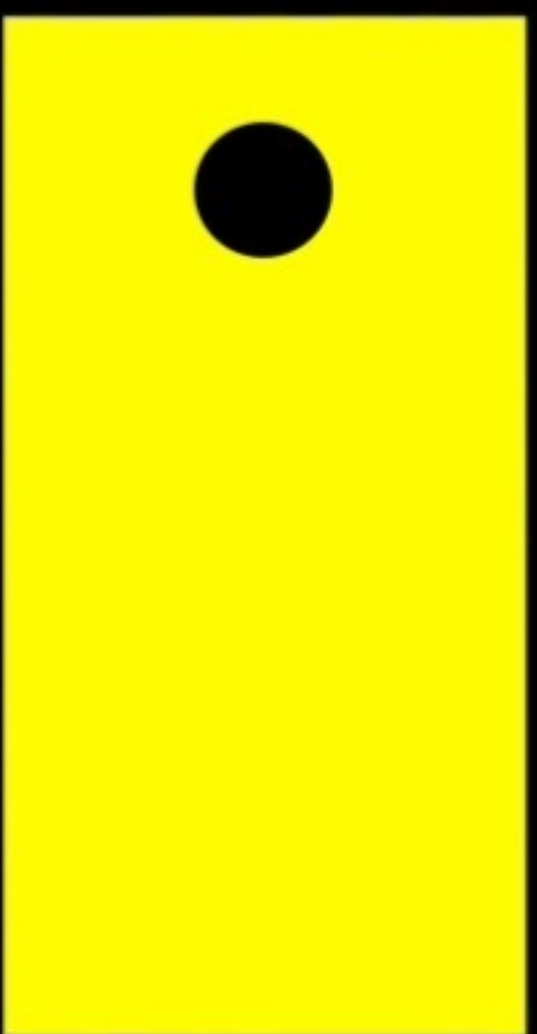
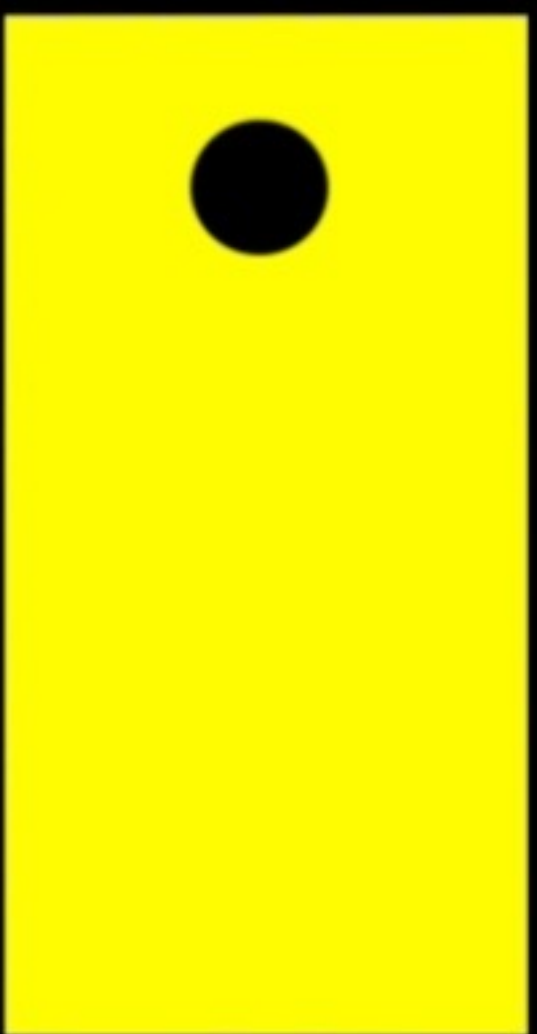
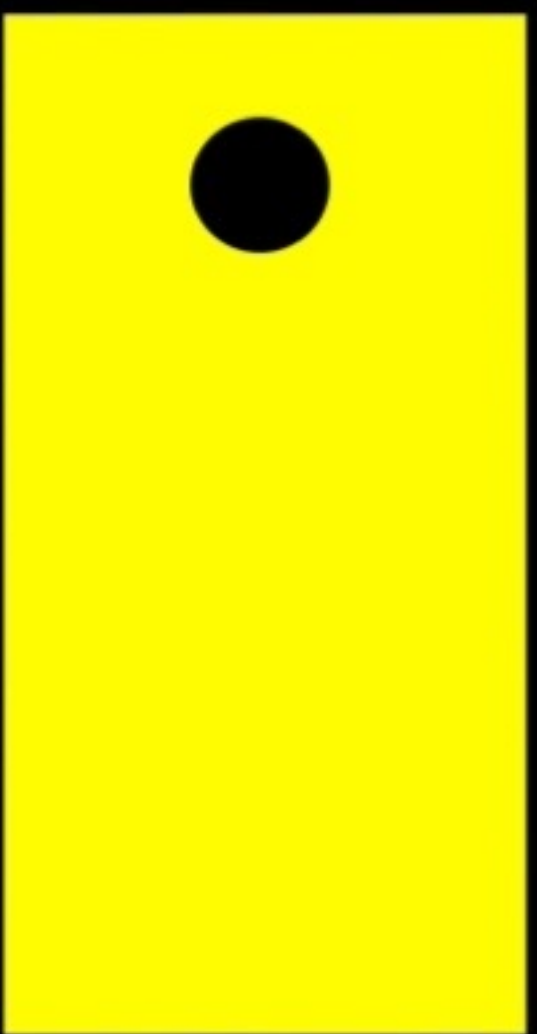
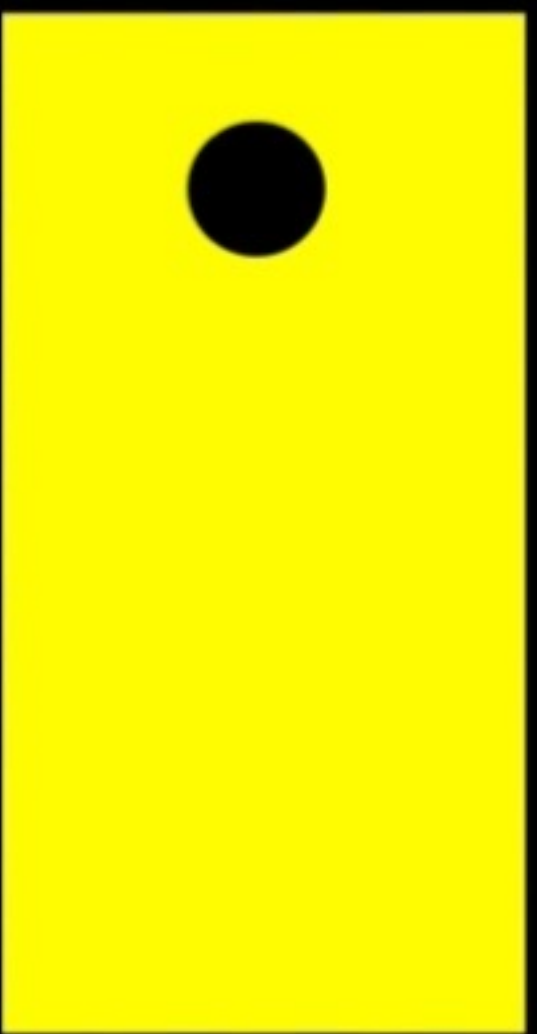
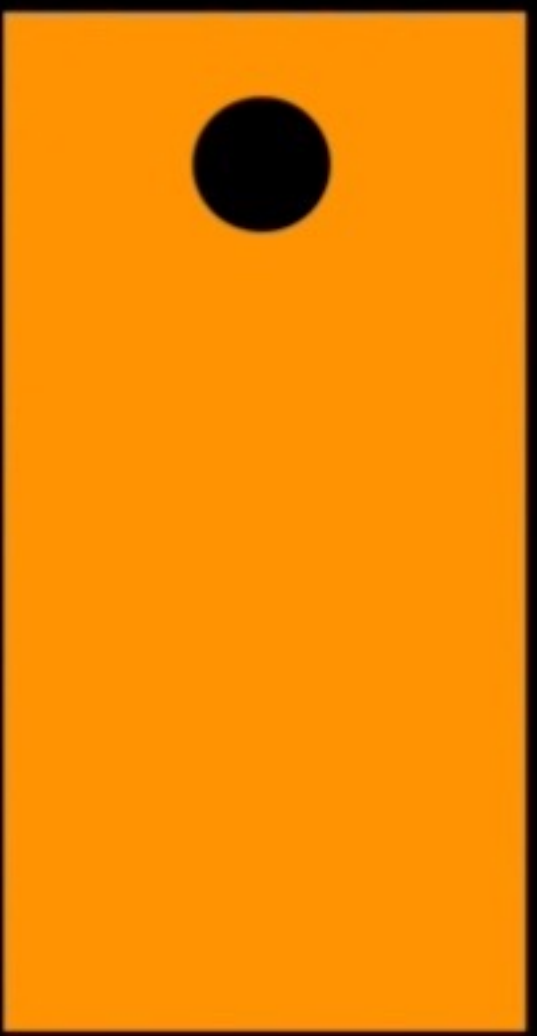
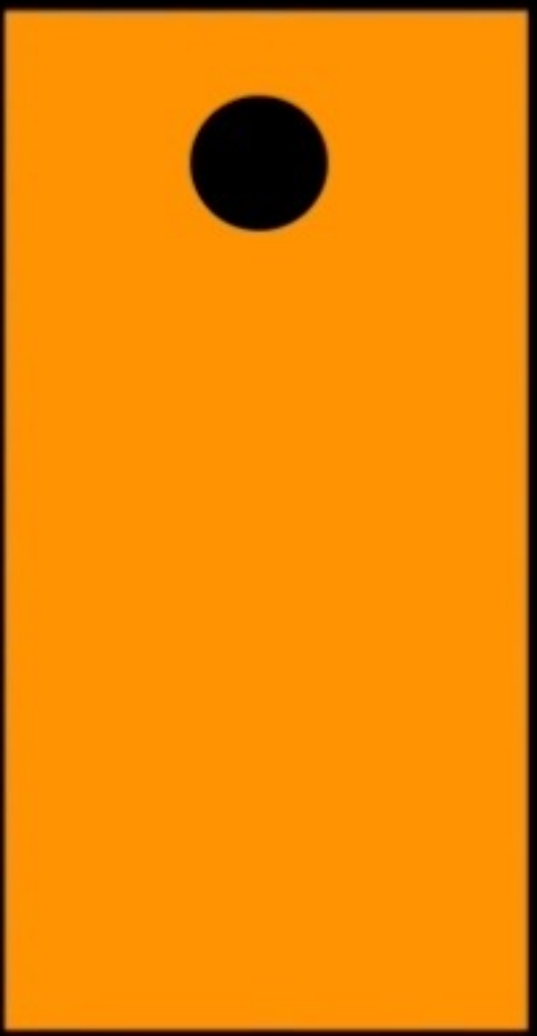
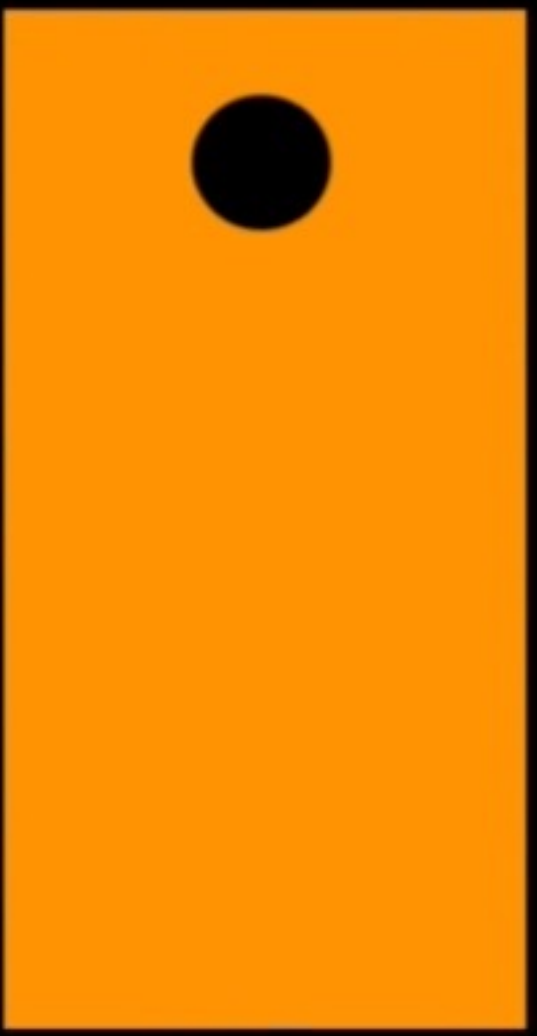
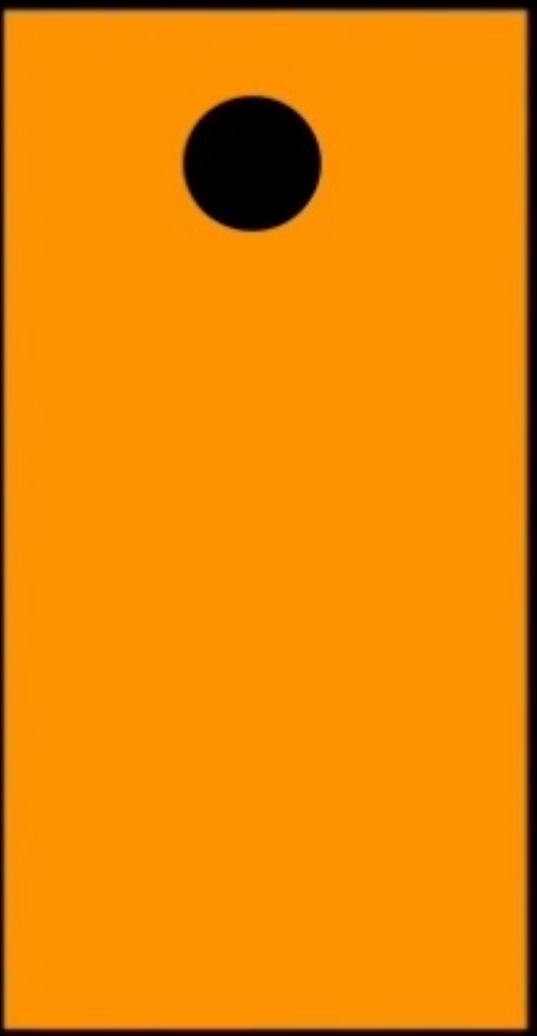


