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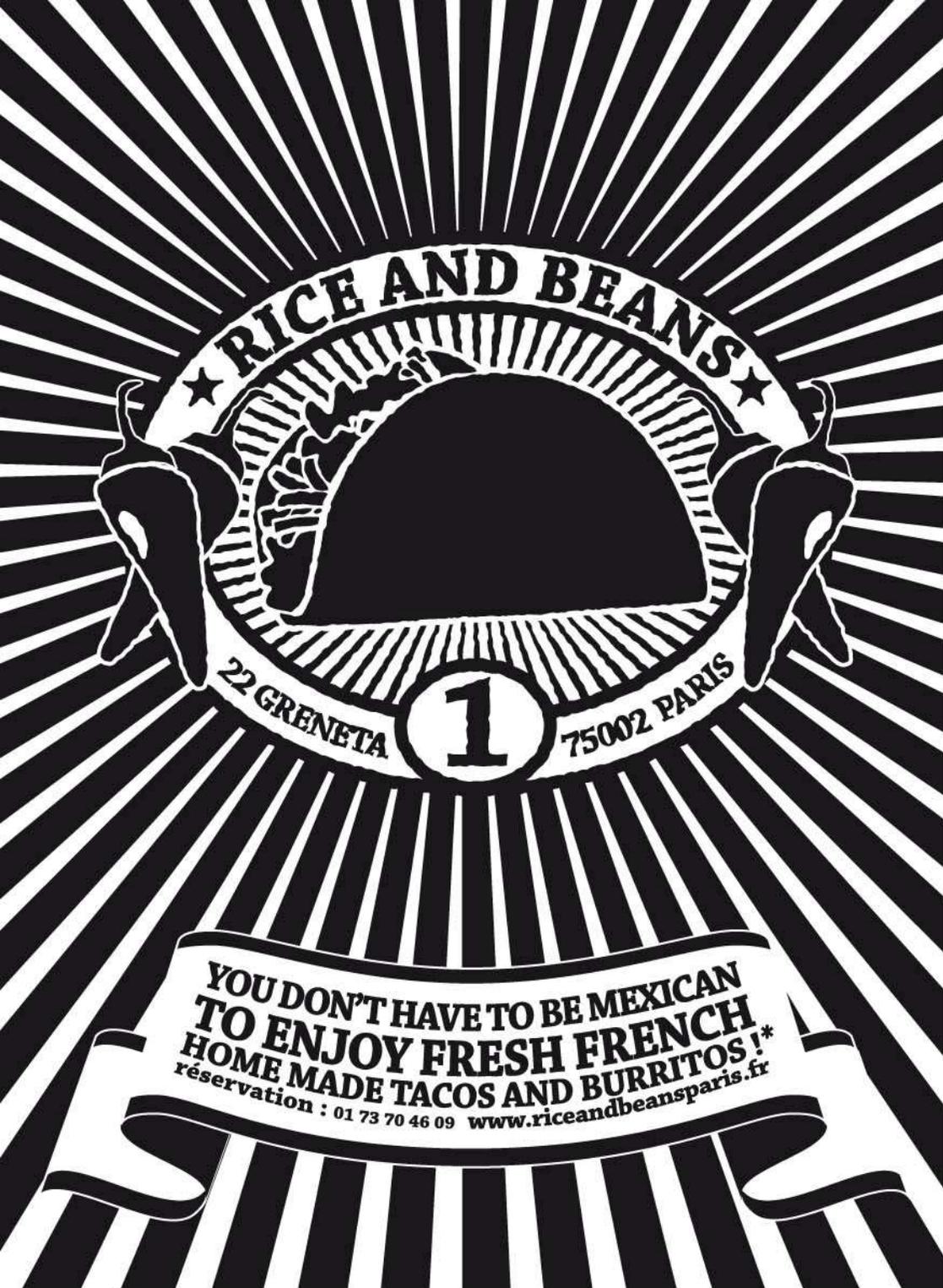
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While many countries, institutions and researchers compete to develop the latest technological solutions, we felt it necessary to return to the origins of the Star Wax adventure: the turntable! Scratching transformed the turntable into a full-fledged musical instrument, adding to their original function of looping the best breaks back-to-back. Then Sampling was born, became more and more sophisticated (with the arrival of more powerful machines and computers) and was eventually dubbed, simply, Beatmaking... It's no overstatement to say that we've come full circle, since these new composers are now seen as full-fledged musicians by the rest of the music industry. Since the next Mixmove Expo marks the 30th anniversary of the CMI – the first sampling-based instrument – we decided to give special prominence to sampling and beatmaking in this issue. Happy Spring! It is year of the rabbit after all...
 - Star Wax Staff



?? WHO'S WHO ??

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Dj Sosa

Top 5 brand new

- Lokid "Fear of Heights"
- Parsifal "W.T.R.T.A." (KIM Remix)
- Valtea "Fino A 10"
- Tumsteak "Look Off"
- Skrillex "Cinema"

Top 5 Oldies

- Gang Starr "New York Straight Talk"
- Justice "Phantom Live"
- Keith Jarrett "The Köln Concert"
- Michael Jackson "Thriller"
- Qtrio "On Cue"

Favorite beatmaker

Nosaj Thing

Favorite festival

Nuits Sonores (Lyon)

Fave Dessert or cheese

Coffee

Favorite website

Sons OFA Glitch (Facebook)

Digital or analog

Twice

Favorite drink

Perrier

Best turntablist

Dj Rafik

Favorite scratch trick

Teaser

If you weren't a DJ, what job would you like to do? My job!



Eva Peel

Top 5 brand new

- Suuns "Up Past The Nursery"
- NDF "Since We Last Met"
- Paris "In Crowded Subways"
- Chloé "Divà" (Jennifer Cardini Remix)
- Discodéine Feat. Jarvis Cocker "Synchronize"

Top 5 Oldies

- Lee Hazlewood & Nancy Sinatra "Some Velvet Morning"
- Bob Dylan "I Want You"
- Sam Cook "Twisting The Night Away"
- Serge Gainsbourg "Initiales BB"
- Marianne Faithfull "Broken English"

Favorite mixer

DjM 600

Favorite festival

Primavera (Barcelone)

Favorite website

www.beatsinspace.net

Favorite Club

Rosa Bonheur (Paris) & Visionare (Berlin)

Favorite vinyl shop

Ground Zero (Paris) & 33 RPM Store (Berlin)

Fave Dessert or cheese

Lemon merengue

Paper magazine or web zine

Vox Pop

Favorite drink

Thé Lapsang Souchong

If you weren't a DJ, what job would you like to do? Film-maker.



Dj Holyfader

Top 5 brand new

- Sawgood "Son Of War"
- Tom Deluxe "Run" (ill Saint m remix)
- Mochiper "Womp a saurus sex"
- DefLeppard "Women" (Samples Deathmix)
- Skrillex "Rock n' Roll"

Top 5 Oldies

- Snap "Rhythm Is A Dancer"
- Tricky "Evolution Revolution"
- Prodigy "Girls"
- Pete Rock "Ain't Nothing"
- The Pharcyde "Drop"

Favorite mixer

Shdj 1200 technics

Favorite website

adopte un mec.com

Favorite festival

Festival de La Tour de Salvagny

Paper magazine or web zine

Paper

Country or town

Country

Favorite club

New Morning (Paris)

Favorite vinyl shop

Turntable Lab (New York)

Digital ou analog

Analog

If you weren't a DJ, what job would you like to do? Salesperson in a vinyl shop !!!! :-)

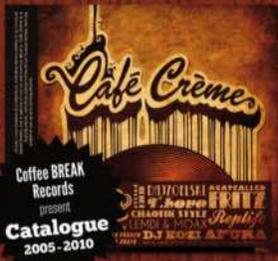
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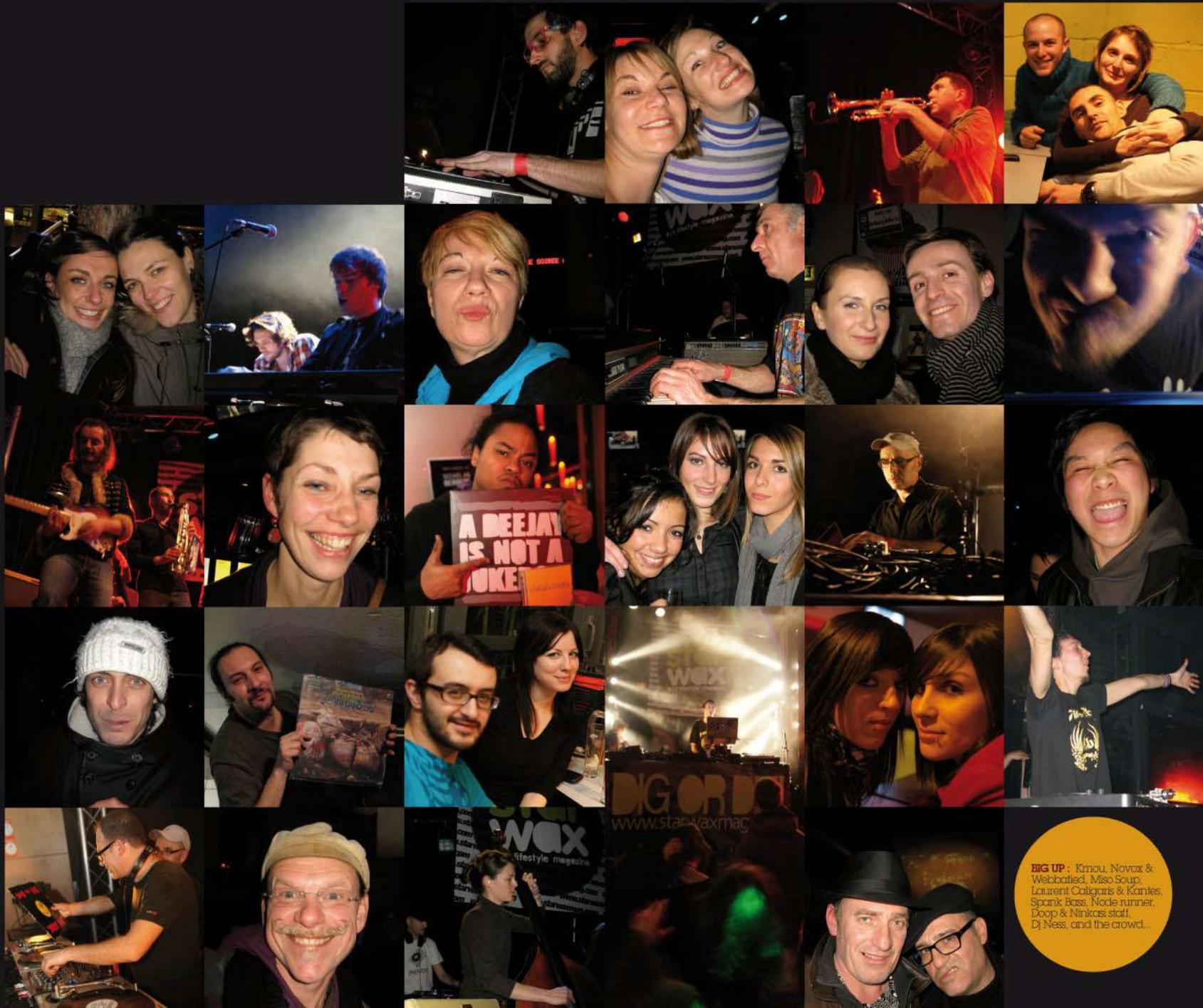
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SOUL SQUARE

