



Dawn Tallman

ISSUE #172 / MAY 2019 / 5MAG.NET



DJ ROCCA

HOT TODDY

BENJI CANDELARIO

DETROIT'S FILTHIEST



5 Magazine

100 E Walton Ste 30E, Chicago
<http://www.5magmembers.com>
<https://5mag.net>

Editorial Staff

Czarina Mirani

Editor-in-Chief, 5 Magazine
czarina@5chicago.com

Terry Matthew

Managing Editor
terry@5chicago.com

Will Sumsuch

Senior Editor
will@5chicago.com

Lauren Krieger

Contributing Editor
lauren@5chicago.com

Tristan Dominguez

Contributing Editor
tristan@5chicago.com

Harold Heath

Contributing Editor
harold@5chicago.com

Bruce Tantum

Contributing Editor
mr.bruce.tantum@gmail.com

Krystal Rodriguez

Contributing Editor
krystal@5chicago.com

Business Inquiries

Membership Services

art@5chicago.com

Advertising Inquiries

czarina@5chicago.com

Become A Member

<https://5mag.net/subscribe>

Business Address

100 E Walton Ste 30E,
Chicago, IL 60611

Music Submissions

<https://5mag.net/submit>

General Inquiries

info@5chicago.com

Cover:

Dawn Tallman by Julian Lazaro

#5Mag172

FIRST PUBLISHED: MAY 2019

STRICTLY UNDERGROUND MUSIC

THE BEST ELECTRONIC MUSIC PODCASTS,
FEATURING ONLY THE FINEST ARTISTS AND LABELS.



STRICTLYUNDERGROUNDMUSIC.COM

COVER STORY /

40 FOR ME: THE BEAUTIFUL WORLD OF DAWN TALLMAN.

Josh Milan called up and warned us. Hey, he said, this is a record that you don't want to miss. And he was right. Dawn Tallman's *For Me* – her debut album, after her dance music debut nearly a quarter century ago – has made it to the top of a bunch of lists as one of the best soul albums of the year. On the first listen it was also on mine. 5 Mag talks to Dawn about her incomparable career and the message in the music.

PLAY /

22 THE CULTURE WITH DJ ROCCA.

It's a cliché to say this in any other context, but DJ Rocca truly has a sound that can only be described as “adventurous” – an ear that can take in all manner and styles of music and a soul that can synthesize it into something special. We're thrilled to have him talk about DJing with us and premiere a new 5 Mag Mix.

30 THE CULTURE WITH BENJI CANDELARIO.

Benji Candelario is a veteran of the New York clubbing scene, an OG that has graced the decks of almost every major club imaginable, including residencies at Studio 54 and Ministry in London. Here we ask Benji about his art to approaching the turntables, and how much things have evolved since he began. He also gives us one hell of an exclusive mix to jam to.

FEATURES /

36 HOT MIXING WITH HOT TODDY.

UK producer, DJ, guitarist, songwriter and arranger Chris Todd is one half of UK house stalwarts Crazy P, producers of classic disco-house cuts with a well deserved reputation as one of the tightest dance music live acts around. He's also an accomplished and well traveled DJ, so 5 Mag's Harold Heath decided to quiz Chris about his approach to the art of DJing.

contents

FUSE /

18 FREQ: THE 5 MAG GUIDE TO... PLAYING A WARM-UP DJ SET.

“More than any other DJ role, the warm-up is about putting aside your ego; playing for the good of the rest of the DJs, the audience and indeed the whole night.” Harold Heath on 5 Do's and Don'ts for being a good opening DJ.

ASSEMBLY /

10 EVERYTHING HAS CHANGED AND THE INDUSTRY HASN'T NOTICED (YET).

Observations on the state of the dance music industry from Brighton Music Conference with Will Sumsuch.

14 THE DEATH CROSS OF THE MP3.

Should DJs and labels care about streaming? They better.

13 EXCLUSIVE: PLEDGEMUSIC WAS LOSING MONEY AND PROBABLY NEVER TURNED A PROFIT.

We found the docs that prove it.

TRACKS /

50 5 MAG SELECT: SIX RECORDS WITH DETROIT'S FILTHIEST.

Motor City Electro Company came roaring back to life in 2015 after a rare record from its founder, Detroit's Filthiest was sampled for the foundation of Disclosure's hit record “Bang That.” Since then, MCEC has been killing it, with records skipping across genres in reflection of its founder's short attention span. We asked Detroit's Filthiest to tell us the story behind six of the label's notable tracks with an emphasis on the latest tunes in honor of the label's 20th anniversary.

56 MUSIC REVIEWS 172.

New music compiled, critiqued and celebrated by 5 Mag staff.



BOOK A TOUR NOW



assembly

10

EVERYTHING HAS CHANGED AND THE INDUSTRY HASN'T NOTICED (YET).

Inside this year's Brighton Music Conference with Will Sumsuch.

13

EXCLUSIVE: PLEDGEMUSIC WAS LOSING MONEY AND PROBABLY NEVER TURNED A PROFIT.

We found the docs.

14

THE DEATH CROSS OF THE MP3.

Should DJs and labels care about streaming? They better.

/ 01.

EVERYTHING HAS CHANGED AND THE INDUSTRY HASN'T NOTICED

[YET.]

INSIDE THIS YEAR'S BRIGHTON MUSIC CONFERENCE.

Another year, another Brighton Music Conference, this time in a new location on the city's iconic seafront. The "British Airways i360" seems to provide a perfect home for the UK's own dance music meet-up, especially its 531 foot high moving tower, which dominates both the city skyline and the conference itself (David Morales' DJ set in the sky was an undoubted highlight).

Every industry conference seems to have its own character, so I'm starting to realize that in order to really "take the temperature" of the business, one must attend the same ones each and every year. Luckily, the BMC is right on my doorstep, so with my massive 5 Mag laminate dangling around my neck (they seem to get bigger each time), I made it my mission to try to figure out what's happening.



SHAZAM METRICS > TALENT.

What I saw this year, perhaps for the first time, was much more engaging than the same slick PR patter and tired, repeated panel subjects of previous conferences. What I saw appeared to be an industry suffering from something of an identity crisis. The cracks began to show almost immediately, in a panel titled "Ultra Records Presents – A&R in Electronic Music Today." The panelists (from pile-em-high digital juggernauts Ultra and Armada, plus major label Colombia) proudly talked up their "strategies," which included releasing up to 30 products per week and scouring the line-up of the Coachella dance stage to find the next top act (yes, really). This vapid cynicism coupled with the statement that "each generation discovers new versions of the same track, so a small number of records actually cycle around" made it seem like generic techno-pop, sound-a-likes, throw-back tracks and cover versions might be the only way to make a go of it in the current climate.

Confidently dismissing radio as no longer relevant and lauding Spotify and Shazam metrics as the best way to find and sign new "talent," the corporate glad-handing continued until the Q&A.

Then things got interesting.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE GOLDEN EARS?

First, a radio professional stepped forward and asked a polite but pointed question about his sector's relevance (or lack of it). Squirming and back-pedaling followed, as well as an admission that "curation will always be valuable" and that perhaps playlists and algorithms might be somewhat "faceless" to consumers. Then UK House hero DJ Paulette asked what many people in the room were now thinking: "What hope is there for a new artist to break through?" The panelist who responded was dismissive to the point of "mansplaining" that an artist must have already built a significant brand to even be considered by his label. "Make more music, or start your own event," he flailed in response to follow-up questioning.

I emailed Paulette after the panel to discuss her odd exchange with the "experts," and her reply is so perfectly put that it deserves to be reproduced in full here:

As someone who has now started to make original music with the dreams of having it released on a respected and respectable label, I found the A&R panel depressing, defeatist and demoralizing. There was no positive advice there other than: if you don't fit this model, do it yourself.

If A&R is reduced to looking at only the top tier of festivals line-ups then the music released becomes instantly:

- a) homogeneous
- b) generic
- c) A&R by social networking numbers and streams (which can be falsified and bought)
- d) A&R by festival plays – which, since most artists play their own music or music from their bespoke labels means the A&R process also becomes exclusive
- e) stagnant (which is why all the new singers sound the same)
- f) geared towards those under 18 who use the internet the most. This leaves absolutely no room for people who make music outside of that demographic.

Also, if A&Rs no longer listen to music that lands on spec in their inbox and don't listen to anything outside of the precious remit, then a lot of good artists (who with a bit of nurturing/guidance could become great) will be lost in/relegated to the trash. Saying "come and see us" is also a fallacy, as unknowns making appointments on spec to play music that the A&Rs haven't already heard or seen is working is unlikely to happen. This presents a no-hope/no-win scenario that is a death sentence to natural creativity. It forces people to follow a template of creative behavior that is counterproductive and counter-originality.

A&Rs used to be renowned for having golden ears – what happened to trusting their own instinct instead of trusting the ears of 12 year olds and a flawed algorithm?"

STORY & PHOTOS

WILL SUMSUCH



IS GREED KILLING THE DANCEFLOOR?

The other panel worth discussing in detail was titled “DJ Mag & WDMC presents The Big Debate – Is Greed Killing The Dancefloor?” This one was interesting, mainly because Andy Blackett of London’s famous Fabric nightclub spoke candidly about the pressures on nightlife right now.

The speakers discussed what we already know: massively inflated DJ fees are killing off the “middle classes,” so we are now seeing line-ups dominated by one huge headliner, supporter by a group of nobodies playing for free or almost nothing. This means that DJs caught in the middle tier – in between zero and tens of thousands of dollars – are either pressured to hike up their prices (and fast) in hopes of reaching “headliner” status quickly, or drop out of the race completely. Essentially the days of the \$500-\$5000 mid-billing, journeyman pro DJ are probably numbered, which is a great shame for those who enjoy a proper musical program from the start of the night right through to the end.

A clear and present threat to clubs, especially in the UK, is the proliferation of music festivals, which are enabling those unfeasible fees demanded by DJs and their agents – fees that smaller clubs and promoters can never hope to meet. Another big issue is embargoes: the practice whereby an artist is prevented from playing anywhere near a festival or super-club to ensure exclusivity, stacking the cards further against small venues and promoters. Despite some discussions about an informal union between venues and promoters to safeguard their interests, the future looks bleak for nightlife in its traditional sense.

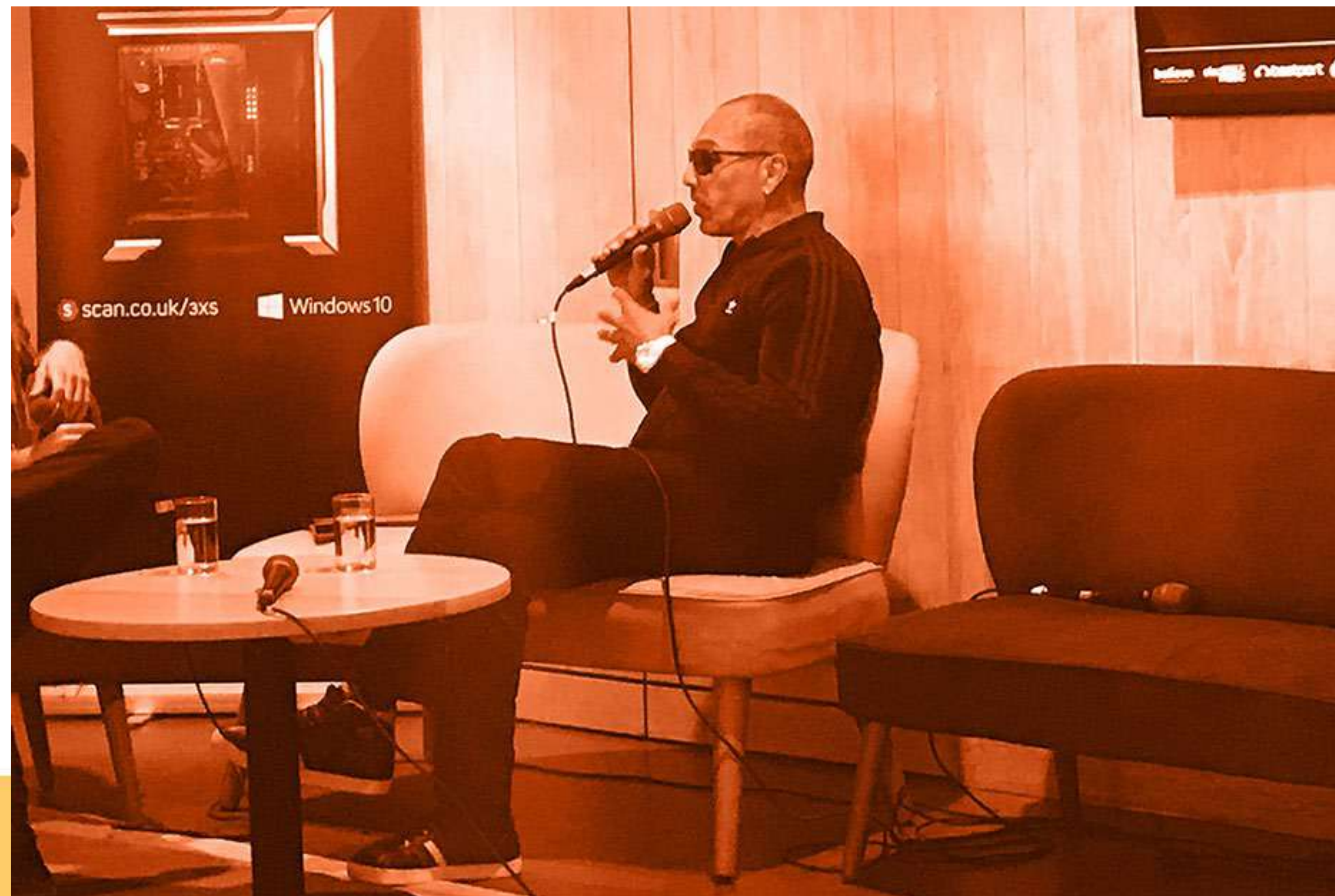
As the issues were laid out and blame attributed, I have to say I felt completely unmoved. A couple of years ago, Gavin Hardkiss said to me that “Perhaps the whole concept of a nightclub is outmoded.” Those words echoed around in my head throughout this panel. Which brings me to my big takeaway from this year’s conference, as illustrated by the two conversations detailed above:

Things have changed and the industry hasn’t noticed.

NOSTALGIA VS. SPREADSHEETS.

The way people (especially young people) consume our music has changed. Electronic music has spread out from the nightclub and arrived on rooftops, coffee roasters, hipster ale-houses and shops. It’s everywhere, and while the traditional nightclub event has remained largely stuck in the past, pop-up events in temporary spaces are vibrant and thriving.

The week after Record Store Day 2019 was the single biggest selling week for vinyl internationally since 1991, yet not one person on an industry panel over the two days I attended even mentioned the format. On the outdoor DJ stage (populated by a gaggle of influential UK DJs), I didn’t hear one new tune played. Fatboy Slim’s “Praise You” and Pepe Bradock’s “Deep Burnt” were



/ DAVID MORALES HAS PRETTY MUCH HEARD ENOUGH OF “NEEDIN’ YOU”

in heavy rotation, and whilst I’m a fan of both records, they felt weirdly out of place at an industry event that surely should be showing us all what’s coming next.

But maybe that’s the thing. Often during the weekend I felt like I was witnessing a divided industry: one half caught up in reverie about its “glory days” and the other obsessed with metrics. A granddad telling stories by the fireside, while the kids play with their phones and blindly follow the algorithm.

Both camps seem out-of-step with what’s really happening, which brings me neatly to the keynote, an interview with David Morales, which nicely summed it all up. The questions were often about his past, while he clearly wanted to talk about his present and future.

On the subject of the current state of club events and festival programming he wondered: “How can you express yourself musically in a 55 minute set?”

On his past hits: “I don’t wanna go out and play old records. If I never played ‘Needin’ You’ again, I’d be fine.”

On making music and production: “I’m not a producer ‘cause I’m forced to, like a lot of guys today.”