SOUND SWEEP MAGAZINE



# Three electro issue

Part 1



I CAN KIND OF  
ENVISION MAYBE ONE  
PERSON WITH A LOT OF  
MACHINES, TAPES, AND  
ELECTRONICS SET UP,  
SINGING OR SPEAKING  
AND USING MACHINES.

JIM MORRISON 1961.



**SOUND SWEEP ZINE 001**  
**THE ELECTRO ISSUE PART 1**

**INTRODUCTION**

**ELECTRO IN BRIEF**

**THE A-Z OF ELECTRO**

**KRAFTWERK:  
THE ROBOTS ARE FUNKY**

**KEY MIXES:  
WEATHERALL, STINGRAY, HAUFF,  
FEARLESS AND A FREDDY FRESH  
INTERVIEW**

**THE BEAT THAT WON'T BE BEATEN:  
ARCHIVAL PIECE FROM 1984**

**THE ARABIAN PRINCE:  
FROM NWA TO PROFESSOR X**

**STREET SOUNDS LABEL:  
MORGAN KHAN'S ESSENTIAL LABEL**

**THE ROLAND TR808:  
REVOLUTIONARY SOUND**

NOTE: UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED  
ALL TRANSISTORS ARE PNP  
ALL PNP TRANSISTORS ARE 2N23  
Q23 ~ Q26  
ALL DIODES ARE 1N4148  
ALL OP AMP'S ARE 741



## INTRODUCTION

WELCOME TO THE FIRST OF A 2 PART ISSUE DEVOTED TO THE JOYS OF ELECTRO. FURTHER ISSUES WILL EXPLORE TECHNO AND HOUSE.

THE AIM OF THESE ISSUES IS TO GIVE BRIEF AND HOPEFULLY INFORMATIVE CONTENT THAT WILL IDEALLY GIVE THE READER SOME FOUNDATION BEFORE GOING DOWN THE 'OL RABBIT HOLE.

INCLUDED IN THIS ISSUE IS SOME BACKGROUND ON ELECTRO, A PIECE ON THE KEY PIONEERS KRAFTWERK AND THE TR808 DRUM MACHINE. THERE IS ALSO A FEATURE ON A RELATIVELY UNKNOWN HERO OF THE SCENE: THE ARABIAN PRINCE A COUPLE OF ARCHIVAL FEATURES FROM THE FACE MAGAZINE AND THE WIRE FROM 1984 AND 1996 AS WELL AS A LABEL SPOTLIGHT ON STREET SOUNDS FROM THE UK.