FORCED TO CHANGE THEIR NAME DUE TO A LEGAL BATTLE WITH ANOTHER BAND ALREADY USING THAT NAME, DESPERATELY IN SEARCH OF A LABEL, CONFRONTED WITH MONEY ISSUES... ARSHITECT, ATOM, GUAN JAY AND PERMONE, A.K.A. SOULSQUARE (PREVIOUSLY KNOWN AS DRUM BROTHERS) MANAGED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THESE SETBACKS AND DID NOT HESITATE TO START MIXING FROM SCRATCH AGAIN OR TO PRODUCE NEW TRACKS TO REPLACE OTHERS THEY CONSIDERED TOO OLD. FIVE YEARS LATER, "LIVE & UNCUT" WAS RELEASED ON KIF RECORDS AND PROVED TO BE ONE OF THE BEST HIP-HOP ALBUMS MADE IN FRANCE FOR QUITE A LONG TIME. BACK TO THE OLD SCHOOL WITH ARSHITECT...

It is already hard to work as a group, but not only are there five of you, you're all geographically scattered as well. What's your secret ?

We don't necessarily see each other, but we all work very hard by ourselves. Then, we exchange sounds and each of us adds their stuff, and in the end, we all decide. We work democratically, we don't have a leader. When three members of the band say what you've done is shit, you shut up and you move on. We all get along very well, we try swallow our egos, even if sometimes it's hard. Obviously, when you put forward ten melodies and most of them are scrapped, you don't exactly jump for joy!

It's no exaggeration to say that this album is the rightful successor of 90s hip-hop music, in the same vein of Pete Rock, Premier, A Tribe Called Quest, De La Soul, etc.

Yes, that's totally the spirit! But with a touch of technology in the arrangements and beats. Of course, if 90s hip-hop fans don't like what we do, it's a failure, in some way.

Not surprisingly, your album contains a lot of samples...

These are only late 60s and early 70s soul and jazz samples – from Blue Note Records for instance – that we enjoy in terms of tone. We're not as fond of 80s music, when musicians started to use synthesizers and when it all became more complicated... We sometimes use more electronic sounds, but only moogs or stuff like that, very vintage sounds that we use quite subtly and always with breakbeat-style drums. It adds a touch of modernity without making the music too cold.

Your productions contain a lot of scratching and technique, but you never fall into the "Hey, look what we can do" category.

Scratching is something we love and that has totally disappeared from hip-hop. In our album, we scratch on almost every track! We always try to choose open instrumentals, preferably with a catchy melody. It's probably not equally as good on every track, but we try not to overload the instrumental just because we absolutely want to add something. We find the original melody and then we enhance it with additional elements.

Your starting point is the melody ? How weird! Beatmakers' usual starting point is the beat...

That's right! But we adapt the beat to the melody. We create a base beat and a bassline to compose the melody and then we revise the beat, we change the drums, etc. Sometimes, we even feature rappers and change the drums at the very last moment.

About rappers: not a single French MC!

Initially, we wanted to feature some, but thing got a bit messed up with all that! Some of them said no, some others wanted money, and others were in but gave us hard times. In the end, we managed to produce three tracks, but Faster Jay (Kif Records boss – Ed.) immediately told us that even though the tracks were good, they didn't fit on the album and because of them, we couldn't sell it abroad. In other words, he didn't want them on the album. Unfortunately, it seems that people don't like French jazzy rap...

Was it the same for live musicians ?

This is how it works: one of us just says something like "hey, what about some flute here?", and then we invite a flutist we know! We don't like "pillaging" another song by sampling a one minute sax solo. Generally, we indulge ourselves and invite musicians who listen to the base instrumental and can freestyle over it for 7-8 minutes, doing everything that comes to their minds. Then, we pick what we find interesting, we revise all the arrangements, we cut, etc. They generally get a kick out of it, since it's a very jazzy way of composing music, and they can freely have fun. It has nothing to do with a rapper who just comes to perform a couple of verses/choruses.

Producing an old school album, reminiscent of the 90s, goes against the current. It is somehow risky...

"Fortunately", we don't make music for a living, we do so because we love it. That's why we never wondered if what we were doing was fashionable, but rather if we like it or not. Generally, we assume that if we like our music, then the audience will too.

JAMEY STAUB

27 SENS AND THE SYNTHESIZER MAKER E-MU HAVE JUST PUBLISHED A BOOK ENTITLED "SP1200: THE ART AND THE SCIENCE". FOR THIS OCCASION, HERE IS AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW OF JAMEY STAUB, SOUND ENGINEER FOR PETE ROCK.



How did you first get involved with music and engineering?

My first involvement goes back to when I was about 10. I grew up in North Carolina, a town called Southern Pines. I had a fish tank and when I used to go down to the place to buy some fish, and they had a wall of 45 singles in the place. I'd go in there and see what the new songs were. Some of the first stuff I bought was Michael Jackson, James Brown ... In third grade, for show and tell, I bought in my 45 single of Sex Machine. I didn't know. My teacher let me play it. That was my show and tell. Soon after my mom bought me a cassette recorder and speaker system. I hooked up the phone to the stereo; I connected the microphone to the handset and the earpiece to the speaker and was able to turn my stereo into a big speaker phone. That was my first invention and after that, you know, I would take my 45s and transfer them to 8 track, or cassette and make my own mixtapes. That was my introduction to engineering and technology.

When did you think of it as a possible career?

Not for a while; my father was a doctor, a heart surgeon. I thought I was gonna go in that direction until college. I was a physics major and was interested in biology and chemistry. During that time, I was recruited by some older classmates to play in their band. I'd played drums since middle school and they knew I had some skills. During my sophomore year at Colgate University I thought maybe music was a better calling for me, and I transferred to the University of Miami. They had one of the best music schools and were one of the first to offer a music engineering technology bachelors degree. That's when I knew that this is what I wanted to do. I studied drums and percussion, and keyboards, as well as electrical engineering, calculus and all sorts of things around me to understand how instruments work and how to use them to manipulate sound and make things work.

What did you do after school?

I worked as a live sound engineer for a Madonna cover band; I toured with them. That was big in the 80s, so I worked the soundboard and lights, traveling around Miami-Dade Florida. I also played in some rock bands down there, and in 86 or 87, I moved and went in on a business venture with some of my old classmates from Colgate and we would buy and sell old houses. So I stepped away from music for a few years. I then moved to New Jersey, to the Jersey Shore, and I would travel to NY, playing in some different rock bands by night, while in the day I was building mansions on the beach.

I was kinda riding both sides of the fence. After that, a friend of mine, Joey, who was a great keyboardist, he convinced me; 'dude, you gotta move to NY, this is the only way you'll be an engineer or producer in New York City'. I used to play in a Grateful Dead cover band with him. My girlfriend at the time, who is now my wife, lived in Queens. So I would spend time with her and I would go around NY passing out my resume. I went all over, including the Hit Factory, Sony, RPM, and many others. I ended up really liking the atmosphere of Green Street Recordings, which was in SOHO. At that time, Public Enemy was making "It Takes a Nation..."

When I started there, they started making Fear of a Black Planet, so I came in at the right time. Russell Simmons was just getting his feet wet, and he had some groups. This was before he was really building his empire. That's when I was introduced to the SP1200 as a music making device. One of my first sessions when I was hired there as an Assistant Engineer, when my job was to ... back then, we had the big 2 inch tape machines. It took a half hour to calibrate and align the reels before the session. One client might want his level here but another may want it stronger, where you get that saturation on the tape. So it took some time to set up. I went in, and Public Enemy had there tones and their levels. They came in, and at that time I didn't really know who they were, so Chuck D comes in and laid down the beat to "Welcome to the Terrordome." And I was like, 'oh, this is a cool beat,' and I didn't know the scene back then, the engineer looks at me and says did you align the tape? Is It Good? So I said yeah, and then Chuck starts rapping "I got so much trouble on my mind / I refuse to lose!" That was my introduction to recording music in New York City. Imagine Flavor Flav coming in with his crazy self, and Eric Vietnam Sadler, who at that time was the king of the SP.