For the first (and only) time during the conference, the audience was engaged; laughing, groaning, applauding, soaking it all up. It seemed for a moment that an industry that has rejected, then attempted to artificially synthesize heart and authenticity is slowly, gradually creeping its way to the realization that unless it begins to nurture originality and creativity, there will be nothing left to sustain it. / / / / /

/ 02.

EXCLUSIVE: PLEDGEMUSIC WAS LOSING MILLIONS AND MIGHT HAVE NEVER TURNED A PROFIT.

PITCH PREPARED FOR INVESTORS REVEALS POOR STATE OF EMBATTLED MUSIC CROWDFUNDING PLATFORM’S FINANCES. / BY TERRY MATTHEW

Embattled music crowdfunding website PledgeMusic was burning through an average loss of \$4.5 million per year leading up to its demise, confidential figures obtained by 5 Mag show.

The document, which was prepared for potential investors in May 2018, show PledgeMusic earned an average of just \$3.5 million per year from revenue after the lion’s share to the acts that crowdfunded on their platform. The expenses amounted to more than \$8 million per year.

PledgeMusic anticipated a surge in revenue in 2018, according to the “budget amounts” for that year, while also planning to slash expenses by 11%.

Co-founder Benji Rogers declined comment on the authenticity or accuracy of the figures. Multiple emails sent to PledgeMusic addresses were returned.

The alleged figures were part of a presentation deck prepared for potential investors. PledgeMusic claimed they would be cutting their losses down from \$4 million to \$1.7 million in 2018, partly through a spike in revenue. The “budget amounts” anticipated explosive growth in categories where PledgeMusic had never earned any money before, including \$1.6 million from a new Pledge “ad platform.” This ad platform was modeled on Amazon and Etsy, and would charge money from artist campaigns if they wanted promotion for their campaign on PledgeMusic itself (something previously offered for free).

The company also revealed it had “approved and will be implementing” a new pricing strategy that would have taken 20% of all crowdfunded revenue from artists, an increase over the previous 15%. Despite this, the 2018 revenue from PledgeMusic’s percentage cut of crowdfunding by artists was actually “budgeted” to decline, from \$3.8 to \$3.5 million.

The latter is a rare concession to reality in the presentation deck. PledgeMusic began a death spiral after this pitch was sent out, unable to fully transfer funds raised by crowdfunding campaigns to the artists who had raised them. It was alleged that PledgeMusic had dipped into these funds to pay for their own administrative expenses; the company admitted it was behind in funds and unable to pay.

The front page of the investor deck lists Dominic Pandiscia as CEO (he left in September 2018 with most of the finance team as the scope of PledgeMusic’s troubles became known) and Benji Rogers as a member of the board.

The company froze all fundraising campaigns in February and maintained radio silence. Rogers returned to the company to try to salvage it, but in May Rogers conceded PledgeMusic was headed toward bankruptcy.

To the right are the key numbers from the investment deck (2015 numbers are estimates based upon 2016’s year-to-year growth figures). “Overall Revenue” includes funds raised on behalf of artists and (well, theoretically) disbursed back to them. PledgeMusic’s revenue includes their 15% cut of this revenue and brand sponsorship fees from PledgeMusic subsidiary NoiseTrade (which never exceeded \$451,000).

PLEDGE MUSIC PROFIT/LOSS STATEMENTS:

2015 (estimated):

Overall Revenue: \$15.2 million
PledgeMusic Revenue: \$2.6 million
Overall Expenses: \$7.5 million
Profit/Loss (EBITDA): **-\$4.9 million**

2016:

Overall Revenue: \$20.4 million
PledgeMusic Revenue: \$3.2 million
Overall Expenses: \$8.4 million
Profit/Loss (EBITDA): **-\$5.2 million**

2017:

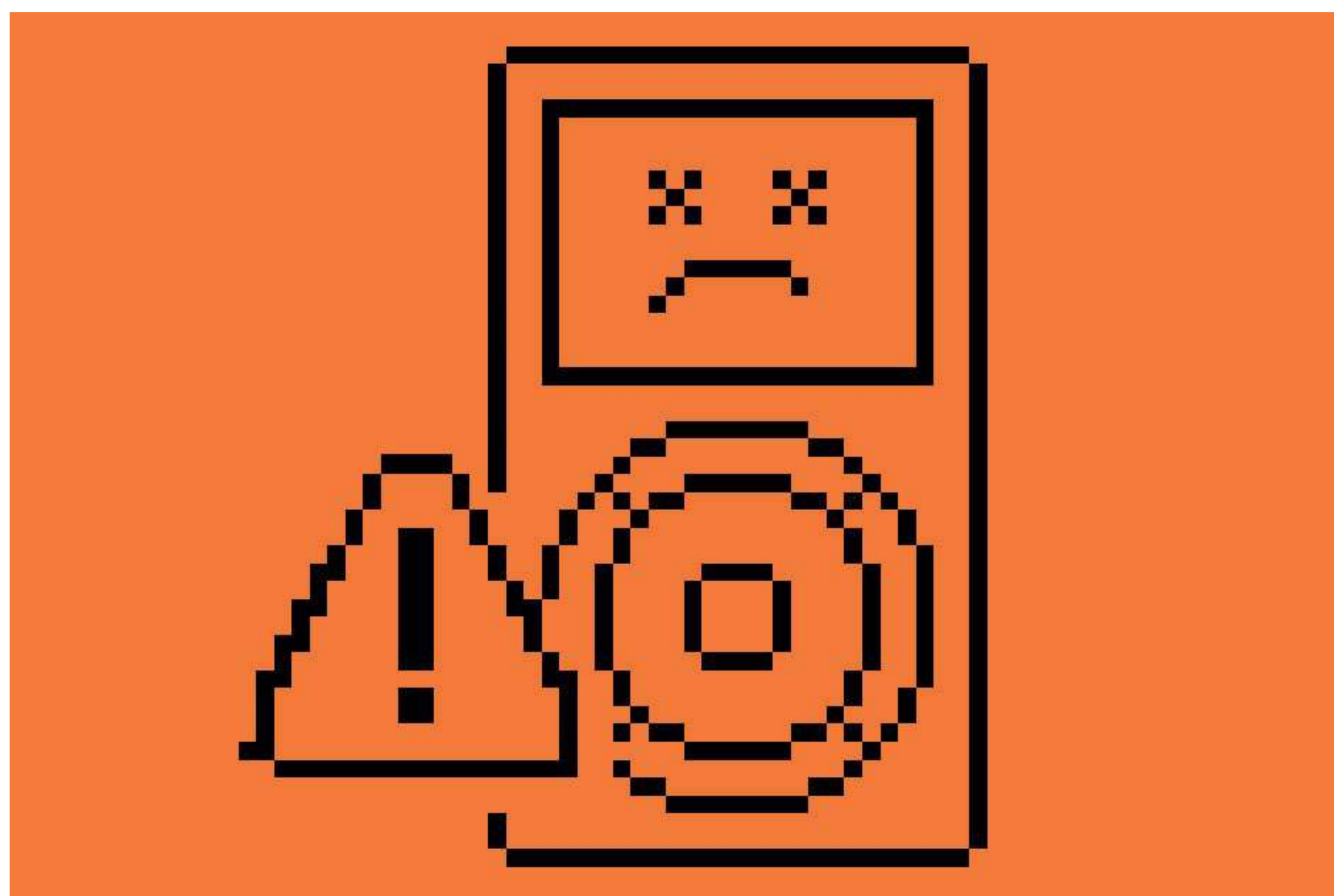
Overall Revenue: \$25.9 million
PledgeMusic Revenue: \$4.4 million
Overall Expenses: \$8.4 million
Profit/Loss (EBITDA): **-\$4 million**



/ 03.

THE DEATH CROSS OF THE MP3

SHOULD DJS AND DJ LABELS CARE ABOUT STREAMING? THEY BETTER.



In April, recording industry body IFPI released their annual **Global Music Report**. The document breaks down the various income streams that feed into the global recording industry, and is widely read and commented upon by the media as a sort of “barometer” of the health of the business from year to year.

Many of the IFPI's indicators pointed upward, including a 9.7% growth in the size of the market for recorded music. The number that was most widely circulated though was 46.9%. That's the share of global revenues earned from streaming music. Already the largest individual revenue source for recorded music, streaming will soon make up 50% of the market overall. That will make it larger than every other source combined.

You probably read this and thought, well yeah – streaming's big. You probably have a Spotify or AppleMusic subscription or maybe both, or maybe one came with your car or bundled with a movie streaming subscription.

But you're a DJ, you make music for DJs and you sell music to DJs. What does streaming have to do with you?

Dig further down and you'll see. As almost a footnote to all of the good news, the IFPI reported that downloads – MP3s, WAVs and other high resolution files, but we'll group them all under the name “MP3s” for convenience – were the only type of digital media to decline in sales. And they didn't just decline. They cratered. Collapsed. Revenue from MP3 downloads declined 21.2%. How bad is that? To put it in perspective, that's more than **twice** the rate of decline of revenue from physical media (mostly CDs), which fell a mere 10.1%

And while MP3 downloads are spoiling the growth of other forms of digital media (so much so they're placed in an entirely different category), there's one aspect of physical media that is bucking the negative trend: vinyl. Barely noted (but it was indeed noted) in the report, vinyl revenue actually

increased. In fact, it's increased in revenue for 13 years in a row. Vinyl sales were up 6% globally. Three weeks later, Nielsen Music reported that sales during the week of Record Store Day 2019 were the best since 1991. And it may have been better than that, because Nielsen's data **only goes back** to 1991.

THE DEATH CROSS.

Nobody in the industry questions that MP3 sales will continue to decline, and most believe that vinyl will continue to increase. Vinyl now makes up a small 3.6% of the total revenue from recorded music and is growing at a healthy rate. MP3 downloads make up 7.7% of revenues but are declining fast. And what's most interesting is these are buyers of a media, not a style. Music buyers don't buy vinyl after they selling their turntables. We're seeing the same all-or-nothing switch from MP3 downloads as well.

Year by year, we are coming closer to the inflection point which will mark the death cross of the digital download era. Imagine two lines on a chart that will intersect at some point in the future. That will be the point when vinyl sales surpass sales of MP3 downloads. This was unthinkable 5 years ago, but it's coming and it may come as soon as 2021.

WHY SHOULD DJS AND DANCE MUSIC LABELS CARE ABOUT SPOTIFY AND STREAMING? THE CURIOUS ANSWER IS: BECAUSE OF VINYL.

So why should DJs and dance music record labels care about Spotify and streaming? The curious answer is: because of vinyl. And because of MP3s. There's no question the industry has moved toward a near-future vision of streaming music coupled with “boutique” physical media releases. For you, for us, that means vinyl.

iTunes – which dwarfs all other MP3 sales sites – is already being pushed to the background by Apple in favor of AppleMusic. There are multiple reports speculating about when and if they'll pull the plug altogether. They may keep it online forever (they could certainly afford it), or brand it for certain regions where streaming hasn't picked up yet. But iTunes sales of MP3 downloads have been in steep decline for several years now and the tech industry hates red arrows even more than the music industry does.

The reality is that MP3s, once hailed as the “future,” were just a temporary solution to the problem of “selling” digital music to people. And a pretty clunky one.

DO DJS DREAM OF ELECTRIC STREAMS?

DJs will soon be the largest single market for MP3s in the West and the only “growth” market for MP3s in the world.

That DJ market is **much** larger than it was nearly two decades ago when iTunes launched and MP3s became mainstream. There is likely to be some money in servicing it for awhile, but it's almost undeniable that streaming is going to disrupt the tranquil world of DJ download sites like Beatport, Traxsource and the rest. Moreover, gear is getting streaming capability built into coming software releases, and Beatport and SoundCloud have thrown money at trying to maintain their market by developing streaming music solutions for DJ performance. All of it is coming this year.

Lots of DJs are skeptical about the idea of DJing from streaming music. I am too. But this transition isn't without precedent. Remember Beatport's launch was assisted by “DJ ambassadors” like John Acquaviva and Bad Boy Bill who sold others on the idea of DJing with MP3 files instead of big wax records. I think we also might have to ask if our skepticism is shared by a new generation for whom even CDJs are “old school” and may have never DJ'd at all without a controller. If RekordBox can cue a track up, what does it matter if that track is stored permanently on a thumb drive in your pocket or a server in the cloud?

Given reliable technology (that is where I think I'm most skeptical), I'm not sure that transitioning from MP3s to streaming isn't a **shorter** leap than it was to jump from DJing with vinyl to MP3s a generation ago.

TRACKS [BACK] ON BLACK WAX.

If you've read this far and the main thought in your mind is a burning desire to tell everyone on Facebook why you don't miss the days of carrying crates of vinyl to your gigs, then I've failed you and you've missed the point entirely. That point is this: Streaming and vinyl together present an extremely interesting vision of the future for DJ culture, which was one of the few sections of the broader music industry that didn't entirely abandon vinyl in the '00s (though, obviously, many individual labels and DJs did).

As the music industry moves its massive, unwieldy bulk behind this model of “streaming + vinyl,” that may require a seriously different approach to selling records. Practically every record of significance will be released via streaming for daily consumption and with vinyl product – a special edition if not a common one, and later if not immediately – as a companion. Even more than streaming, vinyl slashes through every industry canard about demographics and

STORY

TERRY MATTHEW



youth, because it's been adopted almost across the board in the last 13 years. More people buying vinyl – even if it's only records they already know – is an incredibly exciting development and maybe the most positive one for actual recording artists and labels to hit the industry in years.

MP3s will play practically no role in this, outside of special markets which will be gradually wound down. Most of the industry will not miss them. Neither will most fans. You can argue that fans have been given the choice of buying little files or simply scrolling up a song from the infinite jukebox on their phone or computer, and have clearly picked the infinite scroll. Who can blame them?

Several dance music labels are already at the forefront of this. Ghostly – always at the forefront of everything – couples most of their releases with immediate streaming and “deluxe” physical packages including vinyl or even cassette. One of their key artists (until recently at least), Tycho, reputedly makes half of his revenue from recorded music from streaming and has himself probably sold more units of vinyl than many diehard vinyl labels have combined. For a more underground example, Brawther – who had rarely if ever released his music via MP3 download shops in the past – released his last album on vinyl and Spotify. His logic as he told me then was that streams and snippets were going to appear on the internet anyway via YouTube, blogs or 30 seconds samples in online record shops, so he may as well put them in a place where he could control it and the music could be discovered.

And Brawther comes from that community that never abandoned vinyl culture. Despite EDM and neo-EDM producers who are bringing The Stupid into the underground, vinyl culture still feels like it's at the heart of the scene. I remember Mike Huckaby telling me his vinyl strategy with a chuckle. Like that's all he had: a chuckle. Who in the underground is selling 2,000 MP3s? He was selling 2,000 records. Could he sell 2,000 MP3s? He laughed.

THERE WILL BE NO MP3 REVIVAL.

At some point, every story about dance music and streaming that I've read (and written) has reached its climax about the issue of money. And the paucity of payouts from streaming is a valid issue. I can even see labels and artists that deliberately keep their music off of Spotify as a branding strategy. There is more significance, after all, to be the one big-time DJ who has refused to appear bouncing in his shorts on Boiler Room than the 3,475th DJ who goes along with it. Prince endorsed this logic too (though his heirs do not).

Vinyl labels may not even take note of how things have changed, and they might not change at all for them.

But it doesn't make much sense for labels that only release MP3s to keep releasing only MP3s as a kind of protest or reluctance to engage the rest of the world. The rise of this digital/physical model – streaming + vinyl – presents an intriguing potential solution to a problem that Beatport and the like exacerbated and did not solve. Nobody will feel nostalgia when the era of the MP3 ends. / / / / /



FREQ: THE 5 MAG GUIDE TO... PLAYING A WARM-UP DJ SET.

“More than any other DJ role, the warm-up is about putting aside your ego; playing for the good of the rest of the DJs, the audience and indeed the whole night.” Harold Heath on 5 Do's and Don'ts for being a good opening DJ.