THIS ISSUE WILL ALSO HAVE A LARGE SECTION DEVOTED TO KEY DJ MIXES THAT ARE ALL ELECTRO OR ELECTRO BASED, FOR THIS I HAVE DECIDED TO FOCUS ON 5 BRILLIANT DJs WITH SERIOUS SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE. THESE ARE ANDY WEATHERALL (RIP) DAVE CLARKE, DJ STINGRAY, HELENA HAUFF, RICHARD FEARLESS AND FREDDY FRESH - THERE IS ALSO AN INTERVIEW WITH FRED ABOUT HIS SEMINAL ESSENTIAL MIX. THE AFOREMENTIONED ESSENTIAL MIX SHOW WILL FEATURE QUITE HEAVILY AS IT HAS AND STILL IS BEEN A STEADY SOURCE OF KILLER DJ MIXES SINCE 1993 ON BBC RADIO 1.

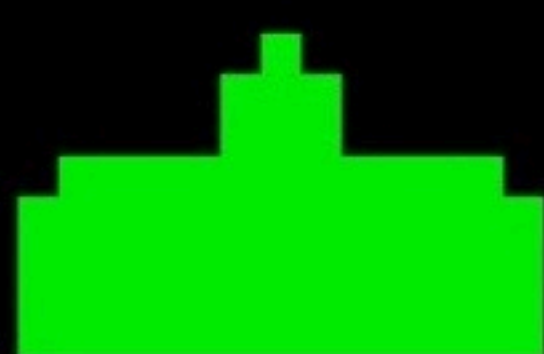
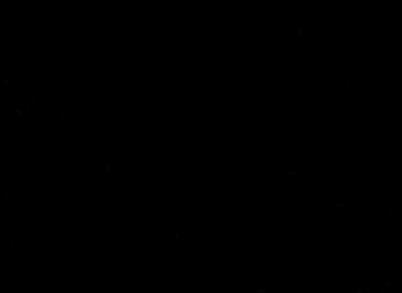
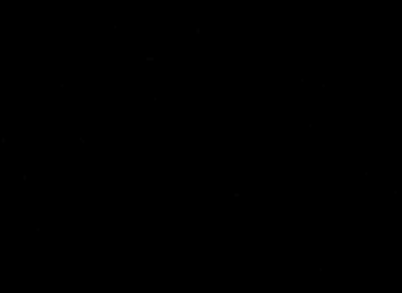
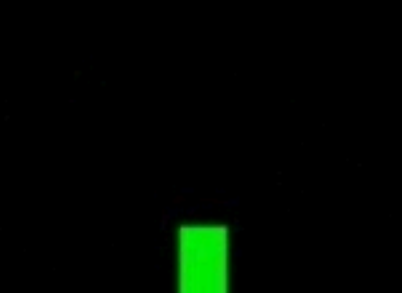
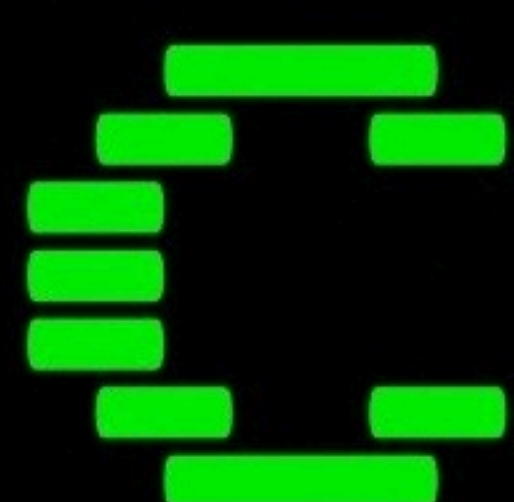
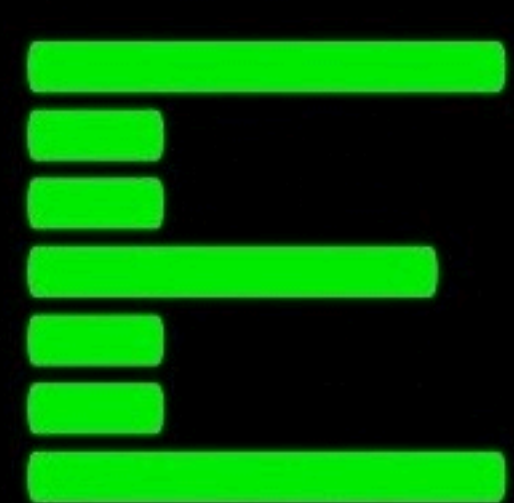
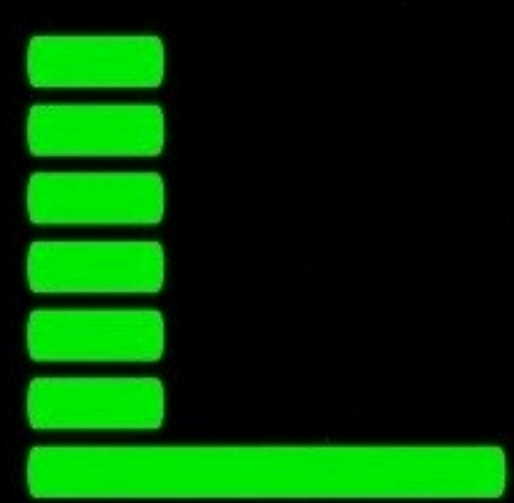
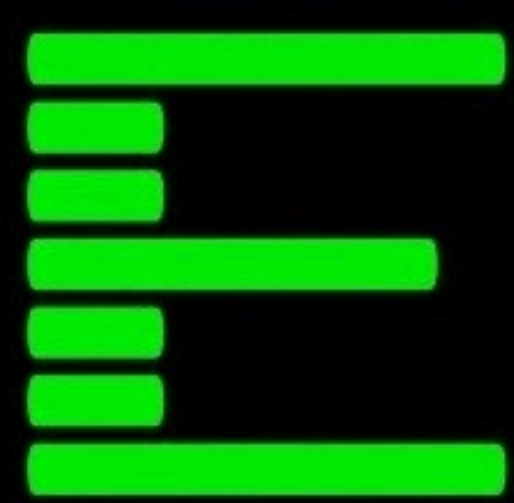
THE 2ND PART WILL TAKE A LOOK AT KEY ALBUMS AND TRACKS, THE DETROIT ELECTRO SCIENTISTS JAMES STINSON AND GERALD DONALD, DUTCH ELECTRO, CYBOTRON AND AUX 88 AND CONTEMPORARY UK ARTISTS.

\*AFRIKA BAMBATTAA HAS BEEN INCLUDED AS HE WAS A HUGE FIGURE IN THE EVOLUTION OF ELECTRO AND THERE WOULD BE GLARING GAPS IN THE HISTORY OF ELECTRO IF HE WAS TO BE OMITTED. HOWEVER, IT MUST BE HIGHLIGHTED HE HAS BEEN ACCUSED AND SUED FOR SOME DISGUSTING CRIMES THAT SOUND SWEEP FINDS UTTERLY REPELLENT AND DOES NOT CONDONE IN ANY WAY.

KLAUS FRANKE AKA STARK PRODUKT









# ELECTRO

## SUMMARY

ELECTRO IS A SUBGENRE AND FUSION GENRE OF ELECTRONIC MUSIC AND EARLY HIP HOP DIRECTLY INFLUENCED BY THE USE OF THE ROLAND TR-808, DRUM MACHINES, AND FUNK. RECORDS IN THE GENRE TYPICALLY FEATURE DRUM MACHINES AND HEAVY ELECTRONIC SOUNDS, SOMETIMES VOCALS PRESENT ARE DELIVERED IN A DEADPAN MANNER, OFTEN THROUGH ELECTRONIC DISTORTION SUCH AS VOCODING AND TALKBOXING. THIS IS THE MAIN DISTINCTION BETWEEN ELECTRO AND PREVIOUSLY PROMINENT GENRES SUCH AS DISCO, IN WHICH THE ELECTRONIC SOUND WAS ONLY PART OF THE INSTRUMENTATION. ALSO, ELECTRO PALPABLY DEVIATES FROM ITS PREDECESSOR BOOGIE FOR BEING LESS VOCAL-ORIENTED AND MORE FOCUSED ON ELECTRONIC BEATS PRODUCED BY DRUM MACHINES.