What were your first impressions of the SP1200?

You gotta remember at that time, it was the first of its kind. At first I was kinda pissed off. I was a drummer. Drum machine?! What?! I play the drums. I think it was 12 bit, so the quality was low, but I think that its a big part of what added to the sound of hip-hop.

"I must say that Pete Rock was The master of the SP"



How did this contradict what you learned in school? The grit, record noise, and lower bit rate sounds must have been the opposite of how you learned to engineer.

When Eric came in with a beat, he would usually bring in beats he made at home or his office. He'd load the disc, and we'd wait five minutes while it loaded. Once it started playing, you know, it sounded amazing. I would spend some time trying to get the hiss and crackle out of the loop, or clean up the drums or bass. And he would say, 'Jamey, no...

"I learned to keep the sound dirty, but also to balance it with some hit quality"



I want that sound, leave it.' It was definitely opposed to what I'd learned in school, you're right. My very early experience with the SP was with Public Enemy. There was only 10 or 12 seconds of sampling times, so he would keep it simple with that. Eric (Sadler) was one of the first guys to use the SP to trigger the Akai S900, which had about a minute of sample time. That was intriguing to me that you can press a button on one machine and it controls another.

Lets skip ahead, to your experiences working with Pete Rock.

I gotta say Pete was The master of the SP1200. When "All Souled Out" came out, Elektra called the studio and said we need some studio time, this kid Pete Rock is coming in. I was still an assistant at the time. Pete had the beat and he's a DJ, so part of the song Go With The Flow, he had this flute solo. He let it go for like a minute and a half on his record. He played directly from the record onto the tape. That was unheard of. The head engineer came out and said 'can you believe he did that? He let that whole record play?' That was my introduction to Pete. Soon after I became the head engineer, Pete's engineer. We clicked musically. He wasn't happy with the chief engineer, who over-processed everything. I learned to keep the sound dirty, but also to balance it with some hit quality - without making it twinkly.

You recorded and mixed a lot of classic records. What was the process when you mixed Pete's drums ?

When he was first starting out, he would sample a sound off the record, and as you can imagine, it didn't sound so big. I applied a lot of techniques to make the drums knock. We used EQ, compression, sometimes I would use a tone generator underneath the sample, sometimes a harmonizer to place harmonics above and below the fundamental frequencies of the tone. If it was a drum loop, say we had a kick, snare and high hat, all in one loop, I'd utilize several faders and on one fader i'd EQ it to highlight the bass drums, I'd gate it and compress it, while on another, I'd bring up the snare sound, and so on. After that we'd take all those tracks and mix them in with the original loop.

The panning mixes and reverb/echoes on the songs you mixed was incredible. Who's idea was that ?

The panning and the echoes was all pretty much me, you know, getting freaky with audio. Everything he was doing was mono, so I was like, hey lets make it interesting for someone wearing headphones. Lets make this pan, lets use left and right and get away from the mono hip-hop sound. I'd try different things and show him, and he'd love it. Pete would come into the studio, often with a satchel of records and his SP. He'd have a basic beat, the drums on a disc, he'd load that and rock it loud at like 100db. He'd play records and as soon as he heard what he wanted to use, he'd say thats it, lets sample this. And if the time of the sample was too much for the sp, he'd say 'Ok, lets get half a measure here, and another half a measure from this other record,' and he would easily piece them together to sound cohesive. He'd sometimes have to record it at a high speed and slow it down to match the key of the song. At other times, we'd do just the drums in the SP, and record that, erase the memory, and then he'd do the bass on its own pass, and then the horns. In his mind, he knew how it would sound when mixed with the other sounds, even though he was just doing say, bass notes to go with this drum pattern that wasn't playing at the time.

Any memorable stories come to mind ?

There are a lot. Many I cant talk about. One that I can talk about is the making of They Reminisce Over You. Pete showed up at like 9pm, he already had a beat. We laid down the beat, CL Smooth showed up at about 11pm. He had two verses. We're rolling the beat so he could finish his writing. At about 1am Pete says, 'oh yeah, I have these horns I wanna add.' After that CL is laying down his rhymes, and by then its almost 3am. Then you know Pete, one of the cool things was that he would always add his classic adlibs. Uh Huh. Yeah. That was always fun. After that, it was late, so Pete and CL fell asleep while I'm mixing this thing. At 7am, I wake Pete up and said 'yo, how does this sound?' He went crazy, he was like "yeah!" and we all loved it. So now we're leaving the studio, and you know those morning birds, the birds that you hear and love to hate ... the sun is coming up and we're in Soho, on Greene Street. We're walking out into the streets of New York City, Pete is in the driver seat and I'm in the passenger seat. Within 20 seconds we just looked at each other and knew it was a classic masterpiece. The story is that we did it one night, it was very emotional. They laid down the parts, and after that, we had it. And we didn't touch it afterwards. It was a really nice experience.

How did the classic Pete Rock interludes come about ?

There were a few occasions where Pete would come in to the studio and we would lay them down, but ultimately, he did those in mastering. After we did all the songs in the studio and mixed them and so on, he would just play the interlude beats out of the SP, a two track mix, and record those directly into the mastering sessions in between songs. Which says a lot about the greatness of the SP1200 and Pete's abilities, because the stuff he would pull out of there. The shit he created that were just two track mixes were amazing. Again, to the credit of the 1200, that thing sounded amazing in the hands of a master. I mean once in a while he would come in and play me the two track mixes and sometimes I thought, damn, lets just use that (laughs).

When was the last time you worked with Pete ?

The last time I worked with Pete was on the "NY's Finest" album. I helped him build a modest home studio. I didn't mix the record, but thats the last time I worked with Pete.

Any words for new SP users ?

I would say good luck (laughs). After working with Pete, I've seen other producers handle that machine, but after working with Pete, its like nobody even had a chance. Ok, a tip, lets see... make every millisecond count. Make every piece of the sound matter.

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How did you start out in music? What were your motivations?

I started fiddling with WAV files from video games like Warcraft, Quake, etc. I didn't want to compose video game music in particular. It's just that it was my only source of sounds: I could find a sound effects for kicks, sword sound effects for snares, etc. I used to bother my friends regularly, forcing them to listen to my noisy tunes. At that time, I wasn't particularly interested in composing music. I was learning drawing and graphic design by myself and was spending my days – and most of my nights – on my computer. When I was fed up with Photoshop, I used to take a break on Rebirth, and it gradually took up more and more of my time.

Were you first a DJ or producer?

I have never performed mixing. During my concerts, I play live. For now, the most important tool is my computer but it will gradually be replaced by live machines. So I only play the tracks I produce.

2080 is the number of a document issued the 26th of January, 2000 by the French National Assembly dealing with the approval of the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of France and the Government of the Republic of South Africa on mutual administrative assistance for the prevention, investigation, detection and prosecution of customs fraud. Is this some kind of political commitment? Why 2080?

(Laughs) Yeah, I'm totally into that whole administrative assistance thing! No, actually it's quite simple: it's the transposition of the 80s into the 2000s. I got inspired by the sound of the synthesizers of the time, including retro video game music, and I wanted to approach this from a more modern angle.

Your style is very 80s, very video game-based. Why are you so nostalgic for this period? What did the 80s have that today doesn't?

Strictly speaking, I'm not sure you can say I'm nostalgic. I'm not the kind to say "It was better before"... After all, I have an Xbox 360! Actually, the thing is I grew up with video game music and my references are "old-school" artists, like Jean Michel Jarre, Moroder, Soft Cell, Orbital... But I also listen to modern musicians, such as The Knife, Hot Chip, Broadcast, Raul Sinier, dDamage... So many that I can't name them all.

Do you prefer working with vintage machines or digital emulations?

I'm not a vintage Nazi. By the way, my concept is to mix different styles. Sometimes, some bass lines are a mix between an analog synth and a VST. But generally speaking, I tend to prefer the original sound of hardware.

Why did you work with Les Gourmets? Aren't your instrumental productions self-sufficient?

(Laughs) I hope they are! I have only produced one track with Les Gourmets, and I think it's totally natural. I signed on their label and they took me under their wings, they taught me a lot of things. I started out with them so I thought it was natural to feature them on my first EP.

Do you think you have to be a geek to produce music? How do you see yourself?

It depends on what you mean by geek. If it means passionate, or even obsessed, then yes, a thousand times yes! I suppose I've joined the cool side of the geek force, because I collect game consoles, Reebok Pump shoes and synthesizers, and I also perform concerts. But somewhere deep inside, I'm still the geek who used to flirt on-line with girls from Quebec, on chat rooms for ages 18-25, using MIRC script.

Do you prefer buying machines rather than records?

Since I'm not a DJ, I do buy machines regularly

What are the machines you couldn't do without on stage?

For now, the only machines I have used on stage are the Nord Micro Modular, the Yamaha TX7 and MFB Synth Lite 2. But the most important part of my equipment is my computer... for now.

You appear to be connected to DJ King Assassin on your personal webpage!

Actually, I just had a look on my MySpace page, and you're right: DJ King Assassin has just requested me as a friend. It's funny. We'll see if he asks me for something!