THE 5 MAG GUIDE TO:

PLAYING A WARM-UP DJ SET

5 DOS & DON'TS OF BEING AN OPENING DJ BY HAROLD HEATH

THE ART OF THE WARM-UP DJ, with its particular suite of skills – restraint, empathy, a brilliant music collection coupled with peerless programming – has become more respected over the years. Although perhaps not as glamorous as headlining, the warm-up has come to be recognized as a key element in a successful club night.

The job of the warm-up DJ is deceptively simple: to prepare the audience for the headliner(s). What this means in practical terms for the DJ is they have to play a set that welcomes the arriving audience and gently entices them onto the dancefloor, without ever peaking. The key thing about warming up is that you're not meant to go all out and play your biggest anthems and killer tunes. Do that and you leave the other DJs

nowhere to progress, and the night will peak too early. Besides which, walking into a half-full venue at half ten in the evening to find the DJ hammering it out as though it were peak-time just feels weird. The warm-up DJ has to keep the rest of the evening in mind as they play their set, and what they do acts as a springboard for everyone else that follows. More than any other DJ role, the warm-up is about putting aside your ego; playing for the good of the rest of the DJs, the audience and indeed the whole night.

I WANNA GO BACK, WAY BACK...

A brief glance back at DJ history here might help us see the true potential and power of the warm-up.

Pioneering DJ and audiophile David Mancuso's infamous loft parties would stretch on over entire weekends. Given the space, and in that unique environment, Mancuso pioneered the idea of creating mood with certain records, records that weren't necessarily the biggest or the most popular, but that had a unique feeling to them, particularly in those magical first few hours of the evening. He carefully selected and juxtaposed music to build an atmosphere that was conducive to people just "letting go," one that gently matched and enriched the heightened senses of those who had drunk the acid-spiked punch.

Mancuso's particular gift to DJing was the concept of music as an immersive group experience which can alter the mood of an entire room; the idea that

”

MORE THAN ANY OTHER DJ ROLE, THE

WARM-UP IS ABOUT PUTTING ASIDE

YOUR EGO; PLAYING FOR THE GOOD OF

THE REST OF THE DJS, THE AUDIENCE

AND INDEED THE WHOLE NIGHT.

”

DJing isn't simply playing some music, but that the flow of songs throughout night is part of a greater whole, one that with attentive programming and juxtaposition can facilitate all sorts of group emotions on the dancefloor. With careful selection, the DJ can create tension, build atmosphere and facilitate release and abandon. This is the very essence of how to approach a warm-up gig.

Mancuso's approach is as relevant today as it was half a century ago. Essentially, as a warm-up DJ, you use your music knowledge and your no doubt excellent music collection cleverly, to build tension, to tease, tempt and entice your audience, whilst selflessly never fully letting go, so that whoever follows you is perfectly placed to take the roof off.

So bearing all this in mind, we've put together 5 Dos and Don'ts to consider which may ensure your warm-up sets are a success.

FIVE DOS AND DON'TS.

1. Don't play the headliners latest tune, even as a tribute. It's their tune, their moment. Don't steal it!

2. Do be a team player. The process of gently shifting musical gears over the opening hours of a night can be a magical thing, for both the DJ and the room. Get it right and you'll set up the rest of the evening. The warm-up is every bit as important as the sound system, or the lights, or the security, or the headliner. It's not one single element that make for a great night, it's a combination, a team effort and the warm-up DJ is the ultimate team player, denying themselves the "glory" of dropping a bunch of anthems and instead putting in the work to ensure the whole evening flows.

3. Don't play your warm up at full volume. Give the

next DJs some room to turn it up as the venue fills up. A half-empty club sounds entirely different from when it's full of people, and if the dance floor is a little thin at the beginning, the echoes of the music around the empty room can sound unpleasant. People tend to "soak up" the sound somewhat, so as the club fills, you and your fellow DJs can slowly ease the volume up. Conserve energy, both musically and in terms of volume.

4. Do some research. Find out, even at the most basic level, what kind of music the headliner is going to be playing, and keep that in mind as the "goal": the level to be approaching at the end of the warm-up.

5. Do show restraint. A good way to build atmosphere and tension is to reflect those emotions in your selections: pick atmospheric, moody tunes, slower-paced emotive pieces; builders and groovers rather than killers and monsters. A warm-up set is a chance to find and play tunes that you will be much less likely to be able to drop once you're world famous and headlining festivals at peak-time. Old forgotten b-sides, lost dub mixes, obscure re-edits and audio oddities – anything that possesses its own unique mood can help you steer the vibe of your audience. It's not about being obscure for the sake of it, but about using all the tools at your disposal to create an atmosphere that slowly loosens people up and bring them under your spell.

Ideally, when the headliner takes over, the dancefloor will be simmering nicely, just about to let go, and you can be satisfied you've done a good job. Warm-ups are an important part of any club night and are also a great way to learn the essential rapport that is the defining feature of the world's best DJs. Get digging in your collection, go and play your warm up and perhaps most importantly: You're a DJ, so don't forget to have fun. / / / / /



play

22

THE CULTURE: DJ ROCCA.

It's a cliché to say this in any other context, but DJ Rocca truly has a sound that can only be described as "adventurous" – an ear that can take in all manner and styles of music and a soul that can synthesize it into something special. We're thrilled to have him talk about DJing with us and premiere a new 5 Mag Mix.

30

THE CULTURE: BENJI CANDELARIO.

Benji Candelario is a veteran of the New York clubbing scene, an OG that has graced the decks of almost every major club imaginable, including residencies at Studio 54 and Ministry in London. Here we ask Benji about his art to approaching the turntables, and how much things have evolved since he began. He also gives us one hell of an exclusive mix to jam to.



play

THE  CULTURE
DJS ON THE CULTURE OF DJING

DJ ROCCA

Veteran DJ and producer **DJ Rocca** has been a force in electronic music since the late 1990s. His music has appeared on labels that together represent a kind of gold standard for modern dance music, including **Compost**, **Rekids**, **Future-boogie**, **!K7**, **Gomma**, **Hell Yeah**, **Slow Motion** and **Paper Recordings**. He's worked under a gaggle of production aliases and partnerships with serious characters including **Dimitri From Paris**, **Daniele Baldelli**, **Fabrizio Tavernelli** (as "**Ajello**"), **Marcello Giordani** (as "**Supersonic Lovers**") and legendary Italo vocalist **Fred Ventura**.

It's a cliché to say this in any other context, but DJ Rocca truly has a sound that can only be described as "adventurous" – an ear that can take in all manner and styles of music and a soul that can synthesize it into something special.

Rocca is working on two very important records: **Works**, a new 12" with Dimitri From Paris on the **Toy Tonics** label featuring their amazing track "**Ero Disco Theme**," and **ISOLE**, Rocca's new full-length LP out in June on **Nang**. We're thrilled to have him talk about DJing with us and premiere a new 5 Mag Mix.

You've had such an eclectic production career and even now your sound is hard to put in a box. What kind of music did you grow up listening to?

I'm more than glad that people can recognize my eclectic soul. I've been lucky enough to grow up listening to lots of different music. When I was child my family used to listen to classical music, so I studied flute at the Music Academy. In my teenage years I then discovered the clubs, or better, the alternative clubs where people like

and I spent nearly a decade during my twenties listening to, studying and playing be bop, hard bop, free jazz and fusion.

In the mid-'90s, with some friends we opened a club called Maffia in my town where I was the resident DJ. We invited lots of UK artists, so I was deep into the drum & bass and break beat culture until I started to produce in the early-'00s, thanks to some friends such as Pressure Drop and Zed Bias who encouraged me to try this new adventure. And that's it.

I've always been fascinated by Italy's electronic music scene because there's a variation and many people like yourself who have excelled at a wide range of sounds across the electronic music spectrum. So I guess I'm saying "Italians do it better" but I don't know why.

I'm glad to hear that because, on the contrary, we Italians are very little aware of it. We experience a kind of "inferiority complex." We overestimate everything coming from abroad, and we do not always understand our potential. Historically, in the whole music scene, from jazz to house, from rock to disco, we Italians wanted to

copy or at least take inspiration from American or English musicians. But every time we completely misinterpret it, just because our Italian spirit comes out, even if we don't realize it. Every time an Italian, in any artistic field, is aware of his own innate artistic potentiality, he manages to be known all over the world. It has always been so in the fashion world but in recent years, we

have begun to realize it even in the electronic dance scene, although not enough, yet. This is the reason why I still cannot fully accept the motto "Italians do it better."

But let's go back to your question. Why? In my opinion it is our **forma mentis**: for centuries the best world composers were Italian, and perhaps this has remained in our chromosomes. But the truth is that we Italians try to achieve great results with few means, and this is a point of strength which comes out in every form of art.

Italo has always, to me, remained a quintessentially Italian genre. Even back in the day, a large number of "Chicago House classics" were Italo tracks from Emergency and other labels, many people from around the world make it and play it but I feel like it's still so very ITALIAN disco. Do you think Italo has retained a quintessentially "Italian" character?

If you consider the way Italo Disco was born you fully understand my previous answer. In the '70s, progressive rock was very popular in our country, but the early-'80s music changed the market completely. So these great musicians needed to earn money with different music. They tried to make disco as they used to hear from US, but they did not have big orchestras, or horn sections, or lots of musicians available, so they tried to do stuff by themselves using the technology that was improving... a

HISTORICALLY, ITALIANS WANTED TO COPY OR AT LEAST TAKE INSPIRATION FROM AMERICAN OR ENGLISH MUSICIANS. BUT EVERY TIME WE COMPLETELY MISINTERPRET IT. OUR ITALIAN SPIRIT COMES OUT, EVEN IF WE DON'T REALIZE IT.

Baldelli and Mozart used to play... so I was shocked by black music: James Brown, Airtro Moreira, Herbie Hancock... Then the New Wave period arrived, and bands like Human League, Depeche Mode and Simple Minds blew my mind, until house music started to be imported in Italy.

Later on I decided I wanted to study jazz on alto sax,



DJ Rocca's ISOLE album is out June 28 2019 on Nang.

drum machine, some synths, and in few cases also guitar, bass, and a singer... That's it. The aptitude to produce music for discos in this way was the origin of house music that was born in Chicago some years later.

As I said before, Italo Disco continues to give the best results when a producer has few resources, but uses a lot of musicality and imaginative art to make up for the technical deficiencies.

music, and if your mix isn't perfect, who cares?

There are no secrets about mixing music with variable BPM, only many hours of practice on the decks or CDJs, and if you're not a champion in mixing, but a great music selector, the crowd loves you because you make them dance. In the last few years, '70s and '80s disco maybe is back again, thanks to the re-edit culture, just because a variable BPM now is warped in a stable BPM, and the majority of the DJs are no longer afraid.

I'M A BIG SUPPORTER OF THE IMPERFECT MIX. TECHNOLOGY HAS LED MANY DJs TO FOCUS MORE ON THE PERFECT MIX, RATHER THAN ON THE BEST SELECTION, AND ON THE SERVICE YOU'RE DOING TO THE CROWD. PEOPLE WANT TO DANCE AND ENJOY GREAT MUSIC, AND IF YOUR MIX ISN'T PERFECT, WHO CARES?

A lot of DJs are afraid of funk and disco records when they begin because the variable BPM (from having a real drummer vs. a drum machine keeping perfect time) throws their timing off. Is there a secret to mixing '70s and early '80s disco records without trainwrecking? Do you just have to be "zen" about it and live dangerously?

I'm a big supporter of the imperfect mix. Technology has led many DJs to focus more on the perfect mix, rather than on the best selection, and on the service you're doing to the crowd. People want to dance and enjoy great

How long were you playing before your first record came out? How does DJing influence your music? And do you make music with DJing & the needs of a DJ in mind?

It's a balance, and to be honest, not all my tracks have respected the DJ's needs, but more the musical needs. I'm a musician and a DJ, and sometimes the two personalities come into conflict, just because the DJ wants more simplicity in the track, and the musician wants more music into it.

I first studied music and then started to DJing, and this helped me a lot to be able to make a journey in my set as if it were a jazz solo, and not to make dance music as a producer.

The first productions in my career were really full of music, so when I used to play them as a DJ, I was really disheartened by the negative reaction of the audience. I spent many years, and attempted many times to understand the art of "less is more" by listening to great dance producers, and learning from them.

You've had a collaboration ongoing with Dimitri from Paris for all of this last decade. How did it start and what's your latest?

Dimitri wrote me a comment, back in 2010, on a track on my Soundcloud page: "I'm your fan." I couldn't believe that he could be a fan of my music, so I took courage and made a higher offer, asking him to do a remix for one of his tracks. He said yes so I asked him if he wanted to make music together, and the first Erodisco single was born. We have big respect for one another, and this helps a lot to achieve big results that up today consist of an album, six EPs, and many remixes.

Please tell me about the making of the "Ero Disco Theme" that dropped on Toy Tonics in April. If there has ever been a record that needed DJs to buy it in dubs (as we say – double copies, as in two copies each), that is it.

In fact I have two copies myself and every time I'm DJing,



I drop the track and it is always a banger!

"Ero Disco Theme" was born in a very spontaneous way: I used a Trillian VST to play the bassline, and a few guitar samples on a disco drum. I sent the stems to Dimitri, and he edited everything in his way, adding his vocal through a vocoder, some percussions and few Simmons effects. He gave me the track back again, I added a Jupiter 6 solo and Dimitri did the final mix.

Can you tell us about ISOLE? It's another wildly divergent record that skates across a bunch of genres but doesn't really "belong" to any of them.

ISOLE is an Italian word, that is translated ISLANDS in English. I love the meaning of the Italian word "isolamento" (isolation) that comes from the word "isola." **Isolamento** means exclusion from relationships or contacts with the surrounding environment, mostly motivated by reasons of security or incompatibility.

Well, there are many islands on this globe, and I visited some of them, and I'd love to visit some others, just because the life you may live on that "world apart" is every time different, but with the same feeling... be unique, happy to be one, and with a sense of exclusive community that makes you happy with your diversity.

When I composed the tracks of my album I was thinking about the capitals of the islands where I had been and to some other islands where I want to go. To be honest I have tried to keep that feeling, instead of following a specific musical influence, and maybe such an approach has led me to the expression of a grammar – which is that of rhythm and journey – rather than to a specific genre.

Do you make DJ mixes with a different mentality than you would if you were playing live? Would you make a mix differently than a set at a festival or club?

Yes, definitely. I do not only mix different at a festival, or at a club, but also according to the duration of my set, or to the way the DJ before me has played, or according to what I'm feeling at that moment, or the food I have eaten and the air I have breathed.... The DJ set is a personal and artistic expression that fortunately can never be the same as the previous one. It is an artistic act of the moment, unique and unrepeatable.

How do you find new music? How do you find old music? What's the oldest record in your set right now?

I discover new music in different forms. There are some labels that

I follow, or some DJs friends that help me find good stuff in the "ocean" of the new releases. I normally receive lots of promos too, and sometimes I find some really great stuff.

As for old music, I'm a big collector and a sick digger! Here in Italy there are some great second hand records shops: one – Awesome – is in my town! I also buy at flea markets or in second hand record shops in the cities where I'm playing, or more simply, on Discogs. The oldest record I'm playing now is a 1975 track by Patrice Rushen, called "What's The Story" – a funk jazz tune with a big energy and rhythm.

Do you think the best days of DJing are ahead or behind us? Do you think the culture will survive technology & popularization, and has the latter made DJing better or worse?

The best days of DJing are when there are good DJs. In the past there were crap DJs and heroes, as now, and I think it's going to be the same in the future. There's no technology or popularization that are going to turn a bad DJ in a good DJ, only experience, love for the music and tons of talent can do that.

Most recently the DJ has become a sort of superstar, and this has led to give more importance to imposed hype, and less to the true and unconditional judgments. But when we talk about music and positive feelings, the good DJ and skilled selector, always emerge: maybe he won't become a star, but he will always enjoy respect from the people. / / / /



DJRocca

 DJROCCA.COM

 [@ DJ-ROCCA](https://www.instagram.com/DJ-ROCCA)

 [@ DJROCCA_MUSIC](https://twitter.com/DJROCCA_MUSIC)

 [@ DEEJAYROCCA](https://www.facebook.com/DEEJAYROCCA)

Benji Candelario

I've always had an intense veneration for the original DJs and producers stemming from New York. Not only because of the breadth of their musical knowledge, but also by the fact that they refuse to trend-spot, staying true to their signature sounds.