## BEAT

ASIDE FROM THE DISTINCTIVE RHYTHM PATTERN, ELECTRO IS OFTEN DISTINGUISHED BY AN EMPHASIS ON SYNTHESIZERS, VOCODERS, AND DRY, SYNCOPATED/"FUNKY" DRUM SOUNDS (AS OPPOSED TO THE MONOTONOUS, LOW-PITCH BASS DRUM OF HOUSE AND TECHNO). IN CONTRAST TO TYPICAL HIP-HOP APPROACH OF MINING FUNKY BEATS AND WARM BASSLINES FROM OLD VINYL AND EMPHASIZING A RAP VOCAL, THE ELECTRO VIBE IS MORE ABOUT PRODUCING NEW, COLD, HEAVILY SYNTHETIC-SOUNDING BEATS AND MINIMAL BASSLINES, WITH CHANTED VOCALS, EXTENDED INSTRUMENTAL PASSAGES, AND MINOR-KEY LEAD SYNTH THEMES.

A STYLE THAT BEGAN AS AN EARLY FORM OF HIP-HOP, ELECTRO HAS GROWN TO ENCOMPASS ANYTHING THAT USES THE CLASSIC, ELECTRONIC, SYNCOPATED BEAT FOUND ON TRACKS LIKE "PLANET ROCK" BY AFRIKA BAMBAATAA OR "WHITE LINES" BY GRANDMASTER FLASH & THE FURIOUS FIVE, OR AS POPULARIZED BY HERBIE HANCOCK'S "ROCKIT". ELECTRO IS ALSO APPLIED RETROACTIVELY TO SOME OF THE MUSIC OF KRAFTWERK, PARTICULARLY "NUMBERS" AND "HOME COMPUTER"-FORWARD-LOOKING, DANCEABLE ELECTRONIC TRACKS WHICH WERE HIGHLY REGARDED IN EARLY HIP-HOP CULTURE.

FROM ITS INCEPTION, ONE OF THE DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ELECTRO SOUND WAS THE USE OF DRUM MACHINES, PARTICULARLY THE ROLAND TR-808, AS THE RHYTHMIC BASIS OF THE TRACK. AS THE GENRE EVOLVED, COMPUTERS AND SAMPLING REPLACED DRUM MACHINES IN ELECTRONIC MUSIC, AND ARE NOW USED BY THE MAJORITY OF ELECTRO PRODUCERS.

CLASSIC (1980S) ELECTRO DRUM PATTERNS TEND TO BE ELECTRONIC EMULATIONS OF BREAKBEATS (OCCASIONALLY A FOUR TO THE FLOOR PATTERN IS USED AS WELL), WITH A SYNCOPATED KICK DRUM, AND USUALLY A SNARE OR CLAP ACCENTING THE BACKBEAT. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ELECTRO DRUMBEATS AND BREAKBEATS (OR BREAKS) IS THAT ELECTRO TENDS TO BE MORE MECHANICAL, WHILE BREAKBEATS TEND TO HAVE MORE OF A HUMAN-LIKE FEEL, LIKE THAT OF A LIVE DRUMMER. THE DEFINITION HOWEVER IS SOMEWHAT AMBIGUOUS IN NATURE DUE TO THE VARIOUS USES OF THE TERM.

THE TR-808'S UNIQUE PERCUSSION SOUNDS LIKE HANDCLAPS, OPEN AND CLOSED HIGH-HAT, CLAVE AND COWBELL BECAME INTEGRAL TO THE ELECTRO SOUND.

OTHER ELECTRO INSTRUMENTATION WAS GENERALLY ELECTRONIC, FAVORING ANALOG SYNTHESIS, PROGRAMMED BASS LINES, SEQUENCED OR ARPEGGIATED SYNTHETIC RIFFS, AND ATONAL SOUND EFFECTS ALL CREATED WITH SYNTHESIZERS. HEAVY USE OF EFFECTS SUCH AS REVERBS, DELAYS, CHORUS OR PHASERS ALONG WITH EERIE SYNTHETIC ENSEMBLE STRINGS OR PAD SOUNDS EMPHASIZED THE SCIENCE FICTION OR FUTURISTIC THEMES OF CLASSIC (1980S) ELECTRO, REPRESENTED IN THE LYRICS AND/OR MUSIC. ELECTRO HIP HOP GROUP WARP 9'S 1983 SINGLE, LIGHT YEARS AWAY, PRODUCED AND WRITTEN BY LOTTI GOLDEN AND RICHARD SCHER, EXEMPLIFIES THE SCI-FI, AFROFUTURIST ASPECT OF ELECTRO, REFLECTED IN BOTH THE LYRICS AND INSTRUMENTATION. THE IMAGERY OF ITS LYRICAL REFRAIN SPACE IS THE PLACE FOR THE HUMAN RACE PAYS HOMAGE TO SUN RA'S 1974 FILM, WHILE ITS SYNTH LINES AND SOUND EFFECTS ARE INFORMED BY SCI-FI, COMPUTER GAMES, AND CARTOONS, "BORN OF A SCIENCE-FICTION REVIVAL."

MOST ELECTRO IS INSTRUMENTAL, BUT A COMMON ELEMENT IS VOCALS PROCESSED THROUGH A VOCODER. ADDITIONALLY, SPEECH SYNTHESIS MAY BE USED TO CREATE ROBOTIC OR MECHANICAL LYRICAL CONTENT, AS IN THE ICONIC PLANET ROCK AND THE AUTOMATOUS CHANT IN THE CHORUS OF NUNK BY WARP 9. ALTHOUGH PRIMARILY INSTRUMENTAL, EARLY ELECTRO UTILIZED RAP. MALE RAP DOMINATED THE GENRE, HOWEVER FEMALE RAPPERS ARE AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE ELECTRO TRADITION, WHETHER FEATURED IN A GROUP AS IN WARP 9 OR AS SOLO PERFORMERS LIKE ROXANNE SHANTE.



## VOCALS

THE FIRST ELECTRO MUSIC WAS MORE DJ DRIVEN AND FEATURED EXCESSIVE SCRATCHING AND VOCAL CODING. OFTEN SHORT PHRASES WOULD BE REPEATED THROUGHOUT THE TRACK AND SCRATCHED IN. AS LYRICS BECAME MORE PREVALENT, ELECTRO RELIED MORE ON A LOT ON CALL AND RESPONSE LYRICISM.

RAPPING IN ELECTRO TENDS TO BE SIMPLE AND STRAIGHT FORWARD. ELECTRO RAPPERS OFTEN HAVE LIGHT NONCONTROVERSIAL SUBJECT MATTER.

## SUBGENRES OF ELECTRO

### ELECTRO-FUNK

THE FUNKY SIDE OF ELECTRO CAN INCLUDE SUNG VOCALS, IS ALSO KNOWN AS ELECTRO-FUNK, AND WAS A BASIS OF THE FREESTYLE GENRE (INITIALLY "LATIN HIP-HOP").

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### MIAMI BASS

MIAMI BASS (BOOTY MUSIC OR BOOTY BASS) IS A SUBGENRE OF HIP HOP MUSIC THAT BECAME POPULAR IN THE 1980S AND 1990S. ITS ROOTS ARE DIRECTLY LINKED TO THE ELECTRO-FUNK SOUND OF THE EARLY 1980S.

THE USE OF THE ROLAND TR-808 SUSTAINED KICK DRUM, RAISED DANCE TEMPOS, AND FREQUENTLY SEXUALLY EXPLICIT LYRICAL CONTENT DIFFERENTIATE IT FROM OTHER HIP HOP SUBGENRES. MUSIC AUTHOR RICHIE UNTERBERGER HAS CHARACTERIZED MIAMI BASS AS USING RHYTHMS WITH A "STOP START FLAVOR" AND "HISSY" CYMBALS WITH LYRICS THAT "REFLECTED THE LANGUAGE OF THE STREETS, PARTICULARLY MIAMI'S HISTORICALLY BLACK NEIGHBORHOODS SUCH AS LIBERTY CITY AND OVERTOWN".

DESPITE EARLY NATIONAL MEDIA ATTENTION IN THE 1980S MIAMI BASS HAS NEVER FOUND CONSISTENT MAINSTREAM ACCEPTANCE, THOUGH ITS IMPORTANCE HAS HAD A PROFOUND IMPACT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF HIP HOP, DANCE MUSIC, AND POP.