What do you think of today's French rap, which has become more and more gangster-like ?

Gangsta rap really pisses me off. It can be cool, but generally speaking I don't like the message it conveys. Rap music is an artistic discipline but it suffers from a bad reputation. We need protest, shocking people, radical points of view, but hanging around with wads of greenbacks saying "I'm a drug dealer and a murderer" is totally lame and ruins the image of rap music.

In what way and why did you collaborate with dDash from dDamage on your EP "Nerd to Geek"?

I'm a huge dDamage fan, I know them well. When I was given the opportunity to ask dDash to sing over one of my tracks, I just jumped at the chance! And I think the result is amazing!

"I tend to prefer the original sound of hardware"

You seem to like scratching. Would you consider collaborating with a turntablist ?

Yes, I do like scratching. This might sound shocking, but my reference is Portishead's Dj. His scratches may be very simple and not technical at all, but they are always well thought-out. For now, I've decided to focus on electro music rather than hip-hop, but a lot of things are going to happen this year!

Could you tell us about your projects ?

First of all, the single "The Backup" in March, then the Ep "The Backup" in April/May, a split Ep with Sexy Synthesizer, a Japanese producer I love, the release of the soundtrack I composed for a documentary entitled "Pop Culture Adventure" by Jac&Johan... This is all I can say for now, but there might be other projects in Japan this year!

AFTER A FEW SINGLE RELEASES, NEW-YORKER NICOLAS JAAR HAS BECOME ONE OF THE MOST SOUGHT-AFTER PRODUCERS ON THE ELECTRONIC MUSIC SCENE. "SPACE IS ONLY NOISE", HIS FIRST ALBUM IS ABOUT TO BE RELEASED ON PARISIAN LABEL CIRCUS COMPANY. THIS PRECOCIOUS AND PROLIFIC MUSICIAN HAS ACCEPTED TO ANSWER A FEW QUESTIONS.

NICOLAS JAAR



Could you tell us a few words about yourself? How did you start out in music?

I started playing music when I was 14. I was using Reason, a very basic music software program. At that time, I was living in NYC. I'm half Chilean and half American... What else could I say?

Your first singles, especially "Time for us", released last year, were big hits. Are you under pressure regarding the release of your first LP record?

Not especially. I haven't tried to produce an album for the dance music audience alone. I've tried to reach a larger audience, with dance music inspirations, but also jazz and a lot of other styles.

That is what I was about to ask: you are considered an electro/house music producer, but your album is way more varied. Does it come naturally to you to combine different music styles or was it a way to surprise your fans?

It has always been this way. "Time for us" was already very varied. Production is neither simple nor linear.

What are your musical influences? I heard about very different artists, such as Mulatu Astatke or Sotie...

Exactly. And also Keith Jarrett. Pink Floyd. Ricardo Villalobos' first albums...

You also differ from the other current electro artists because you use a lot of acoustic sounds. Are you fed up with machines?

No, I think both are important. I like combining acoustic and electronic music, to create a kind of communication between both elements.

What kind of equipment did you use on that album?

Ableton Live, Logic, a piano, a guitar, a microphone.

Do you plan to perform it live?

Yes, with musicians: a saxophonist, a guitarist and a drummer.

Do you perform DJ sets?

Not really. I used to DJ when I was in college, but never professionally.

Do you still collect records?

Yes. Mostly vinyl records.

Your album was released on the French label Circus Company. How did you meet them?

They sent me an email when I was 17... no, 18... We've kept in touch ever since. I liked their music. That's all...

In France, NYC is famous for its hip-hop or indie rock music scene. What about electro music?

Strictly speaking, there's no electro music scene. It's clearly more indie rock right now...

But could you recommend us some local artists?

I'm not part of any scene, so I have no idea.

And what about the venues?

The Poisson Rouge (Greenwich Village - Ed.) is cool, The Marcy Hotel (Williamsburg - Ed.) too.

You spent a part of your life in Chile. A lot of electro artists come from Chile, or are somehow related to Chile (Ricardo Villalobos, Uwe Schmidt, Luciano, Matias Aguayo...). Is there something special to you about this country? Were you influenced by these artists?

Yes, by Ricardo Villalobos. I think what is special about these musicians is that, at one moment, they had to leave their country, and now they have with this feeling of inner separation. Different things coexist in them at the same time. It's probably that.

Your music is often minimalist, sometimes dark, but it still manages to stay groovy. Is this because you lived in a Latin country?

I think it has nothing to do with my life. The answer is far simpler: the music I like is groovy and I want the music I produce to be too. I'm always trying to improve this aspect. But geography has nothing to do with it.

There are a lot of French samples in your album. Do you like French culture or is it just a matter of language musicality?

My mother is half French. I have been exposed to French culture for all my life, and I attended NYC French High-School. So these references are as meaningful for me as they are for most French people.

Is it Gilles Deleuze's voice on "I got a woman"?

No, the only voices I sampled on this album are Jean-Luc Godard's and Serge Gainsbourg's. But I have already sampled Deleuze's on other tracks.

You seem to be very productive. What are your next projects?

A tour with the band I mentioned earlier. I also have projects with my label Clown and Sunsets.

Do you produce other artists on your label Clown and Sunsets?

No. Maybe later. For now, I prefer producing my music alone.



PRODUCER, BEATMAKER, LABEL FOUNDER AND RECORD COLLECTOR, DJ VADIM DIVIDES HIS TIME BETWEEN LONDON, BERLIN AND NEW YORK. IN THE FROSTY ATMOSPHERE OF THE KUBE HOTEL BAR IN PARIS, HE TELLS US ABOUT HIS NEW PROJECT, 'THE ELECTRIC', RECENTLY LAUNCHED WITH PUGS ATOMZ AND SABIRA JADE, HIS MUSICAL EVOLUTION AND A RETURN TO INDEPENDENCE.

You are the initiator of many solo projects or projects with bands. You seem to be always in search of something new. What are your main motivations?

I think you always need to face novelty. If you don't, you stop moving, then you die. Life is movement. As a producer, you always have to think about the way you produce and what you have produced. If you start doing the same thing over and over, you get labeled "old-fashioned". I no longer listen to the artists who inspired me in the early 90s and who made me feel like being a producer. I no longer listen to them because they haven't moved on.

You mean they stayed at the same level?

No, what they're doing today is not even close to what they managed to produce 15 years ago... I tell you that because as a Dj, I keep on buying CDs and records and thus I'm aware of the evolution of the artists, whether they're producers, Djs, MCs or singers. Sometimes I think: "Damn, their sound is getting more and more interesting, they improve each time!" Other times I'm very disappointed and I say to myself that I don't want to listen to their music anymore because I didn't like the last thing I listened to. You can't change, be fresh and modern and at the same time focus on what's "in". I don't make music to be "in", to be fashionable in terms of production, I want my music to last, to be part of the future. It's easy to make trendy music, especially when you follow the trends. I don't want to be fashionable, but being fashionable and modern is the same thing, but it's different. You know? How many Djs and producers who are famous in 2011 will still be there in 2021? I was there in 2001, and the great producers of the time are not the great producers of today. If you go even further back in time, what happened to the junglist masters of 1991? What happened to Roni Size? He was a huge star in the 90s, but now? He's gone.

As a producer, have you ever suffered from writer's block and had to resort to particular strategies to get through it?

Up to now, I've never experienced a real lack of inspiration. I'm lucky because I know a lot of producers who've suffered from writer's block. I never had to deal with that. My biggest problem is time. I'd like to explore every facet of my creative potential, but time flies! I wish I could spend 24/7 working in studio to be able to achieve all I'd like to achieve.

You say so because you travel a lot. But meeting new people must be part of your inspiration, right?

Of course, my creativity is fuelled by my trips, the people I meet, and everyday life. If I were to spend a whole year at home or working in studio, I would probably need to get out, because my creativity would be put to a severe test. Being a Dj gives me a lot of strength in terms of production because I can test my own tracks, understand what people like, what works and what doesn't at all. It allows me to see how music evolves, to see crappy artists being cheered like gods while talented artists are being neglected. That's some crazy shit!

Now let's have a look at your story. You left USSR in 1979 and moved to England with your family with you family. Do you still have contact with the local scene?

My father is Russian. I was born in Russia but I grew up in England. I built up my whole musical culture in London and it probably influenced the way I live and see things now. If I hadn't left Russia, I probably wouldn't have made music.

Do you still perform in Russia? Are there any musicians or DJs you'd like to work with?

I don't really feel inspired by Russian music, which I rarely listen to. Russia has a lot of qualities, but music isn't part of it. Anyway not the music that inspires me. That being said, I feel inspired by a lot of things: contemporary art, colors, political issues, buildings...

This is your first album on your own label after the Jazz Fudge experience. After having signed to Ninja Tune, you moved back to an independent structure.....

My career path is quite unusual. I started with my own label, Jazz Fudge. Then I signed to Ninja Tune but I kept my label, which closed its doors shortly thereafter. Now in 2010, I created a new structure with a label, Organically Grown Sounds (OGS) with artists like Yarah Bravo, The Electric and myself. In 1995, when I founded Jazz Fudge, nobody was interested in my music or wanted to sign me. If I wanted my music to be released, I had to take all the steps by myself. I didn't know anything about record industry, marketing, distribution... I had no hindsight. I had a little money saved and I released my Ep. Today, if I release my productions on my label OGS it's just because the labels that get in touch with me have nothing interesting to offer me. They can't give me anything I don't already master, which was not the case 15 years ago.

In your previous projects, you mixed reggae, soul and hip-hop music. What are the guidelines of your latest project, The Electric?