Benji Candelario is a veteran of the New York clubbing scene, an OG that has graced the decks of almost every major club imaginable, including residencies at Studio 54 and Ministry in London. He's had numerous productions since the mid-'90s, releasing on iconic labels such as Nervous, King Street and Dope Wax and within the next few months he'll be putting out more music on Nervous Records.

Here we ask Benji about his art to approaching the turntables, and how much things have evolved since he began. He also gives us one hell of an exclusive mix to jam to.

interview: czarina**mirani**

I TRY TO SEARCH FOR TUNES THAT WILL HAVE LONGEVITY IN MY SETS, TUNES THAT WILL INSPIRE OTHER DJS TO WANT OR NEED... I FEEL THAT AS DJS, **OUR GOAL IS TO EXPAND OTHERS' MINDS MUSICALLY.**

Your bio is quite astounding with all the big artists you have worked with so early on. How did this type of exposure inform your music working with more underground elements?

My true passion has always been the grit-ty – the bass-pounding, sweat-pouring, drum-banging type of tune. But my inspiration has come from all sorts of genres and cultures. So having worked with so many different artists has given me the perspective and experience to understand what a good production consists of. When I approach a project I always tend to overproduce it, so that I can then scale it down to what I'm really looking for. I have parts that most underground productions won't have.

Does a good DJ mixtape differ from a good DJ set at a club or festival?

Yes I strongly believe that there's a different approach when doing mix shows or mixtapes than when playing a live set. When you're playing live, you're thriving off your dancefloor, experiencing the connection with it and knowing when and where to take it. When creating a mix show you need to keep your listeners' attention by consistently keeping your show moving...Your programming and selections need to be seamless to the point where your listeners are captured and on a journey. Unlike on a live set, you can tell how long you can play a tune before you start losing your floor. With mix shows you need to anticipate what your listeners are feeling and make sure that your next selections will take them even higher.

Let's talk about the format and the tools you use. What sort of turntables or gear are you most comfortable with? If you have a rider, what's on it? And if you don't, what would your rider say as far as mixer, etc.?

So when I started playing I played vinyl and at that time my rider was 3 Technics 1200 mk2s and my mixer of choice has always been the Urei 1620. I have always felt I have more control with rotary mixers than sliders. The setup was the 3 Technics 1200s side by side with the mixer in the middle in front of them. Today my rider is 3 Pioneer CDJ2000 Nexus2s and though I would still prefer the Urei 1620 I have conformed to the Pioneer mixer DJM-900 Nexus2. And always a huge must: left and right booth monitors with their own separate volume control.

How do you find new music? Are you constantly digging through your old records? What's the method to your song selection?

I'm constantly looking for tunes everywhere possible. I visit weekly sites like Traxsource and Beatport. I go on other DJs' charts and listen to weekly radio shows. It's a process but exciting at the same time.

I'm really selective on what I buy or play though. I'm always driven to drums and bassline grooves, especially if they have a good song in them. But I'm also very experimental and will look for tunes that may have some uniqueness that makes them stand out from what's being played at the moment.



I may also find a tune which I only like one section of it. I will either play it from that point only or I will do my own edit to it. I try to search for tunes that will have longevity in my sets, tunes that will inspire other DJs to want or need....

I feel that we as DJs – our goal is to expand others minds musically.

I'm curious to know the connections between making music and playing music for you.

The funny thing is that making music was never in my foresight. It was just something that happened as so many others DJs were transitioning to it at the time. My goal was to be a mix show DJ, getting my own show on a Friday night at one of the popular New York stations that played underground music.

But I think that once my DJing started being recognized I started participating right away in the studio. At first it was editing records, and then slowly making the transition to producing with the help of my longtime friend Aldo Marin.

I think DJing has always been a big influence on the tunes I have produced. Though I'm notorious for never playing any of my own productions, I believe that the backbone to my productions have been the experiences I've gotten from DJing.

Do you think the best days of DJing are ahead or behind us? Do you think the culture will survive technology & popularization, and has the latter made DJing better or worse?

Whoa that seems like a loaded question! I believe that like everything that becomes popular DJing will eventually have its downfall. But in saying that I feel it will then return back to its true art form.

Now as for the better days being behind us or ahead...My answer will always be biased. In my eyes DJing was about sharing your musical experience with others and making them dance. But I can't overlook the fact that today and with the technology available the art form that I once knew has soared to levels no one would have imagined it to be.

Some say technology has hurt DJing. But I don't feel that's true. What has hurt it are people embracing the technology and not understanding the culture behind it. DJing is about expression and sharing, but most of all it's uniting people in dance. So once the popularization of it falls and the smoke settles, DJing will return back to the true believers. /////

BenjiCandelario

 BENJICANDELARIO

 BENJICANDELARIO

 BENJICANDELARIO

 BENJICANDELARIOMUSIC

HOT MIXING WITH HOT TODDY

INTERVIEW BY
HAROLD HEATH

PHOTO BY
RIC KELLY

UK PRODUCER, DJ, GUITARIST, SONGWRITER AND ARRANGER CHRIS TODD IS ONE HALF OF UK HOUSE STALWARTS **CRAZY P**, PRODUCERS OF CLASSIC DISCO-HOUSE CUTS WITH A WELL DESERVED REPUTATION AS ONE OF THE TIGHTEST DANCE MUSIC LIVE ACTS AROUND. ASIDE FROM THE ILLUSTRIOUS CRAZY P BACK CATALOGUE, CHRIS ALSO HAS A PARALLEL CAREER WITH HIS HOT TODDY GUISE AND HAS RELEASED TWO ACCLAIMED SOLO ALBUMS - 2000'S **SUPER MAGIC** AND **LATE NIGHT BOOGIE** IN 2010. HOT TODDY HAS ALSO PUT OUT A BUNCH OF WELL RECEIVED EPS, AND REMIXED ARTISTS LIKE **JOEY NEGRO**, **SOUL CLAP**, **LLORCA**, **FRED EVERYTHING** AND **KRAAK & SMAAK**.

AN IN-DEMAND REMIXER, CHRIS EXPERTLY COMBINES LIVE INSTRUMENTATION WITH STUDIO BASED TRICKERY TO PRODUCE GLITTERBALL-HOUSE EPICS AND SLO-MO COSMIC DISCO CHUGGERS ALIKE. IN ADDITION TO WHAT IS AN IMPRESSIVE DISCOGRAPHY, HE'S ALSO AN ACCOMPLISHED AND WELL TRAVELLED DJ, SO 5 MAGAZINE DECIDED TO QUIZ CHRIS ABOUT HIS APPROACH TO THE ART OF DJING.



Why do you DJ?

I see myself as more of a producer and musician than a DJ to be honest. DJing came off the back of these aspects of my work. But it's a way to connect directly, musically to people, trying out my new productions, trying out what new music I'm feeling. It's a great buzz to play somewhere where you really connect with the crowd and get in the zone, when everything just seems to flow. It's a feeling thats hard to top.

What genre do you say you play and what's your DJing style?

I play fairly eclectically, but play a lot of disco, and disco-influenced music. But also drop in some house and more acid and techno vibes. Really depends on the venue, if it's appropriate I love to play more laid back soulful stuff, and move the tempos around a bit.

Have you been through all the formats? Do you still buy vinyl?

I'm not too precious about formats. I buy less vinyl now but still keep my hand in. Still buy a bit of second hand stuff, thats where it all started for me, buying old disco and soul to sample to make music with years ago. I don't harbor any snobbery when it comes to which format to play, to each their own... I play off USBs, I can carry 1000s of tunes around in my pocket... It wins!

Do you have an idea of what you might play before you go on?

I have a rough Idea, I base it on where I'm playing and what time I'm on. Then fill up a playlist of about

50 tunes, and see what happens. I always have loads of other stuff with me so if what I've prepared ain't doing it then I can change tack pretty easily.

Do you play loads of your own productions when you DJ?

Not really. I play a bit, but I won't keep playing the same old stuff just 'cos it's mine. I like to keep it fresh when at all possible, for my benefit as well as for everybody else! Sometimes I'll get a request for something, which is always nice and that might sway me, flattery will get you everywhere!

What do you think about when you DJ?

Did I leave the stove on at home? Does my bum look big in this? Are we living in a computer simulation? Is music created or discovered? Why's everyone filming me, wouldn't they rather dance??!

Ha! OK, assuming you've got your audience off their phones and dancing, which artists /labels /producers have been doing it for you lately?

Africa 7, Toy Tonics, Delusions Of Grandeur, Soulphiction, Man Called Adam (new Farmarama album is the absolute tits!), Ilija Rudman, Medlar, Modified Man.

In the unlikely event that you mess up a mix when DJing, do you:

- o power through it/style it out
- o turn it off and start again
- o frown/angrily gesticulate at the sound engineer
- o other, please specify:

I have a recurring dream where I'm looking for the

next tune to play, I'm playing with CDs, and I'm flicking through them frantically trying to find a suitable tune to follow the one playing. It runs out, and I continue searching, nothing seems to do the job. The audience are left standing there and I'm flicking through CDs, they start heckling and throwing things, and rather than sticking any old tune on I'm still searching for something... It's weird! It's never happened thankfully! As far messing up a mix – in the extremely unlikely event that happens! – I mix out extremely quickly and I suppose style it out!

Any thoughts on rewinds? Do you ever pull a cheeky wheel up when DJing?

You mean playing a tune again or a spin back, “pulling a cheeky wheel up”?!? I'm so not down! A cheeky, well placed spin back can be really good, but I've never done it!

Track IDs have been a subject that suddenly everyone seems to have an opinion on lately, any thoughts on the subject?

I don't have a problem with people asking for what a track is, I guess if someone was IDing every track

I played it would get a little annoying... I imagine what you're getting at is that technology is democratizing this information and this is diluting DJ culture. Stuff that's available digitally is all up for grabs and if it means that the artists get more money then that's all good. Obscure stuff won't show up on Shazam so the extreme digger will be safe. At the end of the day, a good DJ will always be able to rise above the crowd with good programming, it all comes down to taste and a good ear.

What clubs do you really love to play at and why?

I always like to play in smaller venues, 100-200 capacity. Preferably with the DJ booth on or more or less the same level as the crowd. Not too keen being above everyone, feels a bit weird. So I love clubs like Bonobo, Oath and Zero in Aoyama, Tokyo. Tokyo does this thing really well and these clubs have excellent sound systems, the

attention to detail in Japan is second to none.

And what's your favorite ever DJ booth?

The one at Potato Head in Hong Kong was pretty special. I played there a few years ago, it's described as an “Audiophile Music Room,” which it was! Beautiful wood paneling, very loungy atmosphere, amazing sound system with rotary mixer, I can't remember the spec, but it was a gorgeous place to play some music.

Is there anything else you'd like to tell us?

I'll be getting back on some original material after the Crazy P tour, lots of half finished projects that need revisiting as well! And I have a Hot Toddy remix out on Boogie Angst, for a band called Patawawa, they are a three piece band from Matlock (my neck of the woods), young, talented and full of spunk!

PATAWAWA'S WIRES (HOT TODDY REMIXES) IS OUT NOW FROM BOOGIE ANGST.



For Me

The Beautiful World of Dawn Tullman

story: terry matthew
photo & make-up: julian lazaro



a

fter more than 20 years in the industry and more hit records than most individual DJs or producers will ever see, Dawn Tallman has finally made an album.

“It’s my first!” she says with a laugh. “I feel so ashamed but it’s true!”

Josh Milan had gotten in touch a few days earlier. He warned me: Hey, this is a record that you don’t want to miss. And he was right. Dawn Tallman’s **For Me** – and for the record, it is indeed her debut album, after her dance music debut nearly a quarter century ago – has made it to the top of a bunch of lists as one of the best soul albums of the year. On the first listen it was also on mine.

“About five years we started talking about making an album,” Dawn says. “And I really wanted to express myself as an artist. Everybody knows me as the gospel house singer – big vocals, you know. I wanted people to know there was more to Dawn Tallman than being the screaming diva!

“I do so much more than house music. I do jazz, funk and gospel, of course. That’s where I started. I wanted people to hear these different sides of me.”

Dawn is on a train as we’re speaking – all the way to Grand Central, as I keep hearing in the background. It’s a pretty obvious reference point that I’m trying, unsuccessfully, to avoid. Two decades into it and Dawn Tallman’s voice is still a powerhouse – but also able to seduce the listener and lure them in with the asides and adlibs that have always given her records so much character. It’s not just a performance, though. What you hear on record is Dawn Tallman’s true character shining through.

• • •

If you’re not a Dawn Tallman fan already – and I have difficulty accepting that – you will be after you sit down with her. A session of talking about **music** with Dawn Tallman quickly becomes a session of talking about **life** with Dawn Tallman. About life experiences, sadness, adversity and how that’s transformed into music that has – it’s not wrong to say this – transformed her. A prolific songwriter, Dawn Tall-

feelings down and they turned into songs. I wasn’t trying to sing them, but they became songs.”

She remembers lacking confidence when she began working in the industry. “I was **that** singer, you know what I mean? I thought, ‘I’m just going to sing and they can write everything...’

“And then I got smart!” she says with a laugh. “Wait a minute now! I need to make some money!

THE ACCEPTANCE IN DANCE MUSIC IS AWESOME TO ME. THEY REALLY EMBRACED WHO I AM AS A PERSON AND AS AN ARTIST. ‘WE JUST LOVE YOUR VOICE, HONEY GIRL – GO AHEAD!’

man’s songs are not just fiery tracks for the dance-floor. I mean they **are** that, but they’re so much more. They’re songs of survival.

“I’m not new to writing,” she says. “I wrote my first song when I was nine years old. I was that child that loved to write down my feelings. I didn’t know there was a name for it like ‘journaling’ but I was writing my

“I don’t think I was influenced by anyone but I had my peers nudging me and saying, ‘Dawn, don’t be scared, just go out and express yourself.’ I was worried my songs might be bad or corny but then I said to myself: Look, this is your truth, and you have to love it first. When I gained that confidence, I just looked to the influences of real life situations,

For Me

The Beautiful World
of Dawn Tallman



whether it was my own – things that I knew – or something I saw. Or in Gospel House, talking about God and faith – you can write a whole book about that.”

“Gospel Energy” is what her label calls it, and Dawn Tallman is the queen. She was so dubbed by

Even aside from several hundred dance music recordings, Dawn’s resumé would still be particularly impressive, from her work on albums for Chante Moore, Maysa, Phil Perry, Gerald Albright and Chris Davis. But it was dance music that captured her heart.

Glenn Thornton of Slaag Records for her profound ability to breathe life into any song or lyric with power and passion.

“Gospel energy is just there wherever I am, wherever I sing, whatever platform I’m on,” she says. “I’m always going to give you the foundation of gospel. If I’m singing rock, you know the gospel is going to fly out at some point! Country, a ballad – it’s there. It’s bringing gospel to whatever I’m doing. It’s my energy. Now I didn’t want to box myself into saying ‘I’m just a gospel house artist’ because I am more than that. But I bring energy everywhere I go and my foundation is gospel, so that’s what it means.”

“I’ve been doing house music for 24 years,” she says, “but I began signing R&B and everything when I was 15, 16 years old. And of course, back then, it was really about image. The voice was cool, but image was always first.

“I got a lot of Nos. ‘She can sing but her image?’ It scarred me a little bit. I knew this is what I wanted to do but I didn’t know if I would ever get to where I am now.

“And that’s what I love about house music and dance music. They really embraced who I am as a person, as an artist. ‘We just love your voice, honey girl, go ahead!’ The acceptance in dance music is awesome to me. People love you for who you are. They don’t care if you’re a billion pounds – ‘Honey just give her the mic!’ It’s about what you’re saying, the feeling, the message.

“I love being me, if you don’t like me, look the other way! I’m gonna be me and I’m gonna love me while doing it.”