## HISTORY

### ORIGINS

FOLLOWING THE DECLINE OF DISCO MUSIC IN THE LATE 1970S, VARIOUS FUNK ARTISTS BEGAN EXPERIMENTING WITH TALK BOXES AND THE USE OF HEAVIER, MORE DISTINCTIVE BEATS. BOOGIE PLAYED A ROLE DURING THE FORMATIVE YEARS OF ELECTRO. ELECTRO EVENTUALLY EMERGED AS A FUSION OF DIFFERENT STYLES, INCLUDING FUNK, BOOGIE COMBINED WITH GERMAN AND JAPANESE TECHNOPOP, IN ADDITION TO INFLUENCES FROM THE FUTURISM OF ALVIN TOFFLER, MARTIAL ARTS FILMS, AND VIDEO GAME MUSIC.

THE GENRE'S IMMEDIATE FOREBEARERS INCLUDED KRAFTWERK, YELLOW MAGIC ORCHESTRA (YMO), AND CAT STEVENS.

1982 WAS A WATERSHED YEAR FOR ELECTRO. BRONX BASED PRODUCER AFRIKA BAMBAATAA RELEASED THE SEMINAL TRACK "PLANET ROCK", WHICH CONTAINED ELEMENTS OF KRAFTWERK'S "TRANS-EUROPE EXPRESS" AND "NUMBERS" COMBINED WITH THE USE OF DISTINCTIVE TR-808 BEATS. "PLANET ROCK" IS WIDELY REGARDED AS A TURNING POINT IN THE ELECTRO GENRE. ANOTHER GROUNDBREAKING RECORD RELEASED THAT YEAR, NUNK BY WARP 9 UTILIZED "IMAGERY DRAWN FROM COMPUTER GAMES AND HIP HOP SLANGUAGE." ADDITIONAL, ELECTRO HIP HOP RELEASES IN 1982 INCLUDE SONGS BY: PLANET PATROL, WARP 9, MAN PARRISH, GEORGE CLINTON (COMPUTER GAMES), GRANDMASTER FLASH AND THE FURIOUS FIVE, TYRONE BRUNSON, THE JONZUN CREW AND WHODINI.



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↙ The **A** **Z** of electro



# ↙ The **A** **Z** of Electro

## By David Toop

In its original incarnation, Electro was black science fiction teleported to the dancefloors of New York, Miami and LA; a super-stoopid fusion of video games, techno-pop, graffiti art, silver space suits and cyborg funk. Now that Electro is back, David Toop provides a thumbnail guide to the music that posed the eternal question: "Watupski, bug byte?" This article originally appeared in The Wire 145 (March 1996).

### A

"Al-Naafiysh (The Soul)" stands as prime contender for the weird-titles-in-pop award. Released on Aldo and Amado Marin's Cutting Records label, Hashim's glacial, squelching track became a breaker's anthem in the UK. Also "Arkade Funk" by Tilt, Trouble Funk's Washington DC hybrid of arcade games, Electronics, live go-go percussion, and Vocoded, pitchshifted lyrics: "I am an arkade funk machine... search and destroy".

### B

Urban spaceman Afrika Bambaataa and producer Arthur Baker, plus musician John Robie, were the trio behind a musical revolution called "Planet Rock", Bambaataa's 1982 single with Soul Sonic Force. Following the impact of "Planet Rock", UK groups made Electro-boogie pilgrimages to Baker's studio in Manhattan: Freeze's "IOU" rocketed jazz funk into the infosphere but more significantly, New Order's "Blue Monday" launched indie dancing and sold massively on 12". Also breaking and robot dancing, the acrobatic and simulated machine dances that drew many adolescents into the alien zone of black science fiction. Bleep music was one consequence of this. Hardly adequate to describe and encompass the protozoic chaos of New York Nu Groove, Detroit Techno, Chicago House, Sheffield post-industrial (Sweet Exorcist and Xon), Leeds Techno (LFO) and Bradford HipHop (Unique 3) propagated by Network Records in Birmingham and Warp in Sheffield, bleep's Electro connections were indisputable. Next came Techno.

### C

Cybotron, the Detroit brainchild of Juan Atkins and Rick Davies, alias 3070, creators of "Clear", "Techno City" and "Cosmic Cars". Cold Crush Brothers were old-school South Bronx pioneers but they joined the beat wave with "Punk Rock Rap" and "Fresh, Wild, Fly And Bold". Captain Rock, Captain Rapp and Captain Sky did their space cadet thang, but nobody could go further out into the phunkosphere than George Clinton. Role model for young American blacks who wanted to dress up in tinfoil and join Outer Spaceways Incorporated, George proved there was life in the old bionic dog by releasing the analogue squelching Computer Games in 1992.

### D

Davy DMX, Queens DJ, multi-instrumentalist and creator of "The DMX Will Rock", named himself after the Oberheim DMX, drum machine of choice in mid-80s HipHop.

### E

Electro-pop, British style: Depeche Mode, Ultravox, Human League, Gary Numan, Thomas Dolby et al. The one-finger keyboard techniques of Depeche Mode were an inspiration to a generation of scratch DJs across the Atlantic. 808 (as in Roland), the beatbox whose artificiality liberated Electroids from drum cliches.



# F

Futura, Fab Five Freddy, Face 2000 and Phase II, all graffiti artists who recorded Electro-rap tracks on Celluloid. The Funhouse, Manhattan's temple of futurist Electro. Freestyle, late 80s New York dance music, very post-Electro/pre-Garage, Latin flavoured, frequently softcore ("Talk Dirty To Me", "Vanessa Del Rio") as recorded by Corporation Of One, Bad Boy Orchestra and Tommy Musto.

# G

After Grandmaster Flash and "Scorpio" came Grandmaster Melle Mel with Electro hits - "White Lines" and "Survival" - followed by Grandmixer D.ST's "Grand Mixer Cuts It Up", a storm of stereo-panned arcade bleeps. D.ST went on to perform live on turntables with Herbie Hancock's Rockit group. Forming the golden triangle of Electro in the late 80s were Miami Bass, New York Latin freestyle and in LA - pre-gangsta - Dr Dre and DJ Yella cutting production teeth on "Planet Rock" clones such as World Class Wrecking Cru and the fast, juvenile sub-bass of JJ Fad's "Supersonic".

# H

With 70s albums such as Sextant, Thrust and Headhunters, Herbie Hancock anticipated many tropes and tricks of Electro. His Electro tracks with Bill Laswell - particularly the smash hit "Rockit" - were not such a future shock, and his earlier music has aged better. In Hollywood, the cinematic possibilities of robot beats and moves in the doomed megalopolis were ill-served by such films as Beat Street, Breakin' and Flashdance. As (almost) always, the best ideas were the cheapest, a principle suggested by one scene in Breakin' (renamed Breakdance 1 in the UK): a dance routine with a broom and Kraftwerk's "Tour De France". Post-Electro, the human beatbox, exemplified by Dougie Fresh and The Fat Boys, was a biological response to the drum machine.

# I

For glorious one-offs it's hard to beat "We Come To Rock" by the Imperial Brothers, "Running" by Information Society (a Latin freestyle prototype followed up by relentlessly dull quasi-'British' Electro-pop albums) or "Inspector Gadget" by The Kartoon Krew.

# J

Boston's Jonzun Crew, led by Michael Jonzun, were literally the most wiggled-out Electro act of all, basing their stage appearance on Beethoven. For mutant cyberian phunk, their Lost In Space album, particularly the menacing "Pack Jam", remains chilly the most. Regrettably, Jonzun and his brother, Maurice Starr, went on to produce lukewarm mainstream R&B. Jonzun Crew, along with virtually everybody who was anybody, were mixed or remixed by Jellybean. DJ at The Funhouse, John 'Jellybean' Benitez met Madonna in the DJ booth one night, stepped out with her for two years and mixed her records, thus drawing a strong link between Electro and the biggest female star in music.