If I were to make it close to one musical style in particular, it would be 80s soul music. I listened a lot to Keith Sweat, Gap Band, Al B. Sure, D-Train and Joyce.

I noticed you're using more and more synthesizers which are said to be very hype by some producers who were influenced by P-Funk music.

Yes, probably because P-Funk is driven by synthesizers, while 90s music producers used to sample James Brown, Miles Davis, etc. I'm not saying I don't like this music anymore; to me, James Brown will always be number one. He's the "Godfather"! This project is a mix between the way I use drums and 80s music. It's fresh music that can be listened to again and again in the future.



Speaking of drums, you seem to get closer to today's Detroit sound...

Why do you mean by "today's Detroit sound"? Jay Dee, Wajeed, Black Milk?

Actually, I was thinking of Black Milk... Even if they are all related...

You know, before Jay Dee died, no one ever realized how talented he was - as a producer and as a drummer - it's a shame! When his album was released on BBE Records, I think it was in 2002 (2001 - Ed.), no one gave a shit. When he was still alive, he had warehouse full of records he didn't manage to sell. When he died, people who used to not be interested in him started wearing those t-shirts saying "Jay Dilla saved my life". I'd like to meet one of those guys and ask them where they were before he died...

We couldn't agree more. There is nothing more annoying than this obscene trend consisting in capitalizing on the death of a musician.

That being said, the positive aspect of this trend is that people eventually talk about all these talented musicians.

Do you really think all those people are aware of Jay Dee's talent and understand why he is talented?

Sincerely, I don't. They just assume it's cool to wear that t-shirt. That being said, he'll be remembered as a great producer. This whole trend was launched by Stones Throw Records, but where were they before? Ok, they released "Champion Sound" at the end of his life... But when he left Slum Village, who cared about J-Dilla? Who knew he worked with Janet Jackson? Who knew he produced the latest albums by A Tribe Called Quest? This hurts me: you should learn to enjoy artists' work when they're still alive!

Let Jay Dilla rest in peace and let's get back to your latest project. Except for two tracks ("So now you know" and "Running") you practically don't perform any scratches. It looks like choruses have replaced scratching.

It's funny because I had a talk with Charlie Dark from Attica Blues about 15 years ago, and I told him: "The basis of real hip-hop is scratch." That's what I truly believed in 1995.

It is the perpetual question: does a good DJ have to be a good scratcher? According to me, good house, techno or electro music DJs can perform good sets without mastering scratching perfectly.

Exactly. Today, it's different. My life approach is different. When I was 16, I used to listen to NWA, Fuck the Police, Ice Cube, Beastie Boys. I'm 37 now and I don't feel like partying in a club only filled with guys (laughs). When I go to a club, I want to experience diversity. I want to feel at ease. If you attend a show by Necro and all the Ill Bill crew, most women aren't exactly going to line up... And if some of them dare to come, it's pretty baffling since Necro's message is roughly: "Suck my dick, I'm gonna fuck you in the ass, in the eyes, in the ears..." Not what you can call a girl-friendly ambience... But at an R'n'B concert by Mary J. Blige for instance, whose message is all about "Love, Love, Love", the audience will be composed of 2,000 girls and 50 men...

It wouldn't be hell on earth to me... (laughs)

Of course not. But now I feel concerned about the kind of audience attending my concerts and DJ sets. I can play dark, violent or even psychedelic productions. But today I care about how people perceive my music, that's why I test my new productions on tour. People often wait for the chorus to decide if they're convinced by a track or not.

By the way, the choruses of this album are pretty catchy. Does it contribute to secure the loyalty of your audience and sell your music?

Yes. I've been thinking about that for roughly 5 years. I think about the song. Anyone can make beats and have good sound. To compose and write a song is totally different! It has nothing to do with a 3-4 minute-loop. I want to move people with richer and deeper music. I want people to be transported by the instruments and their musicality. I want depth. I want people to enjoy the lyrics as well as the melody, the topics, etc.

Are you considering an instrumental version of your album? I ask you so because it is no longer a beat-based album but song-based album. Would such a release be conceivable?

It's an interesting question I long thought about, but I have no answer. Some people might enjoy it. But it's definitely not going to be released on vinyl. I would only sell 20 of them... A digital release is conceivable. Besides, it wouldn't cost me a penny. I should see about that with my partner.

"Anyone can make beats and have good sound. To write and compose a song is totally different!"

END OF DECEMBER, 2010. AGORIA IS IN A HÔTEL PARTICULIER IN MONTMARTRE (PARIS, FRANCE) TO INTRODUCE HIS NEW ALBUM. IT IS THE OCCASION FOR THIS LYON-BORN ARTIST (FRANCE) TO TELL US ABOUT HOW HE STARTED OUT, HIS WORK AS A PRODUCER, AND HIS APPROACH TO DJING. EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW FOR STAR WAX MAGAZINE.

Your artist name comes from the "Agora" parties you and your friends used to organize in the 90s. What were these first parties like?

It was totally minor and amateur... Just 15 kids, with an average age of 16. It was the beginning of the rave era. I mixed a little, but never in public. One day, I saw "Agoria" on the poster of one of our parties. I didn't know that DJ, but my friends seemed confident. On D-Day, no trace of Agoria... At the end, my friends told me: "By the way, you are Agoria. Get your records ready, you're on stage in one hour." I mixed and kept the pseudonym.

What would the ideal line-up be for your 'ultimate party'?

It's a tough one. I think I'd put forward newcomers: Space Dimension Controller, James Blake, Sylvain Chauveau. Three captivating artists I follow closely. Among the stage acts, I'd pick Carl Craig. I'm a huge fan of his work. And if possible, I'd invite the late Aaron Carl. And to make the party complete, I'd book Sly and The Family Stone.

Your previous album "The Green Armchair" was released in 2006...

I know what you're thinking... Agoria is lazy! Since my last album, I've composed a soundtrack for the film "Go Fast" and also recorded two mixed compilation albums: "At the controls" in 2007 and "Balance" in 2010. These releases took quite a long time to complete. Moreover, it's pretty difficult to produce tracks when you're djing at different places throughout the world every weekend. Honestly, I would love to be lazy, but I'm the absolute opposite - I'm a workaholic. The development of the label Infiné, in collaboration with Alexandre Cazac and Yannick Matray, was also a rather time-consuming process.

What is the meaning of the title of your new album, "Impermanence"?

I know it can sound a bit pompous at first sight, but it has a real meaning. To my mind, electronic music is repetitive music, but it's never the same. It's an ephemeral permanence. That's what I tried to achieve here. By the way, "Impermanence" also reflects the fluidity of the record, its constant evolution, and the crossing of different musical worlds. Another interpretation: the era we live in. Today, everything goes by in a rush and we no longer take the time to contemplate the world surrounding us. This is particularly true in music and I'm the first to do so. I listen to a track for 15 seconds, I switch to another one, I listen to it for 15 seconds, etc.

Who helped you compose this third album?

As a DJ, you're somehow frustrated because you want to prove that you can compose music without anybody's help. For "Impermanence", I managed to put my complex aside and rather than trying to do everything all by myself, I invited musicians. Thus, Vanessa Wagner (piano), N'Zeng from the Peuple de l'Herbe (trumpet), Amélie Bouard (violin) found their place on the album.

Tell us the story of the song "Speechless". First you asked Carl Craig for something romantic and you ended up with some rather spicy lyrics: "I wanna drink whiskey out of your belly button"...

I was having dinner with Carl Craig before a DJ set at the Rex (Paris, France - Ed.). Suddenly, I stopped listening to him and I felt rocked to sleep by his voice. When I came back to the conversation, I told him we had to do something with his... voice. He immediately accepted, it was a whole new experience for him. The lyrics are not to be taken seriously. Carl is a father of three. But that doesn't mean he isn't naughty...

On the whole, your album sounds very deep, very house... Did you save some killer techno tracks for future single?

These tracks do exist, but I'm saving them for later. Let's say the rave Agoria is in stand-by. I still consider making dancefloor music, but in another way. When I mix the tracks from "Impermanence" at parties, people seem to enjoy it pretty well. This sound evolution corresponds to a personal fulfillment. I met someone who understands me and the songs were composed quite easily, while I spent two years and a half to record "The Green Armchair". "Impermanence" is a sensitive record, and even feminine, as some of my friends would say.

Could you tell us what equipment you used to produce this album?

The same as on my previous albums. But I was also influenced by Carl Craig and bought some new machines. During the recording, I paid special attention to the mixing. You can have a song with shitty melodies, but if the mix is good, the result will be good. In simple words, I have a hardware setup and I mix all the tracks with Logic.



AGORIA

I heard you were going to produce a mix for Fabric. Is that true ?

Absolutely. Normally, the Mix CD is going to be released on the 18th of April. It will bring together songs I consider to be "classics", as well as some more recent tracks. It will be different from "Balance", for which I had looked for tracks for months and even organized a contest in order to find new talents.

What do you think of the song "DJ" by Bowie and its hook: "I am a DJ, I am what I play"? Does that inspire you as a DJ ?

I don't know that song. Well, it depends on the context. A lot of things come to play when you have to choose a record. I think it's true at the very moment when you play the records... However, you should keep in mind that the records you choose depend on the party. Without mentioning the fact that you change. Ephemerality, our old friend... When I started out, I played trance hardcore records and the last time I mixed, I played a record by Sylvain Chauveau – and they seem diametrically opposed. All told, I think the work of a DJ fluctuates and depends on numerous parameters, but at the present moment, yes: "I am what I play".