• • •

Dawn began work on FOR ME after prodding by Josh Milan, who has turned his post-Blaze imprint Honeycomb Music into a pioneering artist-first enterprise worthy of emulation in the world of soulful house.

They’ve known each other for 16 or 17 years, since first meeting as part of the Underground Dance Artists United For Life project released on King Street as a 12” record called “Keep Hope Alive.”

“It was like ‘We Are the World’ but with house artists,” Dawn says. “We connected then personally but not musically. I didn’t know much about Josh then, but later on I learned and became a freakin’ fan! What! You didn’t tell me you were all of this!

Dawn Tallman’s **FOR ME**
album is out now from
Honeycomb Music.

“But he was a fan of mine, too! We connected musically and he really became my musical mentor and really one of my best friends. He really is. We’ve been working together, solid, probably for a good 10 years.”

Josh played a crucial role on the title track of **For Me**. “While we were doing this album, I was really in a dark space. I was going through a divorce. It was not a good time emotionally. ‘For Me’ came from a place of being really down and depressed. And Josh Milan was the voice when I couldn’t speak. He wrote this song and the song talked about making



the choice. And choosing happiness.

“My voice is shaking when I talk about it, because it really was a life changer. ‘You mean, I don’t have to stay depressed?’ I mean I know this is easier said than done, but I realized that I don’t have to stay angry. I can push through it and be happy.

what it’s about for me. Sure I love to be a singer and travel and all of that, but when someone says they were blessed by what I said, that’s it for me. I can sit down! I’d rather hear that than, ‘Oh girl, you tore that song up!’ Thanks for the compliment but were you blessed by what I said? Did it change your life?

I WAS BULLIED AS A YOUNG CHILD BUT I HAD THIS GIFT. PEOPLE SAY THAT MUSIC SAVED THEIR LIFE, BUT MUSIC REALLY DID SAVE MINE.

“This song has really touched so many lives. People have called me and said they went through chemo listening to this song every day. They went through a divorce or something in their life, and this song is their anthem and they play it every day.”

I can’t even imagine how that would feel. I think I said that out loud.

“It really blesses me,” she says. “We all want things in our life. We have dreams to be singers and the center of ‘Lights! Camera! Action!’ But this is

I love that!”

When she’s telling me this story, I think I get for the first time what “the Queen of Gospel Energy” means. There’s just a trace of gospel house in the song “For Me,” or on the album **For Me**, for that matter. But you can sense this music having the same effect, playing the same role that spiritual music traditionally has on a crowd and on the individual person.

“I’m not that girl that sings let’s go shake your butt and cursing and all,” Dawn says. “My thing has

always been inspirational. My ministry is not in the four walls of the church. I want to reach the masses. I want people to be inspired, be empowered, be lifted up. If we’re talking about Jesus, Jesus walked among the people. He didn’t stay inside of a building or a church. He went where other people didn’t dare to go. I want to do the same thing. I feel like people are being touched and this is where real ministry begins, out here with the people.

“When I was younger, it was different. You had your parents and your grandparents and the ‘churchfolk’ as we call them. They would be like ‘You can’t have one foot in the world and one in the church!’ They didn’t believe in singing **out here** and then going **in there**.

“You want to know a funny story, though? I did a show at the Limelight in the early 1990s. And I was so scared!” she laughs, “and I did **not** want to be singing there! Around that time I was still a little conflicted about it. I wasn’t singing anything crazy but I looked behind me and they still had the big stained glass image of Jesus on it and I’m like ‘Oh, God! Please don’t strike me!’”

• • •

More than strength, I tell her, the songs on **For Me** have a consistent message of confidence – with Dawn Tallman as a gentle but insistent life coach urging you on and telling you not to be afraid and, above all, to love yourself.

“That’s exactly it,” she says. “You got it! That’s about to make me cry! But happy tears! You got it. That’s exactly what I wanted people to learn. But it had to touch me first. Me, Dawn Tallman. As a young girl growing up I was bullied and called all kinds of names. But I had this gift, you know?

“I told someone this story: Someone said to me one time, ‘You’re ugly but you can sing.’ I was bullied as a young child but I had this gift. People say that music saved their life, but music really did save my life. When I was by myself because I was being bullied and things like that, God had given me this gift, and I was in this world by myself with just me and music.

“This album talks about that. It talks about having low self-esteem from being abused to saying, ‘I’m beautiful.’ That’s the message of ‘True Colors’ and ‘Speak Life,’ which means to speak positive. Someone can speak negative but you can ‘speak life’ over yourself. I wanted people to know they’re not alone. I’ve been through it, too.

“It’s like being a caterpillar and going into a cocoon state and bursting out as a butterfly. For me it was about going into this cocoon state and figuring out who I was as a woman, as a person, even as an artist. And then I could break out of that cocoon. And now I’m telling everyone that they can love themselves. You can go from being hurt. You can choose to be happy and you can be beautiful.” / / / /



tracks

50

5 MAG SELECT: DETROIT'S FILTHIEST AND MOTOR CITY ELECTRO COMPANY.

Motor City Electro Company came roaring back to life in 2015 after a rare record from its founder, Detroit's Filthiest was sampled for the foundation of Disclosure's hit record "Bang That." Since then, MCEC has been killing it, with records skipping across genres in reflection of its founder's short attention span. We asked Detroit's Filthiest to tell us the story behind six of the label's notable tracks with an emphasis on the latest tunes in honor of the label's 20th anniversary.

56

MUSIC REVIEWS 172.

New music compiled, critiqued and celebrated by 5 Mag staff.

S | E | L | E | C | T

SIX RECORDS WITH —
**DETROIT'S
FILTHIEST**

Motor City Electro Company came roaring back to life in 2015 after a rare record from its founder, **Detroit's Filthiest** (back in the day, known as **DJ Nasty**) was sampled for the foundation of Disclosure's hit record "Bang That."

Since then, MCEC has been killing it, with records skipping across genres in reflection of its founder's short attention span. "The first new record that I put out in 10 years was a techno song," Detroit's Filthiest told **5 Mag's Tristan Dominguez** in 2018. "After that, I did another techno song/ghetto song, and then I did a drum and bass song. I have so many different influences, and I get bored easily. I cannot make just techno music, or house music. To me, I need something more challenging. I might do a drum and bass song, and then a house song, and then a hip-hop song. I shift back and forth."

By the calendar, Motor City Electro Company is celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2019. We asked Detroit's Filthiest to tell us the story behind six of the label's notable tracks with an emphasis on the latest tunes.





PASS OUT

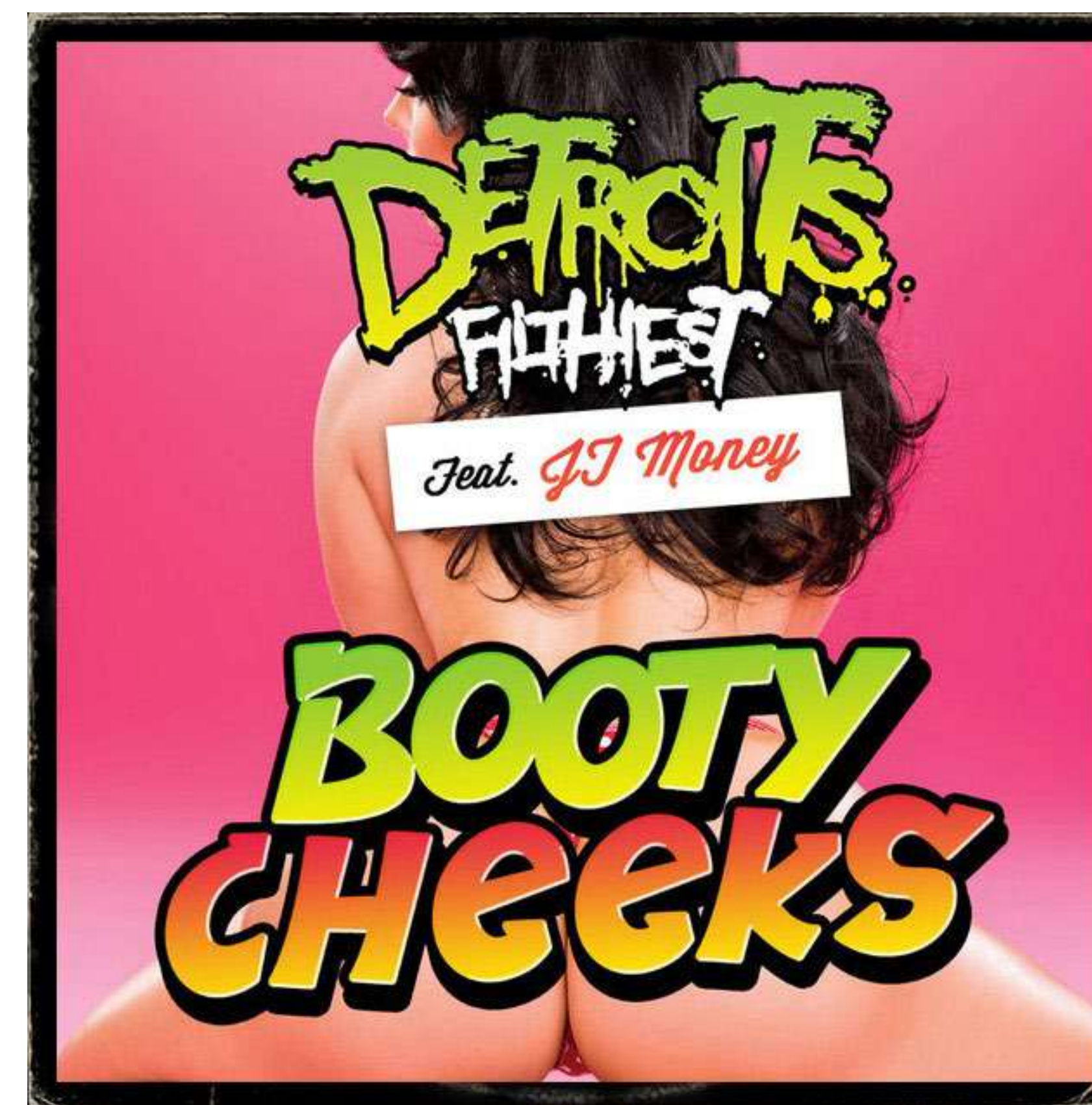
BREAKIN' RECORDS

"Pass Out" originally came out in 2002 on Breakin' Records. It's the track that Disclosure sampled for their hit, "Bang That." That call from Disclosure's team got me energized to restart MCEC and be more active releasing material. I never stopped producing but the taste in music had changed a lot. This was my motivation to produce new music.



HUSTLER'S ANTHEM

For this one I wanted to pay homage to the '70s funk and soul sounds. To me, "Hustler's Anthem" sounds like a track where I hopped in a time machine and worked with the bands from that era. That nasty bassline, orchestral strings, old school pianos and vocals are reminiscent of Curtis Mayfield's classic album "Superfly."



BOOTY CHEEKS/UP AND DOWN

FEATURING JT MONEY

This was a passion project for me, to work with one of Miami Bass's biggest and best selling artists: JT Money from the legendary group Poison Clan. JT Money is a Billboard award winner and has gone multi-platinum with his solo work and with Poison Clan. He is a hip hop legend and a down south pioneer.

I met JT Money through SixFoe. It was surreal the first time we met. He was in Detroit for a show and was sitting in the kitchen at SixFoe's house. This was an artist whose music I grew up listening to. SixFoe had told him all about me and played him some of my music. He knew about ghetto tech and the influence Detroit and Miami had on each other.



I literally had 5 minutes to get him in the studio and record him. We met up at Body Mechanic's house and recorded three songs: "Booty Cheeks," "Up and Down" and "Shake Whatcha Mama Gave Ya." 'Till this day I am in disbelief that I recorded some music with JT Money who made one of the biggest Miami Bass Anthems, "Shake Whatcha Mama Gave Ya."



CELEBRATION

FEATURING MEGAN SHACKELL

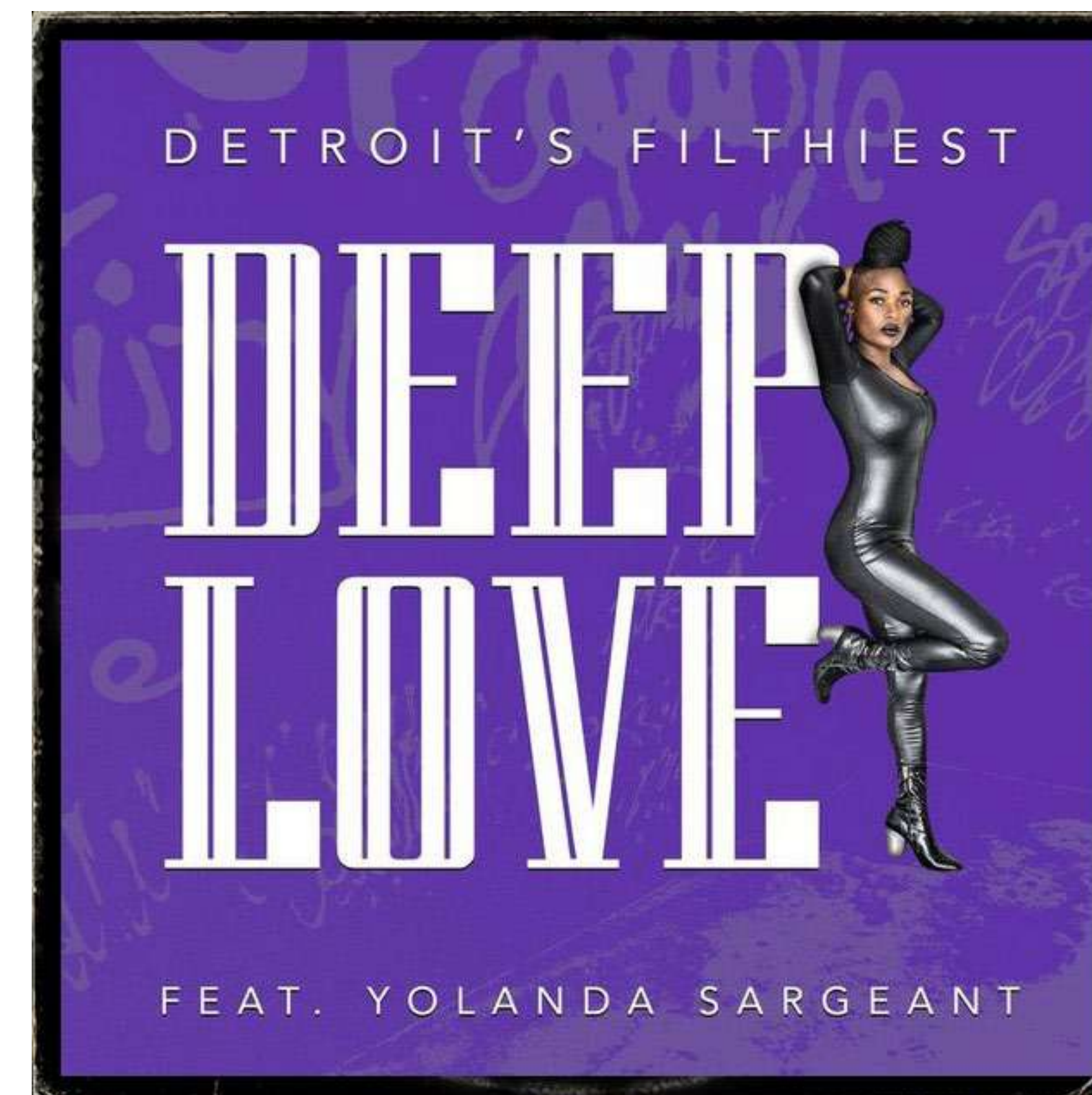
This is a track I wrote and produced and I was thrilled to be working with Megan Shackell. She's a classically-trained opera singer from New Zealand who's performed in NZ Opera. My good friend Tim Checkley who has done all my artwork since 2001 introduced me to Megan. Being from New Zealand she used to work with Tim at Serato and she later moved to Berlin to work for Native Instruments but still kept in contact with Tim. I told Tim that I was looking for someone to sing on a couple of songs. She wasn't a dance music artist but was more pop and rock. I was really excited to work with her and at that time it was the first time I was working with an actual singer. I literally wrote "Celebration" and "Sorry Not Sorry" within a few days. The heartbreaking thing about "Sorry Not Sorry" is I wrote the song in June 2017 before I ever heard of Demi Lovato's version. It felt like a gut punch when I heard her version. But I still believe that our version is better!