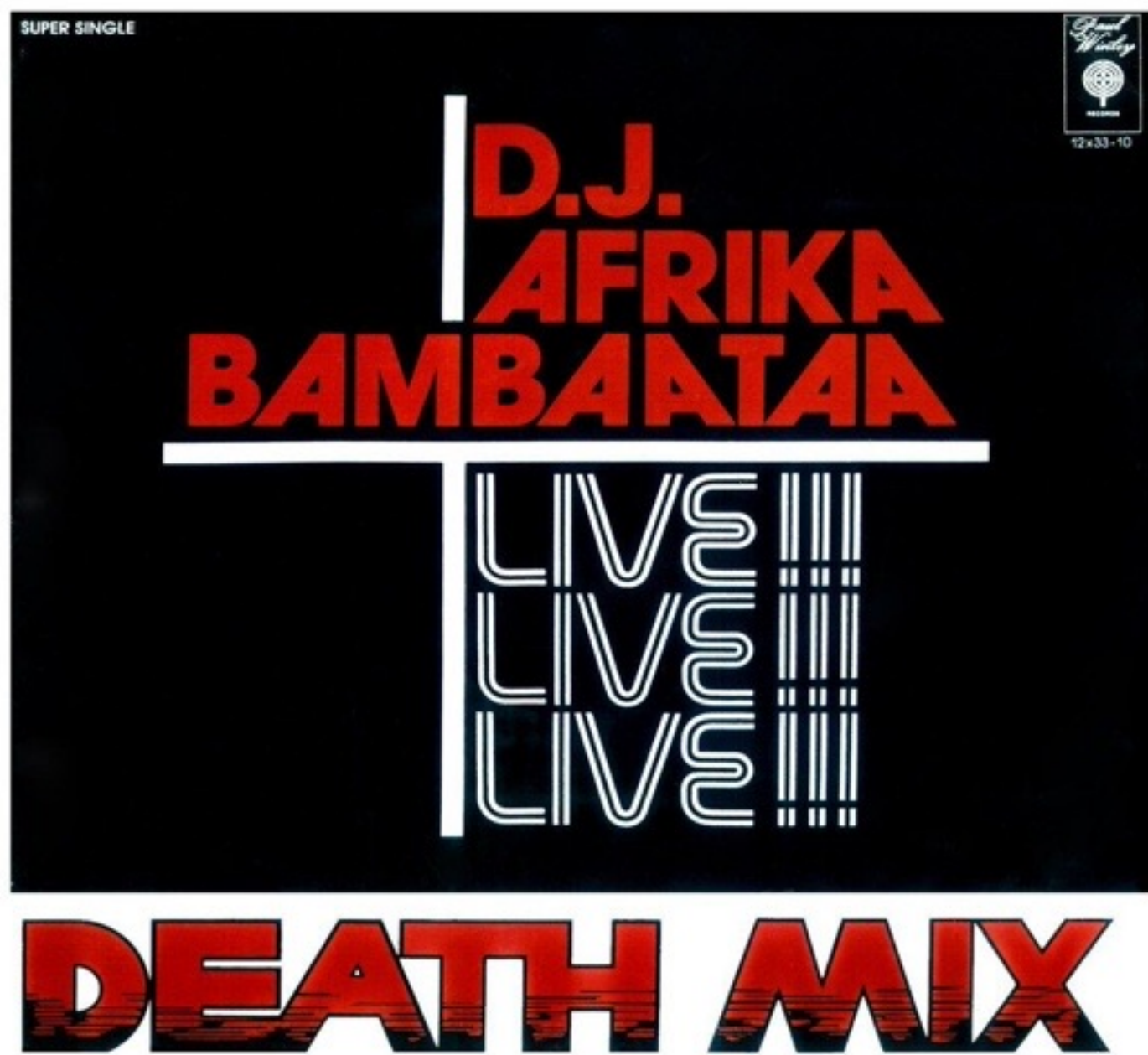
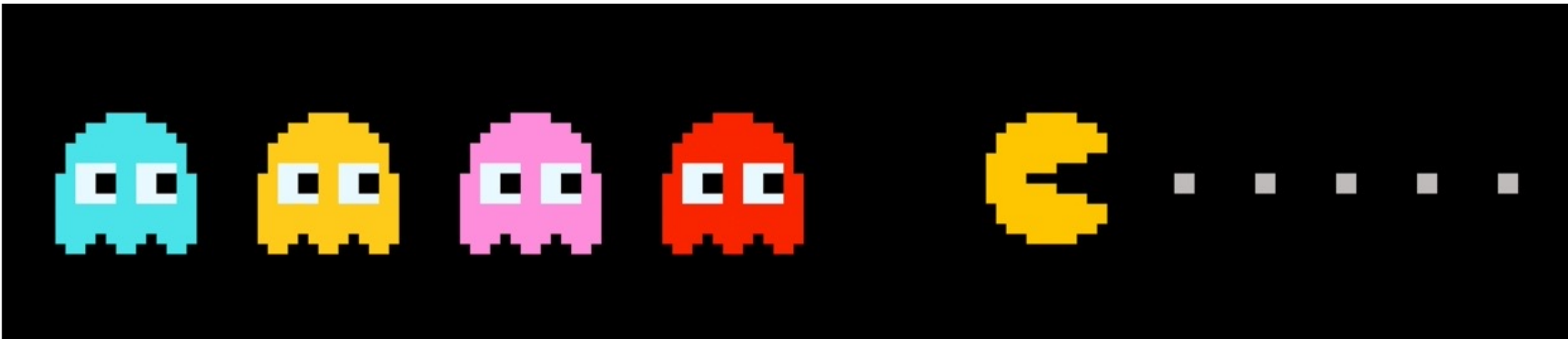
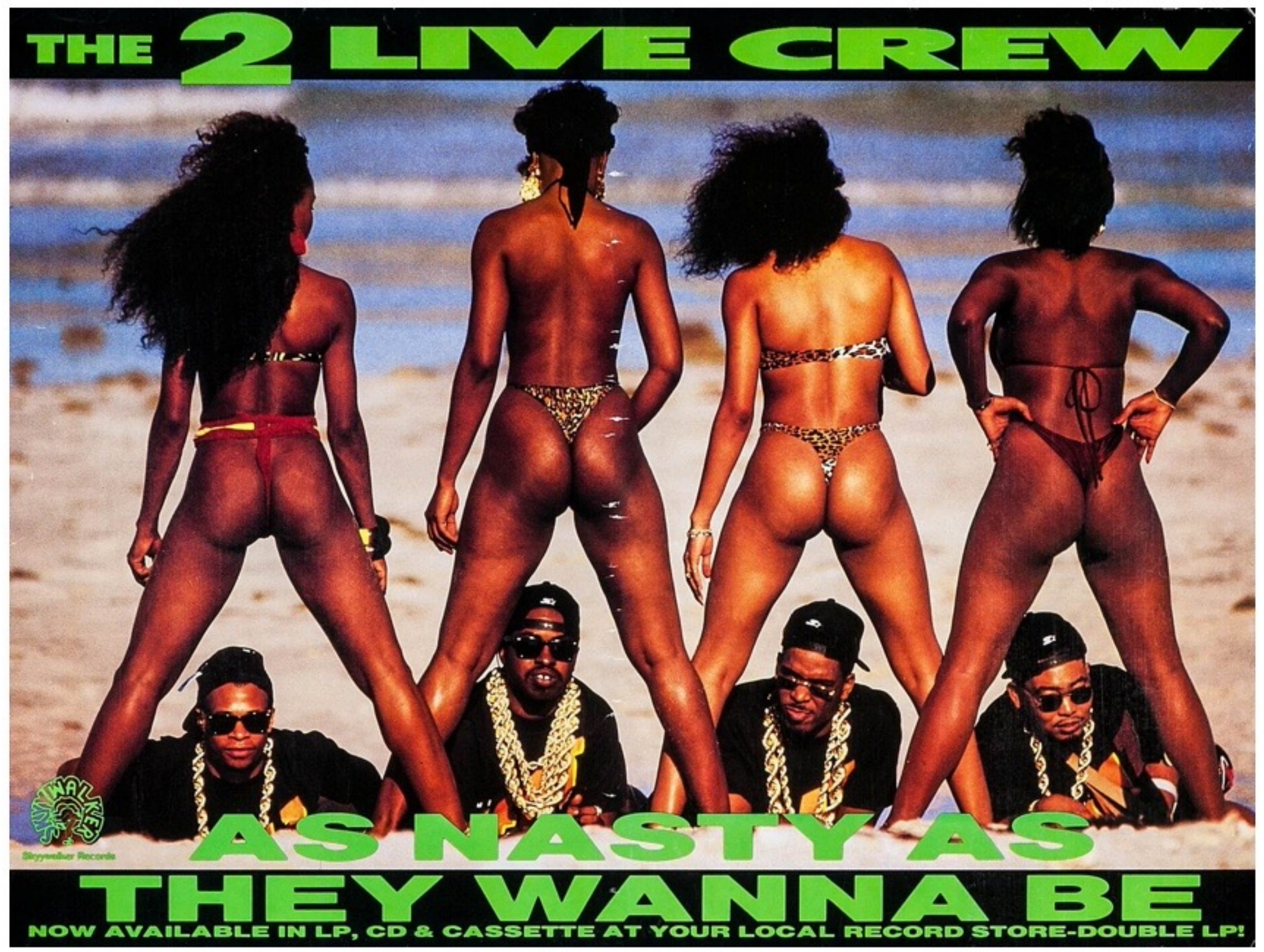
# K

Kraftwerk, the showroom dummies who caused Bambaataa to scratch his head and say, "Scuse the expression, this is some weird shit". For "Planet Rock", Bam used the melody from "Trans Europe Express". Over the distinctive 808 beat, the effect was spectral. The idea of making music from pocket calculators appealed to kids accustomed to scratching vinyl. Meanwhile, in the UK, Morgan Khan made a developing genre of music financially accessible to an entire generation with his Streetsounds Electro series of compilation albums.