Do you still mix trance music from time to time ?

Yes, sometimes! Some friends and I were at a party recently and I played a good old Jam and Spoon. I had forgotten of the BPM were high! It was "Follow me", which must be around 150 BPM, and yet it was a hit at the time.

In February, 2010, you were interviewed by the blog Nerds can dance (Rennes, France) and you said that in the future, music will be totally dematerialized. No more vinyl records, no more CDs, no more files...

That's right. I think the file downloading system is going to disappear. Nowadays, teenagers listen to music streamed from the internet. Physical mediums have tended to disappear over the last few generations, and it seems irreversible. I think that in a few years, everything will be dematerialized. But in what way? We have an insight with the holograms used in Japan. As far as I am concerned, I have never bought as many records as I have for the last six months.

Your first album "Blossom" contains a hidden track. Will this kind of surprise disappear at the same time as supports ?

Of course. This song was called "You can't disco", and actually there were two hidden tracks on the first album. This means there's one secret track in the pregap of the first track (the CD must first be cued to the track, and then manually back-scanned)... But at the same time, Internet is a wonderful tool for the fans: podcasts, mixes or free downloads of unreleased tracks...

What is your opinion of Parisian nightlife ?

I have the same opinion of Parisian nightlife as I do concerning electronic music in France. I think there's a general issue concerning club culture going beyond the framework of clubs... In France, there isn't any specialized radio, major distributor. Record stores don't exist anymore... It's difficult. But when people communicate efficiently, like Ed Banger and Pedro Winter, they manage to pull through and sell an image. A long time ago, F Communications had managed to build something. Honestly, I think you have to fight for the artists if you want to develop the music scene and allow new talents to bloom. In France, a lot of musicians deserve to be discovered. That's the aim of our work with Infiné: we give newcomers a chance and try to build something with them. But we don't want to fall into the trap of chauvinism either.

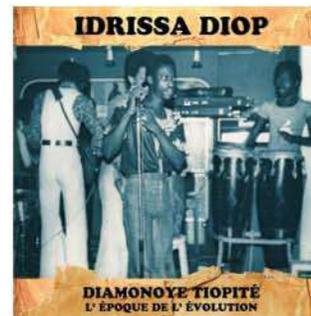
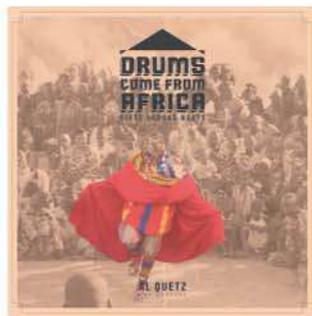
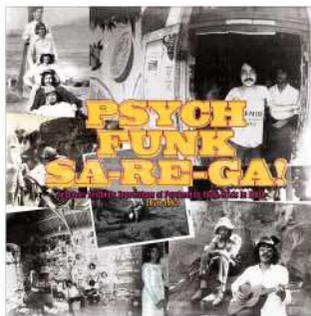
"... I have never bought as many records as I have for the last six months."





11111111 **EL GUSANO**

FANTASIA DEL BARRIO



El Gusano / Fantasia del Barrio Lp

Charisse Kelly and Noel Waggener, creators of the label Heavy Light Records, have recently issued several rare and obscure albums, many of which have never been available previously. Fantasia del Barrio, originally released in 1975 (300 copies), is the link between the traditional Psychedelic sounds of Texas and the Chicano Soul and Funk of the 60s-70s. Injured in Vietnam when he was 20, Eugenio Jaimez was injured in Vietnam at the age of 20, and was then transferred to Japan. During his free-time, he started playing with soul bands, covering Joe Tex, Wilson Pickett, Otis Redding. Back in San Antonio, he became more conscious of his Hispanic roots and recorded this album in a single 10 hour session. From the reminder of his rural origins with the song "Work Your Hand To The Bone" evokes his rural and ethnic origins, while "Pleiku" reminisces of his time spent in Vietnam. This instrumental concept album should please music lovers and beatmakers in search of psychedelic breaks and Texas funk. Limited edition of 1,000. (A.L.)

V.A. / Psych Funk Sa-Re-Ga 2Lp

After the wonderful "Psych-Funk 101" and "Brazilian Guitar Fuzz Bananas", Word Psychedelic Funk Classics has just released a new compilation album. Bearing witness to their growing interest in Indian music, the selection emphasizes traditional Indian styles like Bhangra and Dandiya as well as those with western funk influences. Though some tracks, such as "Mod Trade" by the Black Beats have already been featured on other compilations, most tracks have only been previously available on the original albums. Among the 19 tracks, you can't miss the amazing "Dharmatma Theme Music" by the Kalyanji Anandji Brothers, with its Morricone-like trumpet imposing its melody to the breakbeat, and "Lekar Hum Diwana Di" by R.D. Burman (who has 5 tracks on the compilation) in which the Asha Bhosle and Kishore Kumar duet is accompanied by an avalanche of violins, congas, tabla tarangs and acid guitars. Disco influences are prevalent in "Tere Jaisa Pyara Koi Nahin" by Usha Khanna and "Phir Tery Yaad" by Asha Bhosle. Another interesting track: a Deep Purple cover by Atomic Forest. In addition to the heavy tracklist, a 20-page, full-color booklet will allow you to immerse yourself even deeper into Indian aesthetics. (A.L.)

Al Quetz / Drums come from Africa (Dirty Voodoo Beats) Lp

Quetzal is a French producer with his roots in Hip-Hop, but he's always been a huge fan of Jazz & Latin music. For his third album on Still Musik, armed with a sampler and a passion for the groove, he sets out in quest of the perfect beat. This expedition takes him straight back to the roots: Africa. From afrobeat to highlife, without forgetting rumba, traditional percussion instruments and trance have highly influenced African music. An absolute gold mine for beatmakers or turntablists. Quetzal relies heavily on the raw material, adding Jazz & Funk elements into the mix, giving it the MPC treatment. A series of breaks that even the most demanding DJs are going to enjoy, from "Herb from the Kingdom of Saba" to "Sunsplash Theme". (J.V.)

Dean Olbricht / Tiliae Ep

This record by Budapest-born Dean Olbricht is the third 12" single released on the young French label Absolute Records. On the A-side, there's the dreamy, delicate tune "Tiliae I". In a coherent vein, the B-side features a remix of the track "Narvik", which gets a 'shock treatment' of sorts by French producer Maxime Dangles, bringing some superb sophistication into the mix. For those who buy the vinyl release, there's a download code included which allows you to get a hold of the track "Tiliae II" for free. This release heralds a forthcoming project by Dean Olbricht feat. Paul Nazca. (Leiss)

Idrissa Diop & Cheikh Tidiane Tall / Diamonoye Tiopité 2Lp

The first release by Teranga, a Senegal-based label, contains twelve recordings (some of which were previously unreleased) from 1969 to 1976 on which Idrissa Diop is accompanied by the Sahel Band and one of the most renowned keyboard players in Senegal, Cheikh Tall. Dakkar born Idrissa Diop (Idy) fell into music at the age of 8. When he turned 19, he signed his first solo album "Dioubo" ("peace" - Ed.) combining traditional Senegalese music and Latin influences. Shortly thereafter, he formed the band "Sahel", bringing together many talented Senegalese musicians. With producer Moussa Dialo he then recorded "Bamba", an album that has heavily inspired a number of artists such as Youssou N'dour, Thione Seck and Omar Pene. Greek Kafetzis, the man behind this compilation, was intent on respecting the character of original recordings, which differs somewhat from most Afro re-releases which focus on more modern mix and mastering techniques to bring older tunes "up to date", with the idea of making the sounds more "dancefloor-friendly". This album is a beautiful gatefold release, marking the first in a series which shall, without a doubt, give new life to numerous Sahel talents from the 60s and 70s. (A.L.)

Afro Latin Vintage Orchestra / Ayodegi Lp

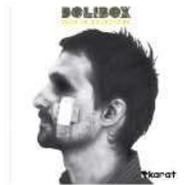
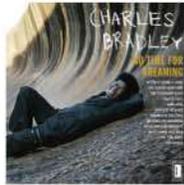
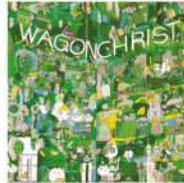
After an album of less inspired covers, the Afro Vintage Orchestra brings us a much more complete collection of original songs with their latest album "Ayodegi". Much to our delight, they take us on a voyage through a kaleidoscope of Afro sounds, by way of Nigeria, Ethiopia, Cuba (with heavy nods to Irakere) as well as the West Indies. Lionel "Masta Conga" is a skilled percussionist, arranger, mix engineer and most importantly, an excellent producer who's been quite active in the modern Afro music scene for several years now. The two co-leaders of the band, Elvis Martinez Smith (guitar), and Fabulous Fab Smith (tenor sax) composed half of the album tunes. The most notable songs on the album are "Theme Jazz" (my personal favorite), which mixes afro-beat and free jazz, "Old School Trip" on a go-go funk tip (reminiscent of Mad In Paris) and "TNT", a blaxploitation track with a touch of free jazz, which finishes up the album perfectly. (D)Ness.