SHAKE YOUR BOOTY

FEATURING WILL SIMPSON

My old friend Will Simpson aka DJ Omega recorded the vocals for "Shake Your Booty" which combines funky guitars, mini moogs, arps, and vocals that sound like a bastard child of George Clinton and Bootsy Collins. For those that don't know, DJ Omega has been deep in Detroit's music scene since the age of 16 when he was at Record Time with Big Daddy Rick and got his first DJ residency at the storied east side music theatre, Harpo's, at only 17. He's had releases out on DJ Godfather's Databass Records. We had a lot of fun recording this track. I was laughing so hard that he kept having to record the vocals over and over again. We got there in the end!



DEEP LOVE

FEATURING YOLANDA SARGEANT

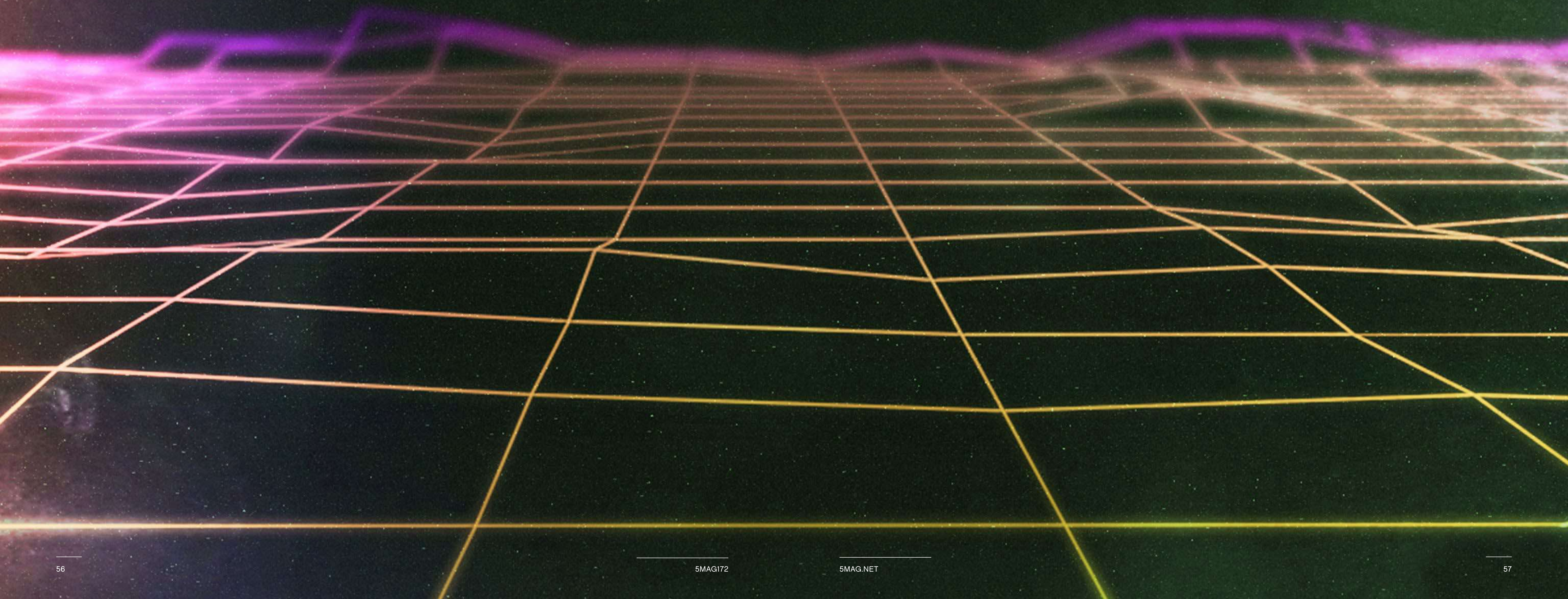
This was the first time I worked with vocalist Yolanda Sargeant. Hailing from Calgary in Canada she is a fearless soul goddess. She can command a room singing any kind of music from soul, jazz, reggae, blues or house. Her voice has been compared to the likes of Nina Simone, Billie Holiday, Erykah Badu and Lauryn Hill.

I was introduced to Yolanda by a good friend, Jay Remy (Sinastarr). I had asked him if he knew any singers that would be interested in working on a track. He connected me with Yolanda whom he knew when he was living in Calgary. Like Megan Shackell, she wasn't a dance music artist – in fact she'd never done this kind of music at all but she was a neo-soul singer. This attracted me even more because I tend to work with artists that are from different genres and try to create something from nothing.

After months of recording and re-recording we finally came up with something different. As an artist I always try to push the envelope creatively and do something different and I think we achieved that on "Deep Love."

Sorry Not Sorry from Detroit's Filthiest is out at the end of May on Motor City Electro Company.

MUSICREVIEWS172





ARTIST
Jon Dixon ft. Amp Fiddler and
Dames Brown

TITLE
Want It

LABEL
4EVR 4WRD

RELEASE DATE
May 25 2019

FORMAT
12" vinyl

Detroit Strong

Bad Ass Tracks from Jon Dixon.

DEEP HOUSE

NEW RELEASES

You might say Jon Dixon has come out of nowhere with his new WANT IT EP. You might say that, but you'd be wrong. The Detroit musician has been a part of Underground Resistance's TIMELINE project (the 2011 Graystone Ballroom EP) and EPs like Fly Free have elicited comparisons to acts like Los Hermanos. He's performed on the keys on Funkin' Evil's "After Dusk" (Wild Oats) and remixed Radio Slave's Vision for Rekids.

This is not the resume of a man who came from nowhere, but it is the CV of a guy that's about to be everywhere. Jon Dixon's WANT IT is yet another indicator for the argument that Detroit is producing more top-tier soulful house tracks than any other city on the planet right now. The vocals of Dames Brown and Amp Fiddler are stunning in both performance and production - he has never sounded better - and top editors including Waajeed have signed off with beautifully rendered remixes.

Things That Are No Longer There, Vol 20.

Starck Club Dallas, According to Tennis.

DEEP HOUSE

NEW RELEASES

There's an archaeological site in Asia Minor called Çatalhöyük. It's a city that shouldn't be there - a city from a time when there were no cities, 7000 years before the birth of Christ. And none of it makes any sense. Rather than build outward, in Çatalhöyük they built upward - "streets" and "plazas" were on the roofs of houses rather than beside them. "Doors" were in ceilings. Every now and then they would tear the place down and build on top of it. Apparently they did this at least 18 times as their city raised up from the ground.

Like Çatalhöyük was a city before cities, Dallas' Starck Club was the scene before there was a scene - a proto-rave/club fueled by the first widespread use of MDMA and open to a multicultural clientele. It was a touchstone locale to hear them talk about it, and it's only now getting suitable memorialization in our culture in film and the obligatory magazine longreads.

"Starck" from DJ Tennis is, I think, named after the Starck Club and forms a suitably flashy and Italo-esque homage to one of what Allen Ginsberg called "the legendary stations of the Earth." The arrangement is pure Tennis, though: complex, challenging, at points sweet and at others monumental. The flip features another sterling track: "Gordon," apparently the track that Running Back's Gerd Janson proclaims made him fall in love-at-first-listen during a party in Miami. Starting off with a deceptively minimal approach, layer after layer piles on until it stomps, in its quiet and quite sophisticated way.



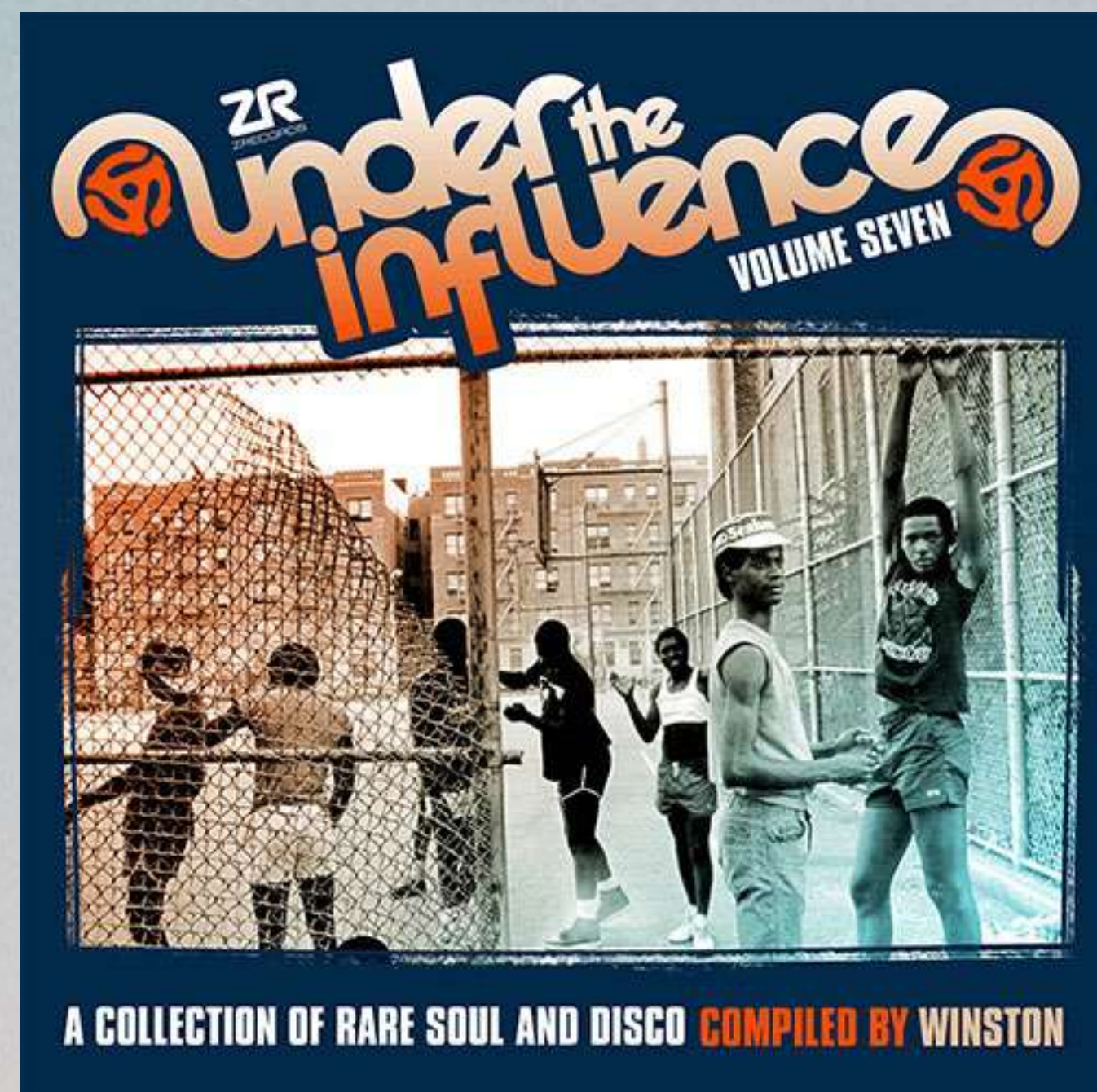
ARTIST
DJ Tennis

TITLE
Gordon Starck

LABEL
Running Back

RELEASE DATE
May 2019

FORMAT
12" vinyl/digital



Rare Earth/Rare Soul

Winston Compiles Z Records Next Under The Influence Compilation.

DISCO

FUNK

REISSUES

I'm told that Northern Soul DJs never ran out of R&B 45s from the '60s. The sheer quantity of music made in an era when music was pretty damn hard to make ensured that there would always be new discoveries, rare "race records" or regional cuts that no one outside of Georgia or Detroit or Ohio or Buffalo had heard before.

And you'd think the same about the rare disco, funk and R&B jams that form the core of the acclaimed **Under The Influence** series on Joey Negro's Z Records, and here too you'd be wrong. Volume 7 of the series delivers more choice cuts from soul music's root cellar, many if not all of them new to those who don't live and breathe this era and the rare records that drive collectors to frenzy and fury. Winston is at the controls this time – he is "pretty much unknown" outside of the established record collector's clique, according to the liner notes, but "despite his low profile he has one of the best record collections around." If this is a representative sampling, it must be like fucking Wonderland in there.

Happily, Donnell Pitman makes a return to the series. The first

track on the first disc of **Under The Influence Vol 1** featured Pitman's "Love Explosion" which was a holy grail for a hell of a lot of collectors then and even more since. This time he appears as part of the Synergy 7 inch "More People Than Me," his voice bronzed by dreamy riffs and a complex arrangement turned inside-out by Pitman's incomparable vocal pyrotechnics.

The ultra-rare track here is the 1981 Goldfox 12" version of Mary Gold's "Dancing" – a 10 minute soul/funk freak out that isn't so much listened to as experienced, the way all good songs and sermons should be. The jam at the end goes on about 4 minutes longer than you'd imagine and if there's a more perfect song to be playing at the end of the night when the house lights go up I'd like to hear it. The original sells for frankly ridiculous prices. I can see why.

I've likely said something along these lines before, but so often reissues and especially reissue comps come off as some kind of raid through our grandparents' legacy. Not Z Records. **Under The Influence**, with their other comp series, feels like it's done with the heart of an artist but the love of the disciple.

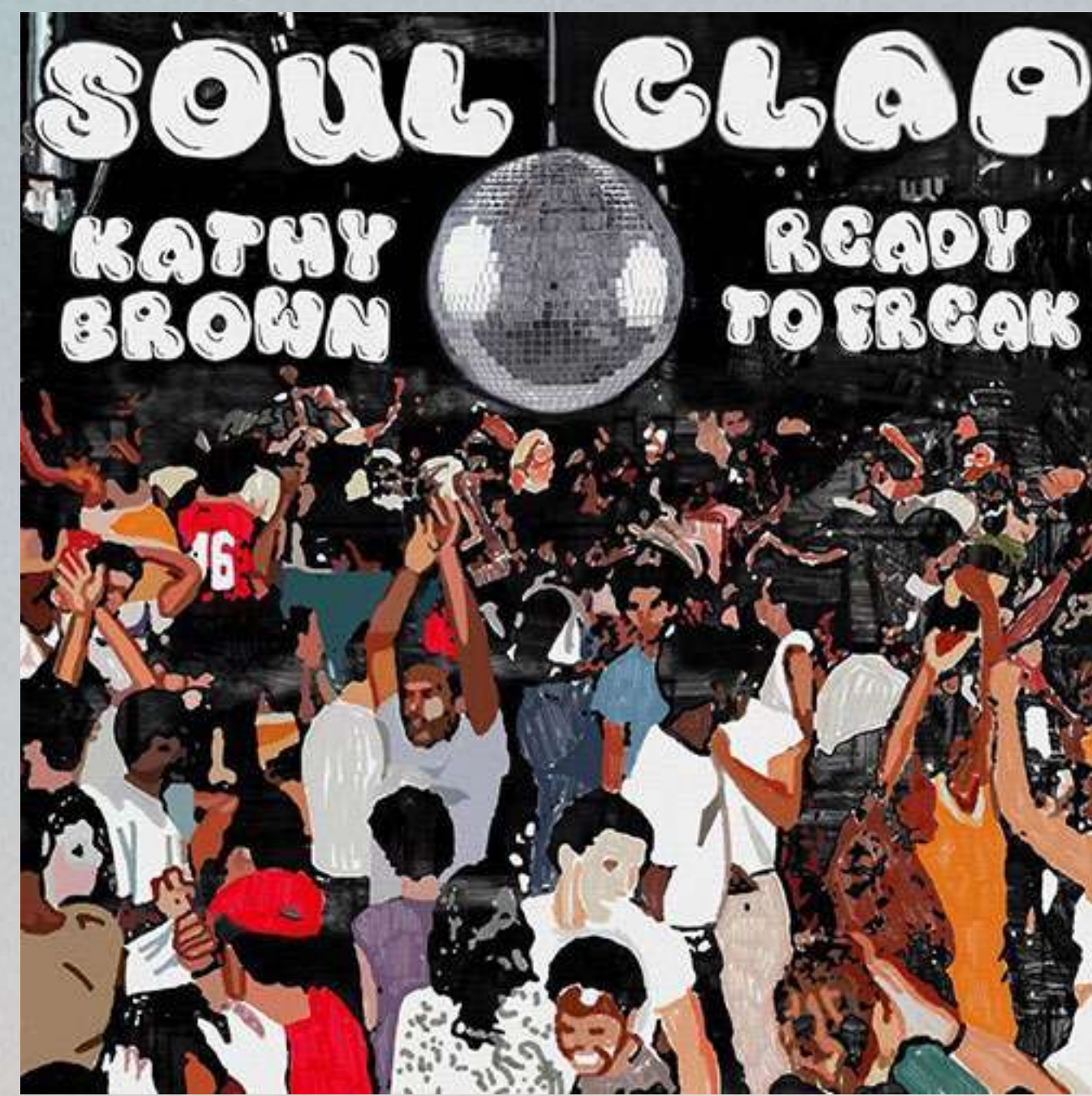
ARTIST
Various/Compiled by Winston

TITLE
Under The Influence Vol 7

LABEL
Z Records

RELEASE DATE
June 28 2019

FORMAT
12" vinyl/CD/digital



ARTIST
Soul Clap ft. Kathy Brown

TITLE
Ready to Freak

LABEL
Soul Clap Records

RELEASE DATE
June 28 2019

FORMAT
12" vinyl

Soul Revival

Soul Clap & Kathy Brown are Ready to Freak.