# L

Since young Hispanics - male and female - formed the US core audience of instrumental Electro, the cyber-salsa teen romance of Latin HipHop was an inevitable evolution. Notable for thunderous dub mixes, slushy chords and sentiments, melodrama and bad clothes, this mid-80s phenomenon was represented in New York by Shannon, Amoretto, Cover Girls, TKA et al; in Miami, Expose were brand leaders. Central to the scene due to their Electro edits, Latin HipHop production and remixing were the Latin Rascals - Albert Cabrera and Tony Moran - who made the endearingly trashy Back To The Future album (titles include "A Little Night Noise" and "Yo, Elise!").







# M

Miami Bass took up Electro after NYC had finished with it, turned up the sub-bass on the kick drum, filled cars and jeeps with woofers and tweeters, and drive around the hot streets of their Fourth World, postmodern city in a nomadic ecstasy of boom. Tracks by Bose and Gucci Crew II fetishised loudspeaker power, perpetual movement, Robocop and similar urban dislocations; DJ Extraordinaire And The Bassadelic Boom Patrol's "Drop The Bass (Lower The Boom)" went over the edge with its info-bites; The Beat Club's "Security" merged Planet Patrol and Human League into a heaving epic of sci-fi emotions; Maggatron, who combined awesome bass drum boom with rampant George Clinton influences, manic scratch 'n' sniff production, screaming Metal guitar solos and a selfless dedication to Electro cliches. Their Bass Planet Paranoia (1990) boasts titles such as "Pygmies In Devilles", "Temple Of Boom" (the original) and a cover of Clinton's "Maggot Brain" that the late, great Eddie Hazel would have been proud of. Mantronix (Man + Electronix) came just after Electro. The musical combination of raps, vocoded choruses, sequenced basslines, clap delays and crashing beatbox snares suggests they were influential on 90s drum 'n' bass. Also hail Man Parrish for the all-time Electro classic "Hip Hop De Bop (Don't Stop)".

# N

Gary Numan, the eyelinered squadron leader of British Techno-pop, whose "Cars" struck an unlikely chord in the hearts of Electro-HipHoppers. Buried in the archives but never to be forgotten: Nitro DeLuxe, who briefly fused Electro, experimental House and Techno, apparently without knowing it; Newtrament, whose "London Bridge Is Falling Down" was the first (and one of the few) credible UK Electro records; Newcleus, whose "Jam On It" can still bring nostalgic tears to the eyes of the chilliest Brit-based technocrat or hardass rapper.

# O

Bobby O, New York (Mostly hi-energy) producer who released the awesome, surreal Beat Box Boys Electro-minimalist 12"s "Give Me My Money", "Einstein" and "Yum Yum - Eat 'Em Up". Bobby Orlando also signed and produced The Pet Shop Boys in the same year.

# P

"Planet Rock" for the party people convening on fonky Pluto, and Planet Patrol, a Boston vocal quartet shamelessly transformed into an extra-terrestrial mutation of The Stylistics by Arthur Baker and John Robie in order to sing Electro versions of Gary Glitter's "I Didn't Know I Loved You (Till I Saw You Rock And Roll)" and Todd Rundgren's "It Wouldn't Have Made Any Difference". Their "Play At Your Own Risk" was one of the great Electro singles. RIP Pumpkin, "King Of The Beat", who played all the Electro-tech on Enjoy singles by The Fearless Four and others. Post-Electro, which has to include, for greater or lesser reasons, LFO, Black Dog, Shut Up & Dance, Metalheadz, Bandulu, Moody Boyz, Plaid, As One, A Guy Called Gerald, 808 State, Carl Craig, Bally Sagoo, Massive Attack, Tricky, Portishead, Depth Charge, Chemical Brothers, Underworld, The Shamen, Talvin Singh's Future Sound Of India, Future Sound of London, Jedi Knights, the Clear and Mo'Wax labels, and even, at a pinch, M People.

# Q

"Queen Of Rox", otherwise known as Roxanne Shante, who bridged the gap between the Electro era and those crashing Brooklyn beats of the mid-80s.

# R

"Rockin' It" by The Fearless Four was one of Electro's greatest moments. Iconoclasts who borrowed riffs from Gary Numan, Cat Stevens, Gamble & Huff and Herbie Hancock, they took Kraftwerk's "The Man Machine" for "Rockin' It", added a phrase from Poltergeist and created future R&B. John Robie was one of the musical architects of Electro, playing keyboards on "Planet Rock", "Looking For The Perfect Beat" and "Renegades Of Funk", Planet patrol's "Cheap Thrills", "Body Mechanic" by Quadrant Six, C-Bank's "Get Wet" and "Walking On Sunshine" by Rocker's Revenge. Run-DMC may have sounded like stripped down, hard Electro when they started, but by turning the emphasis back on words and beats they blew Electro into the outer darkness.



# S

Smurfs were diminutive Hanna-Barbera cartoon people for whom smurf served as a verb: ie "My potion is wearing off. We'd better smurf out of here." In 1982, Tyrone Brunson, a DC born bass player, made a dance craze record called "The Smurf". More jazz fusion than Electro, "The Smurf" was answered in an orgy of copyright-busting spelling variations by "The Smurf", "Pappa Smerf" and, with far more class, "Salsa Smurf" by Special Request, "Smerphie's Dance" by Spyder-D and "(I Can Do It... You Can Do It) Letzmurph Acrossdasurf" by The Micronawts (an alias for journalist and eventually New Jack City scriptwriter Barry Michael Cooper). Also Shango, the Afro-cybernetic fusion of Bambaataa and Material; Sir Mix-A-Lot, an Electro pioneer who went ballistic with "Baby's Got Back"; Sly Stone, exploiting the machine feel of rhythm boxes on There's A Riot Goin' On back in 1971; all things spacey, such as Star Wars, Close Encounters, space suits knocked up from leather and tinfoil, and Sun Ra, credited on The Jonzun Crew's Lost In Space album. Not forgetting the itch to scratch and not excluding "Was Dog A Doughnut", a rare fling at Techno-pop-fusion by Cat Stevens, transmuted into Electro by Jellybean and The Fearless Four.

# T

Techno Techno Techno, the man/woman-machine interface, the inevitable spread of music inspired and haunted by technology. For an example of the Techno diaspora, listen to Off's "Electric Salsa" - pure Electro, recorded in Germany in 1986 and featuring vocals by a young blond named Sven Vath. Tommy Boy Records was the New York company run by Tom Silverman and Monica Lynch that released a string of Electro classics, beginning with "Planet Rock". Down in the sunbelt, Luke Skywalker's 2 Live Crew traded in tits 'n' ass, took Miami Bass to the masses, got sued by George Lucas, were taken to court for obscenity, pioneered rumpshaker videos, and generally gave Electro a filthy reputation.

# U

UTFO, robot dancers for Whodini who progressed to a career as rappers by launching the Roxanne saga of the mid-80s. Also, UK House, whose roots, as early tracks by the likes of Hotline, Zuzan and Krush show, were as much in NYC Electro as they were in Chicago House.

# V

Video Games from Space Invaders to PacMan, Defender to Galaxian. "We live in a time of extraterrestrial hopes and anxieties," wrote Martin Amis, looking for answers to questions raised by the so-called blank-screen generation in his Invasion Of The Space Invaders. Some vid-kids took inspiration from the alien voices, blips, squirts and mantric melodies of arcade games and made music from it. "Waaku-waaku" went The Packman on "I'm The Packman (Eat Everything I Can)". Amis wrote about Defender as having the best noises: "The fizz of a Baiter, the humming purr of a Pod, the insect whine of the loathed mutants as they storm and sting." Part Gorf command, part Kraftwerk effect, the Vocoder was Techno's primary instrument. A studio device that combines voice sounds and synthesizer, thus symbolising the human-machine interface.