Virgil Howe & Malcolm Catto / B-boy Bounce - B-boy Space Shuffle 7"

The UK label Breakin Bread, known for the high quality of its breakbeats, is launching a new 7" series particularly focused on drums, all live. Indeed, the album motto is: "Drums! Beats, breaks, rolls, all live, no loops". And in order to mark the beginning of this new series they got Virgil Howe (Killer Meters drummer) joining Malcolm Catto (Heliocentrics and Quantic Soul Orchestra drummer) on the first 7". On the B-side, Malcolm Catto is more convincing, due to his rather singular and slightly more sophisticated style of drumming. The hazy vibes of "B-BoyBounce" by Virgil Howe. On B-side, Malcolm Catto is more convincing thanks to his very particular and probably better thought-out drumming: the darkest atmosphere of "B boy Space Shuffle" is a reminder of the atmosphere of "Dark Days" by Dj Shadow. If you love furious breakbeat, you'll love this record. (A.L.)

Gratuit / Rien Ep

The name of the artist Gratuit ("free" - Ed.) and the title of his Ep Rien ("nothing" - Ed.) sound a bit redundant at first, but it does give us some insight into the philosophy of Ego Twister, the label producing this opus. Rather than fuelling the debate about the record industry crisis, the Angers-based label (France) decided to nail its colors to the mast and make music fans put their money where their mouth is. Each of the Ego Twister releases are available in digital format (at whatever price you chose to pay), though true record-lovers can get their hands on the limited-edition CD or a rather tasty-looking red vinyl LP version (a limited release of 300 copies) at a reasonable price. First released in 2010, this album features 8 tracks that are sure to kill your speakers, with an unlikely meeting of sounds and influences reminiscent of Teki Latex, Mr. Oizo and... Timbaland. The album represents a truly surprising collection of tunes sung and rapped in French, and provides us with an excellent introduction to the underground, electronic sounds of Ego Twister Limited vinyl edition of 300. (Leiss)



GaBLé / CuTe HoRSe CuT

GaBLé is a trio from Caen who have developed quite a reputation within the french Indie Rock scene over the last few years. On their third album for Loaf Records, the band lays down more solid proof of their singular charm, blasting away at pre-existing definitions of songwriting, both barrels loaded with an arsenal of math rock, psychedelic folk and electronic experimentation. The lack of simple pop formulas and the eclectic diversity of instruments could conjure up images of nightmarish prog rock experimentations, but even a quick listen tells us that we have nothing to worry about here. On the contrary, the almost punk-like short length of these songs (an average of two minutes long!) coupled with a minimalist production style, present the true value of the music and provide a palpable intensity to their work. If, at first glance, Gable seems to remind us of a slew of groups out there nowadays who surf on the stylings of 'free-form' references like Animal Collective (with repetitive, trance-like sequences), "CuTe HoRSe CuT" feels more akin to recent albums such as "Deerhoof vs. Evil", in terms of their formal rejection of classic pop arrangements. The songs come across as addictive mutant hybrids, torn between experimentation and songwriting, constantly coherent and efficient throughout the entire album. (J.V.)

The ButtsHakers / Headaches and Heartaches

The ButtsHakers are a garage/soul combo created in 2007 in Lyon (France). The band has a major trump card: the voice of the singer, Ciara Thompson, born in Saint-Louis, Missouri. She delivers a heavy soul highly reminiscent of the early years of Tina Turner. This first album on BackToMono Records follows several self produced 7" singles. This album should not only allow the band to reach a larger audience, but also confirm the reviews of their dynamic live performances. Giving a rebirth of sorts to vintage-era Rhythm n' Blues, their rock-heavy brand of soul manages to avoid the typical traps of most retro groups and establishes them as the French answer to bands like the Bellrays, an idea solidly apparent on "Headaches and Heartaches". (J.V.)

Wagon Christ / Toomorrow

Wagon Christ is just one of the numerous alter-egos of Luke Vibert, a true pioneer of British Electronic music, one of the few artists who has managed to release albums on the most important labels from the past few decades such as Mo' Wax, Warp and Rephlex. This time he's back with another album on Ninja Tune, once again jam-packed with a king-size dose of Hip-Hop samples, at times straightforward and obvious ("Ain't He Heavy, He's My Brother" or "Respectrum"), but more generally sideways, through his own mix of sampler acrobatics ("Toomorrow" or "Sentimental Hardcore"). Sound effects, borrowed catchphrases and naive acid basslines clash with jazz breaks and funk grooves, creating an original simplicity and spontaneity that provides a sharp contrast to most of the current electronic productions out there. A true master, here in fine form.

Très Coronas / La musica es mi amara

When we finally received "La musica es mi amara", the latest album by Très Coronas, a band composed of PNO and Rocca, we immediately had a special thought for the latter, who in the past flooded the shelves of music stores with his projects with La Clé and his solo projects, essentially in French. Rocca remains the leader of this band, and his rapped voice predominates over a big hot hip-hop bass line that will make your neighbors tremble. In this album, there are only a small handful of choruses in French and only one French guest, Soprano. The turntables aren't used so much as an instrument, though he does call in DJ Kohd for some serious scratch work, most notable at the end of "Somos Hip-Hop". If the tracks containing violin riffs aren't our favorite ones, the reggae-orientation of the riddim in "Caminando" is extremely original. The greatest moments of this album are due to the excellent fusion between Spanish rap and live drums, the guitars in the amazing mid-tempo track "Consejo de Oro", the Brass horns on the powerful "Mas Salbaje", the southern Rap orientation of "Me La Busco Como Sea" or the exotic and enchanting flutes in "Mi Tierra". For the moment, it seems that Tres Corona are mostly popular in Latin American countries than in France, but we have no doubt that the fever will spread to Europe. Their original mix of Salsa, Samba, Cumbia and Rap is bound to grow and catch on. Be sure to catch them on stage, you won't be disappointed. (I.J.)

Charles Bradley / No time for dreaming

Discovered by Gabe Roth, the creator of Daptone Records, Charles Bradley is the umpteenth example of redemption through soul music. Like Sharon Jones, another hot shot on the label, this soul man has seen some hard times, going from one odd job to another, from Alaska to Maine, California and Canada. His brother's murder could have dragged him to the depths of despair, but it didn't. After recording a series of singles with Sugarma & Co, he got closer to the Menahan Street Band, thanks to which his rough voice regained all its intensity. Bradley sings sincerely and you can hear it! Apart from the classic soul ballads such as "Lovin' you, Baby" and "In you (I found A Love)", Charles Bradley's rough tone of voice is brought to light by the power of the arrangements in "The World (Is Going Up In Flames)" and "No time for dreaming". This album, mixed by the Daptones at their infamous "House Of Soul" studios, maintains a high standard of soul recordings, comparable to some of the most legendary releases from labels like Stax. Highly recommended. (A.L.)

The Shoes / Crack my Bones

This is the first album by The Shoes on the label Green United Music. Comparable to local cohorts Yulsek and Brodinski, this duo from Reims, France, has received an enormous amount of critical acclaim, ever since the release of their first EP. They're well-known in the UK, and their single "People Movin'" was awarded 'single of the week' by the NME which has boosted expectations for their first full-length outing. The fusion between the band's British influences (pop, new wave, punk, Madchester...) and the "French Touch 2.0" production ethic has given their work a calculated efficiency to please the masses. One only needs to take a look at the guest features on the album, which testify to this effect (Esser on two tracks, Gonzales, members of Wave Machines and CocknBull Kid...). As if that wasn't enough, the final result was even mixed in London! The opening song, "Stay the Same" sets the tone and confirms that beyond the electro veneer of the production, there are real songwriting skills. An unanswerable melody. Pop in its purest assertion. The other songs unfortunately don't reach such greatness, but according to "Time to Dance", "Investigator", and even "Wastin Time", The Shoes may be a serious competitor for the British on their own ground. (J.V.)

Dolibox / Fake is beautiful

At the beginning of it all, we find Rouen natives Alex & Laetitia, founders of the independent and eclectic electronic music shop Katapult as well as House/Techno label Karat (started in 1999). It's safe to say that they've seen many styles, trends and fashions come and go over the year, while hosting parties at venues such as the Rex Club, with a high-quality selection of guest dj's such as Ricardo Villalobos, Mark Broom, Baby Ford or Superpitcher. A regular acolyte of Ark over the years, Dolibox is now presenting his first album on Karat Records, after a string of well-received 12" singles. As ambivalent as the title is, it does sum up perfectly Dolibox's general aesthetic, his ability to forge unexpected ties between house and techno with other obscure musical influences that you just can't quite put your finger on. It's dark and disturbingly beautiful, and still manages to keep your feet on the dancefloor, somehow at the exact opposite of 'functional' house music that screams at you to "put your hands in the air" while simultaneously emptying your mind. This is one to watch. (Leiss)

The Natural Yogurt Band / Tuck in with...

The Natural Yogurt Band is a British duo composed of Miles Newbold (keyboards, vibraphone, flute...) and Wayne Fullwood (drums and bass). "Tuck in with...", their second album released by Egon on his label Now Again is half-way between a music library and a rare groove collection. In other words, it's a series of relatively short vignettes based on jazz or funk breaks and backed by melodies and instrumentations reminiscent of the 60s and the 70s. Through its virtuosity, this revival of a glorious era is a reminder of the Whitefield Brothers, another Now Again project. Just like them, this album will please the amateurs but leave cold those who swear by the originals of the time. Be sure to check out the excellent graphic design and the dassy packaging on this one. (J.V.)

Munk / The Bird and The Beat

Mathias Modica a.k.a. Munk is the co-creator of Gomma, a Munich label (Germany) often compared to DFA because of its House/Disco/Punk ethic. This attitude is confirmed by the list of musicians he has worked with: James Murphy, Asia Argento, Chloé... The album reflects the philosophy of the label: a music designed for dancefloor but marked with strong 80s, post-punk or italo disco influences. Surrounded by a lot of singers (Koko Von Napoo, The Teenagers, Joyze Muniz, Lou Haytwer from New Young Pony Club...), Munk was helped by Etienne de Crecy, Alex Gopher and Jan Driver de Boyze Noize for the mixing: a guarantee of efficiency, confirmed by the songs "La Musica" or "Rue de Rome". Too much, maybe? Nonetheless, "The Bird and The Bear" reaches greatness when it gets more subtle and less formatted, like in "Violent Love", a song Debbie Harris herself would surely not have refused, had it been written 30 years ago. (J.V.)