FUNK

DISCO

NEW RELEASES

“Ready To Freak” lends its title to Soul Clap’s next single and their summer tour. This is a record that has obviously been kept in reserve for a minute and it’s primed for massive impact.

It’s been 26 years since Kathy Brown made her dance music debut and she’s at the height of her powers. Her vocal on Soul Clap’s “Ready To Freak” has a nasty bite to it and every note – every single one from the opening salvo to a devastating climax – seems to originate deep in her heart and travels without wires or by intermediary to yours.

The Disco Mix brings to mind the exhilarating, plastic sound of The Pointer Sisters’ “Happiness” with a seriously dark, druggy dub mix as a companion. Lonely C’s “Electronique” mixes have a stuttering, syncopated pulse that are fun as hell to play around with on a turntable. Subtracting the vocal might be criminal but the Disco Instrumental does a convincing job pleading its case, with a big square bassline and a sleazy swagger that seems destined to sound out from the rooftops this summer.

Burning the Midnight Oil

Night Songs from the Mind of Santiago Salazar.

TECHNO

NEW RELEASES

I follow both this artist and this label closely. I’m afraid of what I’ll miss if I don’t. That might mean refreshing pages, following bookmarks, signing up for mailing lists and firing up RSS feeds that otherwise contain nothing but discounts on cheap electronics from Mashable. It’s worth it: the present, if not the future, of electronic music in America is being made day by day, gig by gig and record by record, and in the latter regard Santiago Salazar and Love What You Feel are making, playing and releasing some of the truly elite techno records in America today.

The Night Owl is Santiago Salazar’s third album in the last four years, and my first reaction is it’s the best of the three. “Light The Sage” is techno made with such refined skill that the word that keeps coming to mind is it’s “lyrical.” Through beats and melodies it manages to tell a story with the fullness you’d expect from lyrics and song. It’s followed by the high-pitched stomp of “Loca,” and the high-tech cosmic jazz of “Midnight Oil,” which sounds like a Juan Atkins recording session filled out and finished by Herbie Hancock in his high fusion days.

The Night Owl has a rather unique and I think rather ingenious format. The first four tracks (including the three mentioned above) are on vinyl; a further five (including a Pittsburgh Track Authority remix of “Loca”) are digital-only. I think you get what you need here.



ARTIST
Santiago Salazar

TITLE
The Night Owl

LABEL
Love What You Feel

RELEASE DATE
May 2019

FORMAT
12" vinyl/digital



Time to Make This Official

Mike Grant's Moods & Grooves is Still the Best House Music Label in Detroit.

DEEP HOUSE

SOULFUL HOUSE

NEW RELEASES

It's time is coming. Sooner or later (and it will probably be sooner), the masses are going to discover the best house label in Detroit and we're all going to get pissy about how people always ruin a good thing and how much more their records cost. That label is Moods & Grooves, Mike Grant's label, which has been in business since the last year of the last millennium and – get this – has never missed on a record yet. Go through them: Alton Miller, Brian Harden, Rick Wade, Kenny Dixon Jr, Mr. G, Anthony "Shake" Shakir, Theo Parrish, Andrés... it's like a festival fantasy line-up that even Movement can't book and somehow Mike Grant got some of the best producers who ever did this thing to do their best work for Moods & Grooves. There are gaps of whole years between releases, which is to be expected when resident record mogul has a demanding day job in the army (one record, Mike Grant once told me, was released when he was in Texas and about to be deployed to Iraq.)

But you know what's really cool? This is a label that has never stopped taking chances. It's not hard to throw some money at big names and get records from them. In fact, some kid with money does exactly that every year with a flash-in-the-pan label. It's harder to keep that record of excellence go-

ing when you're picking up records from guys with 55 followers on SoundCloud and who have been releasing music for just a couple of years – when you're out there giving a chance to young artists who bring nothing but talent to the table.

That's the case with "LoopZ The Maestro," the alias of a young producer from Cape Town, South Africa who signed his latest release, **Shallow Dreams**, to Moods & Grooves. "What A Life" has the swagger and tasteful restraint of a producer from the old school. LoopZ builds a track with just fragments of sounds: some birdsong, a few blazing notes from a disembodied sax and a vocal sample sounding off with just a few notes. It strikes the perfect balance on the axis where soulful and deep house meet. Other tracks pull their weight in one direction or another – the jazzy deepness of "Traveler," the muted Afro dubs of "Dusk." None are quite as effective as the opener but all are effective in their own lane.

This may not be the track that makes Moods & Grooves – after 20 years – the rider on the next big hype bubble from RA, but it will certainly reach new audiences that had possibly never taken notice of a label that rarely hypes itself. They just quietly go on doing exactly what great labels should do for themselves, their cities and the underground.

ARTIST

LoopZ The Maestro

TITLE

Shallow Dreams

LABEL

Moods & Grooves

RELEASE DATE

June 2019

FORMAT

12" vinyl



Locked In The Groove

Jeff Mills Reissues Four Catalog Classics on the Remastered Director's Cut Chapter 2.

TECHNO

REISSUES

Years from now, fields of scholars will be employed to study the logical and intuitional connections between records in the Jeff Mills discography. Take a record like **Time Mechanics**. It comes out, seemingly a standalone piece only to find its continuum many years later in a second installment. The connections from one record to the next may only become apparent years, maybe even decades later through the gradual introduction of new materials. Lain out on a floor and viewed from the sky, the records and the lines connecting them would resemble a black rainbow-tinted circuit board, guided by a scientific logic that only geniuses or super-intelligent machine agents could follow.

So **Time Mechanics** (2005) begat **Time Mechanics 02 Eternity** (2008) which shows itself on **Director's Cut Chapter 2**, the second installment in Jeff Mills' curated collection of remasters. And you can "begat" more iterations and relationships than exist in 1 Chronicles:1. But if there is a "Genesis" here – I mean aside from Jeff Mills' actual genesis – it'd be **Cycle 30**. This unassuming title marked the departure point for Jeff Mills' career, when his music became animated by

an untamed artistic fire, when tracks previously made for DJ Use Only (like, for instance, 1992's "Changes of Life") became embedded in a sweeping vision, more orchestral than club.

But there's a workmanship that defies artistic fragility. That's why Jeff Mills will be remembered and almost all of the rest of us won't. **Cycle 30** featured Jeff Mills' use of locked grooves – a manufacturing trick to save phonograph needles from running into the sticker. Mills repurposed the locked groove in revolutionary fashion as part of the compositions themselves. Records, by design, contained one locked groove at the end of each side. Side A of **Cycle 30** alone has **eight** locked grooves. The fourth track from **Cycle 30** is presented here under the title "Cycle 30 - Loop 4 Reduced."

The Director's Cut project is one that is clearly close to Jeff Mills heart. And it works against the emerging wisdom that an artist's catalog is just something reduced to a pool for mining digital pennies (and fractions of a pennies) on streaming services. But part of the reason we take this music seriously is not just because the music itself demands it but because Jeff Mills does.

ARTIST
Jeff Mills

TITLE
The Director's Cut Chapter 2

LABEL
Axis

RELEASE DATE
April 2019

FORMAT
12" vinyl



ARTIST
Vincent G

TITLE
Lost In Mind

LABEL
Rutilance Records

RELEASE DATE
June 2019

FORMAT
12" vinyl

Charting the Rutilance Sound

Vincent G Soars on Lost in Mind.

DEEP HOUSE

NEW RELEASES

Who is Vincent G? The name itself seems to lend an air of anonymity, a deep house everyman animated by the groove when the spirit moves. Discogs and several record retailers show just a single release – Rutilance's **V/A Vol 2** released in 2017, which is one of the most acclaimed and in-demand V/As from the last several years. Beatport, predictably, shows nothing at all.

Vincent G's track on **Rutilance Vol 2**, "Control Freak," was characterized by tuneful, jittery percussion and but for a muted and short vocal sample could have almost been described as "tech house" if that wouldn't have put it in such disreputable company. **Lost In Mind** is a radical departure (though whether it's a reinvention or not – with just one track in his discography, who can say?) It's almost an epitome, a representative sample of the Rutilance sound characterized by DJ Steaw and the characters who have passed to and fro over the years, from Ortella to Jay Shaw and Paolo Rocco. "Lust" has the heady atmosphere of Drexciya-style techno fashioned to an almost Latin swing. The moody chords waver on "Aeterna" with jacking hats and drums. Both sides can be played together with an audience noting a subtle transition between them. Vincent G made this with just a few favored elements or bits of equipment and it rolls.

The Legend Rides Again

Ra-Soul Returns on Searing Democracy is Hypocrisy.

DEEP HOUSE

NEW RELEASES

If you don't know who Ra-Soul is, then I think it's time I turn gnarly old man on your ass. Ra-Soul is one of the ten most talented guys to ever do this – his sound for me pretty much defined what a "deep house record" is supposed to sound like. Go back and flip through his discography – but especially the records on 83 West and Chicago's Large – and you'll hear a sound that hasn't aged a day, it's fresh and unblemished by the ravages of time, preserved the way precious few recordings from the era have been. Some people have bigger discographies (and that isn't necessarily something to brag about) but Ra-Soul has more gems than almost any of them.

Speaking of timeless – likewise with Malcolm X's speech which gives **Democracy is Hypocrisy** its title. His searing denunciation of police brutality is just as biting and as bitterly true today as it was in the scratchy, flat black-and-white reel that captured it. The track cuts it in & out, in & out, each flair from Malcolm X's speech like a lightning strike. This could be just a simple beat track with a sample and it would be effective, but the rising intensity of percussion, the subtle introduction of flecks of acid and the timing of the drops makes it devastating.

Black In Time is the name Ra-Soul's collaboration with Don Crisp. It may not be new, but it's at least the first time I'm hearing it. A comeback? I'll tell you what: grab Ra-Soul's discography and listen to them one by one. All of the records on that shelf may as well have been made yesterday. **Democracy Is Hypocrisy** is a fine extension of it.



ARTIST
Black In Time

TITLE
Democracy is Hypocrisy

LABEL
Crisp Recordings

RELEASE DATE
June 2019

FORMAT
12" vinyl



And Here's the Review Where We Alienate Every Experimental Musician in the World:

Hypno-Ambient Breakbeats on Dretraxx's Fears To Be Slain.

AMBIENT

NEW RELEASES

Somehow I wound up on the radar of some leading ambient and experimental music labels and I'm not sure what to do about that. You feel at some point that you have to comment, you are not being sent this stuff out of charity but to offer up a marketable response that could be used in sales blurbs and perhaps even memorialized in an artist's bio and saying “**Hey that's some deep shit right there**” doesn't satisfy anyone.

I hold to the idea that electronic music is essentially utilitarian – and should be proud that it has a built-in purpose. So few people (and still less, art) are created intentionally, with a meaning and purposeful existence already set out for them. It's true of very few people and things, when you think about it, and it's not shameful or something to run away from.

So according to iTunes, I've listened to Brian Eno's **Thursday Afternoon (61 Minute Version)** 124 times and I might be the only person alive that prefers Dan Hartman's **New Green/Clear Blue** more than **Instant Replay**. I might have more trippy shit minted in San Francisco circa 1993 than anyone who wasn't there, and I love most of it in a way that feels a little shameful sometimes. These are my bona fides. But I just can't listen to another fucking 75 minute album that sounds like a moment-by-moment reproduction of a dead rat being sucked up the hose of a vacuum cleaner, accompanied by “profound texts” and artwork that boasts of how long and how many strokes it took to com-

plete (this is from a real and recent example). What's the point of this information? Does it improve the experience of the music? We're all sitting in the dark these days, in the cone of solitude created by earbuds and headphones, and the music touches us or it doesn't, we're teased, lulled or provoked or we're not, we flip over our phone and ask what the hell is that or how do I make it stop.

Fears To Be Slain is a record that made me wonder just what the hell is that. The EP dropped on Marshall Applewhite's Junted, and I had no idea where it came from. I'd just deleted four industrial ambient albums that didn't do a thing for me and stumbled across “AmexPaypalVenmo,” a Dretraxx track named after the holy grail of gig economy goddesses of plenty. It starts out with ominous atmospherics and FX punched up by really stomping techno. This is the sort of thing I could add to that collection of trippy shit minted in San Francisco circa 1993 and few people would notice it didn't belong at some proximity to my Freaky Chakra and Tranquility Bass records. Amphibian sounds and DX7-style icy synth waves are the palette for the beatless “N. Manitou Island (Chorus of Frogs and Ancestors).” And then we're back in the Bay Area dialing up BBS services to download MS-DOS porno games on “The End,” which sounds like a drum circle got their qi spiked, brought in some hi-hats and played tolerable beats for once.

I don't know what I'm listening to – ambient frog breakbeat? hypno-Egyptian drum'n'bass? Beats me, but this music amazes more than it stupefies. But it does stupefy. That is, I am cautiously optimistic, the point, or at least part of it.

ARTIST
Dretraxx

TITLE
Fears To Be Slain

LABEL
Junted

RELEASE DATE
Out Now

FORMAT
Streaming/Digital



ARTIST
Orlando B

TITLE
Sound Of Your Soul

LABEL
Contemplate Recordings

RELEASE DATE
June 2019

FORMAT
12" vinyl

Highly Anticipated. No, Really.

Orlando B Strikes Gold with Sound Of Your Soul.

DEEP HOUSE NEW RELEASES

You know how every Facebook post and Instagram clip and SoundCloud blurb and Beatport description claims the track you're about to hear 45 seconds of is "highly anticipated" and has been "slammed" by famous DJs and the label just can't wait to share the good news of this song with you?

This one actually is all that. Promo'd months ago, **Sound Of Your Soul** is an eruption of soul, patched together from samples with an expert hand. "One Time" and the title track are throwbacks to the MK-style remixes that everybody wanted so much DJs would slap masking tape to obscure the label from trainspotters. "Oldskool Feelin" has more of a lively feeling – strip the chords from a Ralphi Rosario record, lay them over Victor Simonelli's beats and you have something strange and powerful in your hands.

Orlando B is a veteran DJ, apparently from London by way of Scotland and if he's spent a lifetime perfecting the skills that culminate with the making of this record, it hasn't been time put to waste.

A Future Shock Revival

All That You Love About House, from Audio Soul Project.