Rexperience 2 / Jennifer Cardini

France has a rather unique position in the Techno scene, although there are many artists defending that movement, the music has never become a mass phenomenon throughout the country. We can speculate whether those involved are to blame, as they've never succeeded in establishing a genuine 'club culture' in France, if one compares with scenes in Germany or the UK. Certain clubs in particular come to mind, such as Tresor or Fabric, which have since become serious record labels, constantly seeking to remain innovative and without compromise. While the French clubbing scene is going through some pretty rough times, some French club managers have finally decided to follow the example of their neighbors. Thus, after having organized parties for 20 years, the Rex Club (Paris, France) has just released the second volume of the young "Rexperience" series, after a first try carried out by D'Juz. Behind this new mixed CD, another Rex regular, the talented and magnetic Jennifer Cardini, the very first French artist signed to Kompakt. Alternating between new talents (Ben Frost, John Roberts) and established artists (Matthew Dear, Superpitcher), the creator of the label Correspondant produces a mix swaying between house and techno. The result is both charming and sensitive and perfectly reflects the sound and attitude of her residency at the Rex Club. (Leiss)

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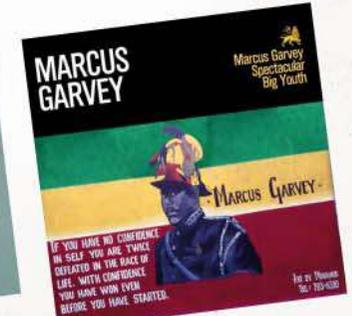
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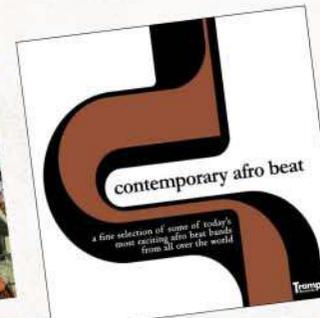
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GUILLAUME SAINTILLAN IS A POITIERS-BASED DIGGER (FRANCE) SCOURING CONVENTIONS AND FLEA-MARKETS. HE HAS ALSO BEEN RUNNING A BLOG FOR A YEAR, PLEXUSRECORDS.BLOGSPOT.COM, ON WHICH YOU CAN FIND AUDIO CONTENTS, ARCHIVES, AS WELL AS NEW OR SECOND-HAND RARE GROOVE VINYL RECORDS. WE ASKED HIM TO FLIP THROUGH HIS COLLECTION TO DIG OUT SOME TRACKS SAMPLED BY HIP-HOP BEATMAKERS.



The Silhouettes / "Conversations with The Silhouettes" (Segué, 1969)

"Fonky First" sampled by Pete Rock for "#1 Soul Brother" (on the album "Soul Survivor")

It is one of the most amazing productions by saxophonist Nathan Davis: Latin sounding jazz backed by wonderfully groovy vibes and captivating singing. The album oscillates between jazz, pop, bossanova and psychedelic funk music. The outstanding fuzzed vibes riffs in the songs "Fonky First" and "Lunar Invasion" echo Stark Reality's world. With their drum break in the intro, these songs were definitely meant to be sampled! And that's what Pete Rock did on the second volume of "Soul Survivor", on which he also superimposed an insistent vibes sample and discrete filtered echoes of female voices and flutes: an absolute gem! I really fell in love with this album, released on the small label Segué!

Approx. value: € 60

Melvin Bliss / "Reward Synthetic substitution" (Sunburst, 1973)

"Synthetic substitution" sampled by Dj Premier for "Code of the streets" (on the album "Hard to earn" by Gangstarr)

More than a simple drum sample, the intro of "Synthetic Substitution" is at the essence of hip-hop rhythm section, just like "It's a new day" by Skull Snapps! Since the late 80s, almost all beatmakers have been using this drum-loop in their productions: De La Soul, Public Enemy, Souls of Mischief, Gangstarr and also DJ Cam tried to make this break theirs! But with such heavy and compressed drum beats, it couldn't have been otherwise... Still, you shouldn't miss this essential and wonderful composition: an absolute gem, half-way between soul and funk, with tragic piano riffs and breath-taking singing! Not to mention "Reward", a wonderful song Melvin Bliss used to consider one of the most important at the time... A documentary about this very special man is in preparation. It may allow this great musician who recently passed away to make himself known otherwise than through his indirect influence on hip-hop's emergence. Approx. value: € 90 (second issue)

Don Cherry / "Complete Communion" (Blue Note, 1965)

"Complete Communion" sampled by Madlib for "Microphone Mathematics" (on the album "Quasimoto")

In 1965, Don Cherry had already played with a lot of jazz icons: Ornette Coleman, Archie Shepp, John Coltrane, Steve Lacy, Sonny Rollins... Boosted by the experience he gained through now legendary sessions, Don Cherry managed to produce an incredibly mature album... He has already asserted his very own style and his sidemen are not just anybody: Gato Barbieri, Henry Grimes and Edward Blackwell! This is a crucial album marking the beginning of a long and successful solo career. Criss-crossing the boundaries between free-jazz and spiritual jazz, "Complete Communion" paves the way for the musician's mystical explorations to come. Thanks to his SP-1200, Madlib gives special prominence to a central motif of the suite and inserts it into the utterly eccentric and fuzzy world of his character Quasimoto. Even with a gap of 35 years, it's not surprising to see these geniuses meet and interacting through their reciprocal work! Approx. value: € 300

Placebo / Third album (Harvest, 1974)

"Plotselling", sampled by Sixtoo for "Part 5" (on the album "Jackals and Vipers in Envy of Man")

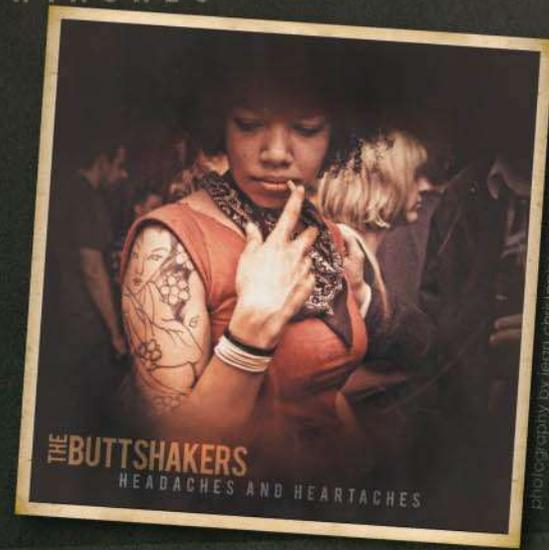
Placebo's third album is not only a European rare groove classic, but also a stunning artistic success and a gold mine for beatmakers! Marc Moulin and his crew offer us a well thought-out and atmospheric jazz-funk album, where Rhodes piano and synthesizer riffs alternate with deeply inspired choruses. Miles Davis' "Bitches Brew" influence is noticeable, which should delight the most demanding producers. Pete Rock, Madlib, Doctor L, Manu Boubli and Sixtoo have all looked into this little treasure... On his album "Jackals and Vipers in Envy of Man", Sixtoo sampled the piano ostinato at the middle of the song "Plotselling", creating a shaking and pretty frightening loop. The original version of this little treasure is currently very hard to find. And even the unofficial vinyl reissues are quite expensive. Approx. value: € 300



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Harlem Pop Trotters / "S-T"
(Les Tréteaux, 1975)

"Plongée synthétique" sampled by DJ Spinna for "Vent" (on the album "Jigmastas")

There were a lot of "budget" labels in the 70s, and Les Tréteaux is probably the most surprising of them! At a yard-sale, you can't miss its famous "Super Hits"; cheesy French music par excellence... But besides these minor compilation albums, some solid references can be found on this label, including this album by the Harlem Pop Trotters - of the same caliber of the amazing Godchild. With Jean-Claude Pierré and François Rolland at the helm, the album offers a jazz-funk "à la française" and well thought-out arrangements. Well-known by rare groove music fans, this album is a classic of its kind and was reissued by Kif Records a short time ago. DJ Spinna, a producer interested in European funk music and sound design, sampled the strangest and darkest track of the album in his "Jigmastas" project (with MC Kriminul). The result is surprisingly funky, especially when you know it arose from a pure sound experimentation! Approx. value: € 120



O.V. Wright / "8 men and 4 women"
(BackBeat, 1968)

"Motherless Child", sampled by RZA for "Motherless Child" (on the album "Ironman" by Ghostface Killah)

Released on the label BackBeat in 1968, this album contains some of the most beautiful deep soul ballads ever recorded... A gospel voice filled with emotions, backed by simple and subtle arrangements: this album can't leave you cold! Its version of "Motherless Child" (a traditional Negro Spiritual song) is probably one of the most moving ever, among those by Louis Armstrong, Lou Rawls or Odetta. With RZA, Ghostface Killah and Raekwon, Staten Island streets have replaced the cotton fields. In their own way, they managed to pay tribute to this committed lament. Thanks to a second sample of OV Wright ("Into Something"), RZA managed to create a dark groove, proper to NYC... An archetypal Wu-Tang sound! Approx. value: €100

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