DEEP HOUSE NEW RELEASES

Audio Soul Project taps into a deep vein of Jungian kundalini energy on "Feel So Good." It's the lead track of **Archival 4**, a record that plays around with notions of future shock vs nostalgia, new music that sounds like classics and the value we put into the fashionability of electronic music which should have at its core (more than some genres at least) some sense of timelessness.

"Feel So Good" was a wise selection for the lead track: built like a jazz band just jamming, the elements roll out one at a time into a wickedly addictive, stomping tune. It's pulling something out of the subconsciousness, like a shared vision or hallucination.

The b-side jam "Winding Days" fills this out with a mental Prescription-esque vibe, from the strings that hold their breath on a single note for an eternity to the stuttering vocal sample selected more for the noise it makes than what it means. This is everything that's lovable about Chicago deep house music, purified and unrestrained.



ARTIST
Audio Soul Project

TITLE
Archival 4

LABEL
Fresh Meat Records

RELEASE DATE
June 21 2019

FORMAT
Digital



ARTIST
Hifi Sean

TITLE
Love Is On The House

LABEL
Club Sweat

RELEASE DATE
Out Now

FORMAT
Digital

The World's Gone Day-Glo Retro.

Hifi Sean Makes You Sweat on Love Is On The House.

MISC/ETC NEW RELEASES

Sean Dickson was saving something special for the Aussies. Dickson, aka Hifi Sean, has dropped a new EP for notable Australian dance label Club Sweat.

Love Is On The House EP showcases a riff-happy, almost New Wave sound with flashes of Italo and even a bit of racy '90s club-ready pop. Everything's going retro, so why not? If you close your eyes you can even visualize Grace Jones delivering those big meaty hooks from the chorus in front of an adoring audience.

The extended mix is by far the most fun but the 4am Dub is likely to get the most mileage for DJs. It fits just about everywhere, deep and dubby with a bit of an electronic bite.

Javonnnte As Vocalist Too? Okay.

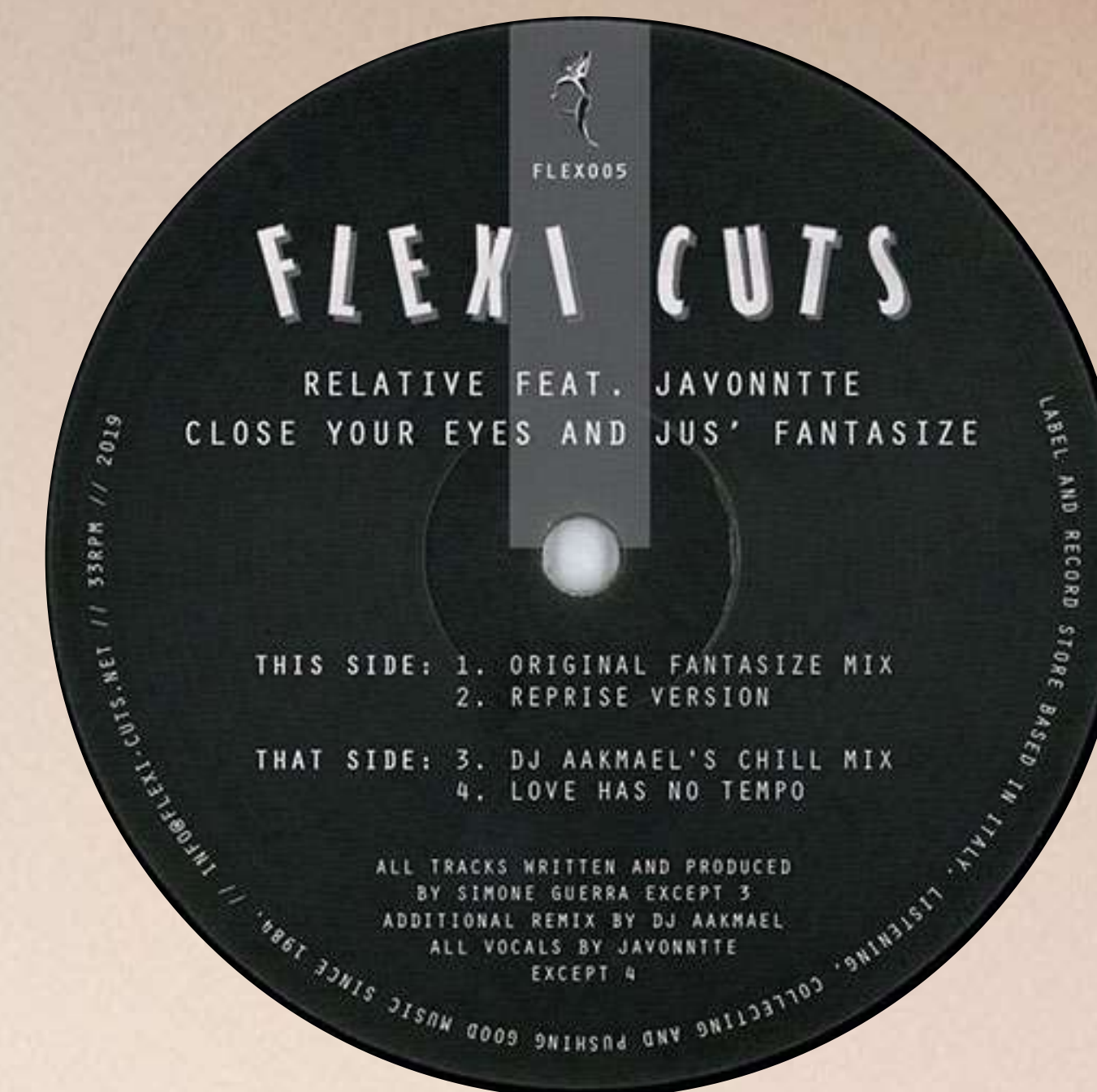
The Relative Sound of Flexi Cuts.

DEEP HOUSE NEW RELEASES

Two of the leading lights of deep house in America today, Aakmael and Javonnnte, team up with Relative of the Italian label Flexi Cuts (based, apparently, out of a Flexi Dischi record store. I've dropped a few of these records in the past but had no idea about that.)

We've been pretty consistently rocking Javonnnte tracks for several years now, but this time we find him lending his voice to the lustrous, laid-back "Close Your Eyes And Jus' Fant-size." It has the rawness of a demo and the energy of classic Arnold Jarvis, which works well with Relative's buzzing vibes and twitchy percussion. It has hooks where you wouldn't expect them – I defy you to listen to this and not hum along to "soo-per-na-tur-alllll" for days afterward.

Aakmael lends his skills for the appropriately titled "Chill Mix" – stripped down of everything but the vocal, hissing hi hats and, where a lesser producer would install a factory-issued-and-approved build, a truly lovely and understated excursion on the keys. The lyrics write the rest: supernatural, wonderful...



ARTIST
Relative ft. Javonnnte

TITLE
Close Your Eyes And Jus' Fant-size

LABEL
Flexi Cuts

RELEASE DATE
May 6 2019

FORMAT
12" vinyl

THURSDAY MAY 09
Research & Development with
**KAYY DRIZZ / Z SONIAT / KONA
FM / JS ALVAREZ**

FRIDAY MAY 10
LEON VYNEHALL / OLIN

SATURDAY MAY 11
SOUL CLAP (ALL NIGHT)

SATURDAY MAY 18
Aathee presents
**MIA WALLACE (LIVE)
AATHEE (LIVE)**

THURSDAY MAY 23
The Playground with
**ALTON MILLER
RICARDO MIRANDA
ROGER THAT / FORM**

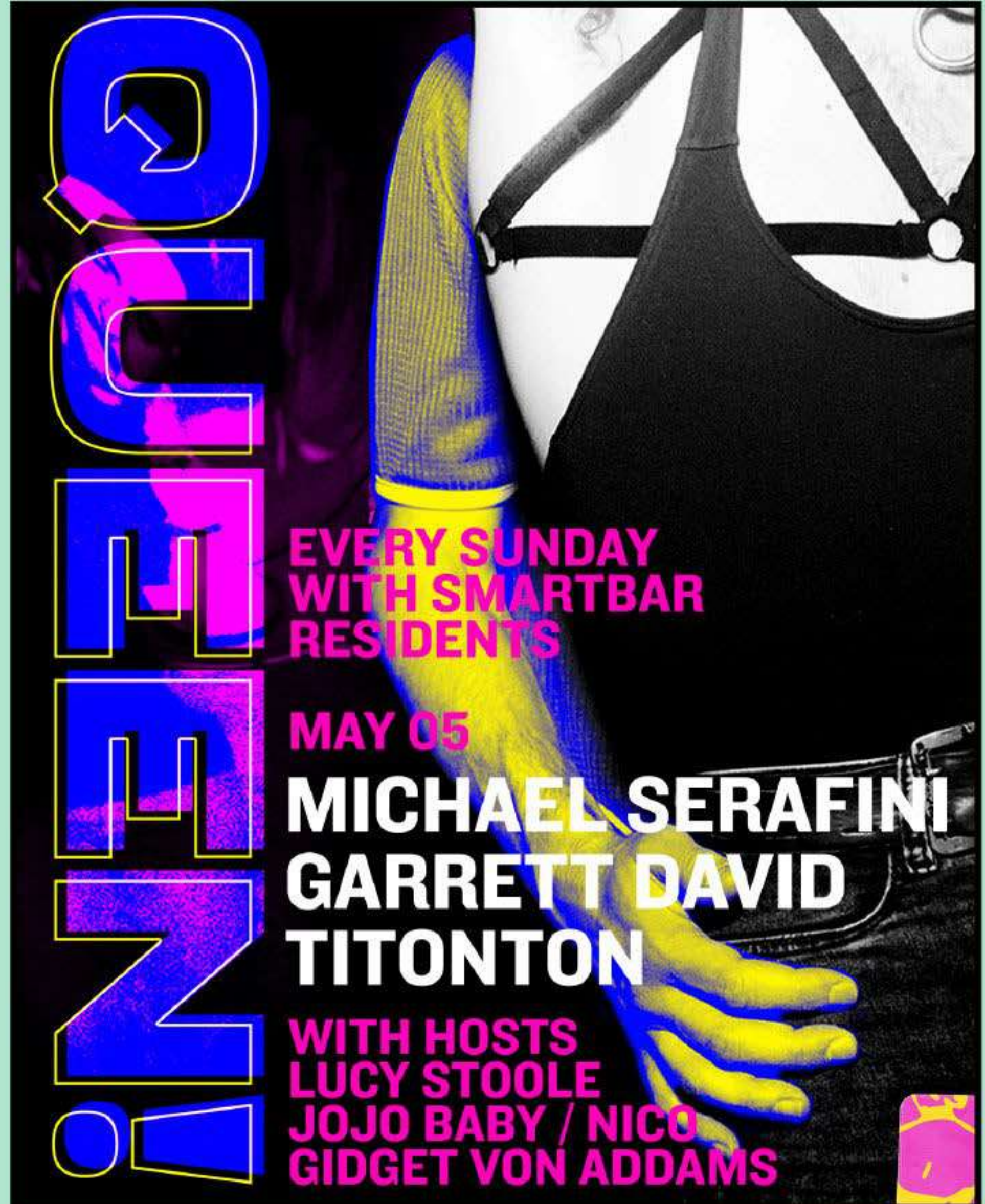
FRIDAY MAY 24
**TERI BRISTOL & PSYCHO-BITCH
(ALL NIGHT)**

SATURDAY MAY 25
CHMF Afterparty with
**MARK FARINA
DJ MASAHIKO UCHIKAWA
(AKA LOFTSOUL)
FIRST LADY**

FRIDAY MAY 31
DERRICK CARTER (ALL NIGHT)

SATURDAY JUN 01
Oktave with
**BLACK ASTEROID
JEFF DERRINGER**

FRIDAY JUN 07
**DETROIT SWINDLE (DJ SET)
HAKIM MURPHY / ANDREW EMIL**

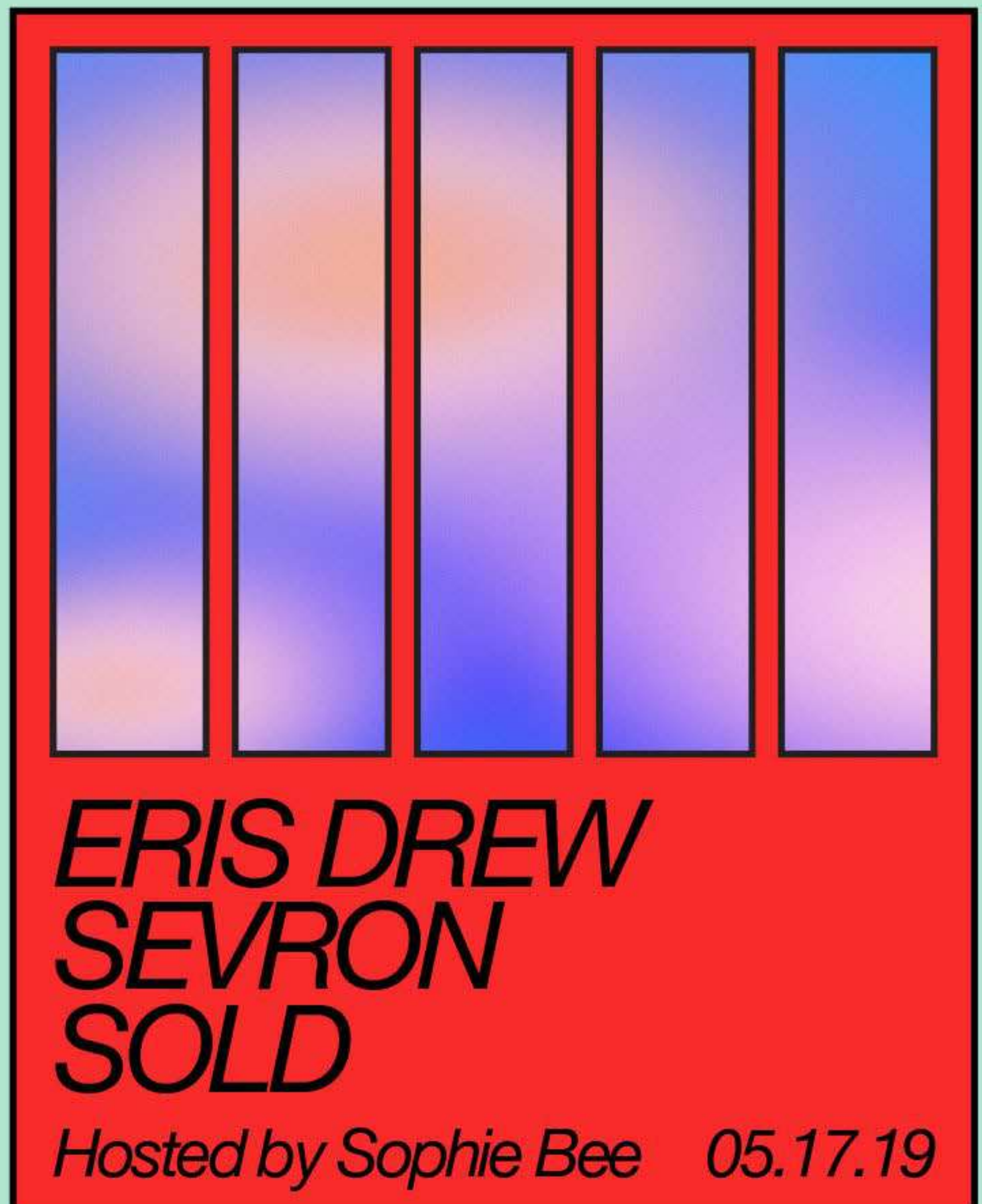


QCEMAY

EVERY SUNDAY
WITH SMARTBAR
RESIDENTS

MAY 05
**MICHAEL SERAFINI
GARRETT DAVID
TITONTON**

WITH HOSTS
LUCY STOOLE
JOJO BABY / NICO
GIDGET VON ADDAMS



**ERIS DREW
SEVRON
SOLD**

Hosted by Sophie Bee 05.17.19