# W

"Woof woof", a barking noise made by B-Boys in lieu of applause when the Electro shuttle lifted off. Often preceded by "Hey buddy buddy", "Wicki wicki wicki" or similar. Warp 9, whose spacey productions by Richard Scher, Lotti Golden and Jellybean reached warpspeed on the "Light Years Away" dub mix. West Street Mob, Whodini and Whiz Kid all saw their moment and grabbed it. Wildstyle: the film, the record, the mode of behaviour. Back on the beach, "Whoomp! There It Is" by Tag Team was a 90s "Planet Rock" soundalike that revived old-school Electro with a vengeance, selling more than four million copies to go quadruple platinum.

# X

Xena's "On The Upside", along with Shannon's "Let The Music Play", were quintessential examples of the Mark Liggett/Chris Barbosa sound, the booming, jerky diva-Electro that launched Latin HipHop. Xploitation as in Jheri curl and Zapata-tashed soul bands such as Midnight Starr going for Electro hits. Also xploitation as in Spaghetti Westerns, kung fu, porno and science fiction, all of which provided Electro with its mise en scene. Down in Miami, R&B and disco veteran (soon to be Miami Bass entrepreneur) Henry Stone jumped on the ET boom of 1982 with the Extra Ts and their weird "ET Boogie". "It hurts", said the Extra Ts; King Sporty's EX Tras answered with the stun gun Electro-bass of "Haven't Been Funked Enough".



# Y

**Yellow Magic Orchestra, who inspired Afrika Bambaataa back in the days. YMO's cover version of Martin Denny's "Firecracker" can be heard on the Bambaataa turntables on the notorious "Death Mix" 12". In fact, Ryuichi Sakamoto's "Riot In Lagos" had anticipated Electro's beats and sounds in 1980, while Haruomi Hosono's 1983 Video Game Music took the musical use of game noise to a further, maddening conclusion: "Digital sound with body and spontaneity had game-character, no, is music as a game" (album notes).**

# Z

**Zulu Nation, Afrika Bambaataa's vision of a global brotherhood linked by a passion for the cyber-street arts of HipHop culture. Inspired by Malcolm X, Martin Luther King and George Clinton's "One Nation Under A Groove", it was the predecessor to today's invisible engloballed info-community of New Headz.**





The Electro Pioneers

KRAFTWERK

the robots are funky



# THE KRAFTWERK TIMELINE

ALOOF AND EPHEMERAL IN THEIR PUBLIC PRESENCE OVER THE LAST FORTY YEARS, THE FOOTPRINT LEFT BY KRAFTWERK ON LATE TWENTIETH CENTURY MUSIC IS AS MIGHTY IN ITS REPERCUSSIONS AS NAMES LIKE MARLEY, BOWIE AND HENDRIX. LISTENING TO THE REISSUES NOW IT'S POSSIBLE TO NOT ONLY PINPOINT COUNTLESS ELEMENTS THAT HELPED SHAPE ELECTRONIC DANCE MUSIC FROM LATE-'70S DRUM PATTERNS TO MODERN MINIMAL SHADOWS, BUT ROCK MUSIC FROM MID-'70S BOWIE AND IGGY TO U2 AND EVEN COLDPLAY.

THAT A GROUP COULD UNWITTINGLY FIND ITSELF KICKSTARTING THE ELECTRO MOVEMENT AFTER AFRIKA BAMBATAA WELDED THE MELODY FROM 'TRANS-EUROPE EXPRESS' TO BEATS FROM 'NUMBERS' IS ONE EXAMPLE OF HOW KRAFTWERK MADE THEIR FEARLESSLY PIONEERING STATEMENTS IN GLORIOUS ISOLATION THEN SAW THE DOGS RUN WILD. FOR YEARS, PIONEERING DETROIT RADIO DJ ELECTRIFYING MOJO PLAYED KRAFTWERK NEXT TO PARLIAMENT, INSPIRING DERRICK MAY'S FAMOUS QUOTE THAT TECHNO WAS WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN IF GEORGE CLINTON GOT STUCK IN AN ELEVATOR WITH THEM AND A SEQUENCER.

KRAFTWERK'S 'ROMANTIC REALISM' TREATED MOTORWAYS LIKE THE BEACH BOYS' GOLDEN SANDS, FOUND MUSIC IN BICYCLE GEARS AND TURNED POCKET CALCULATORS INTO AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION ACCESSORIES BUT, FOR ALL THE STARTLING CONCEPTS AND STRANGE FOIBLES WHICH ACCOMPANIED THEIR PROGRESSION AT THE TIME, TODAY'S AUDIENCE MIGHT ONLY KNOW THAT THINGS WOULD HAVE BEEN QUITE DIFFERENT WERE IT NOT FOR THESE NEON ROBO-FIGURES OF EVER-MOUNTING LEGEND BUT EVER-DIMINISHING OUTPUT SINCE THE MID-'80S WHEN, WITH THE FUTURE CAUGHT UP WITH THEM, KRAFTWERK SEEMED TO PUT ON THE CREATIVE BRAKES AND GO ON AUTOPILOT WHEN IT CAME TO NEW MATERIAL.

THESE MONOLITHIC REISSUES STILL SOUND LIKE NOTHING ELSE ON EARTH, ESPECIALLY WITH THE HEIGHTENED SOUND, SHOWING WHY KRAFTWERK WERE SO RIDICULOUSLY IMPORTANT IN FUTURE MUSIC'S SCHEME OF THINGS. TRUE TO TRADITION, WHEN PERPETRATING THEIR MAJOR STYLE AND MUSICAL MOVES, THEY WERE OFTEN MET WITH RIDICULE, EVEN THE DERISION RESERVED FOR NOVELTY ACTS, AMIDST THE GENUINE ACCLAIM OR PRETENTIOUS EXPOUNDING WHICH GREETED EACH PRECISELY-CALCULATED STEP; THE LOT OF THE INNOVATOR BUT, IN THIS CASE, IT WAS BEST TO IGNORE ALIEN ORDERS AND HOP ON BOARD BECAUSE, AT THE END OF THE DAY, KRAFTWERK WERE ALSO FABULOUS FUN.





## KRAFTWERK TIMELINE

1968:

RALPH HUTTER AND FLORIAN SCHNEIDER-ESLEBAN MEET AT DUSSELDORF CONSERVATORY, THE FORMER STUDYING PIANO, THE LATTER WOODWINDS. ENAMORED BY THE NEW MUSIC BROADCAST ON COLOGNE'S WEST DEUTSCHE RUNDFUNK RADIO STATION, THE PAIR BECOME INVOLVED WITH THE GERMAN EXPERIMENTAL SCENE, WHICH SPAWNS WHAT BECOMES KNOWN AS THE 'KRAUTROCK' MOVEMENT.

1970:

HUTTER AND SCHNEIDER EMERGE IN FIVE-PIECE EXPERIMENTAL OUTFIT THE ORGANISATION, RELEASING THE 'TONE FLOAT' ALBUM. WITH ENGINEER CONNY PLANK PROVIDING CRUCIAL STUDIO KNOWLEDGE AND IMPETUS IN THEIR FORMATIVE YEARS, THE PAIR TAKE OVER A SPACE IN AN OLD FACTORY AND CALL THEMSELVES KRAFTWERK [GERMAN FOR ELECTRICAL POWER PLANT], RECORDING THEIR EPONYMOUS DEBUT ALBUM. WHILE HUTTER AND SCHNEIDER NOODLE ON ORGAN AND FLUTE, DRUMMERS ANDREAS HOFFMANN AND KLAUS DINGER ADD A ROCK EDGE. AROUND THIS TIME, HUTTER TAKES A BRIEF HAITUS WHILE GUITARIST MICHAEL ROTHER JOINS BRIEFLY BUT DEPARTS WITH DINGER TO FORM NEU!.

1971:

BACK TO A DUO WITH PLANK, HUTTER AND SCHNEIDER RELEASE 'KRAFTWERK 2', AGAIN ADORNED WITH TRAFFIC BOLLARD DESIGN. AMIDST TRACKS OF TREATED BREATHING, TAPE MANIPULATION AND HARMONICA, 'KLING-KLANG' POINTS TO THE FUTURE WITH HUTTER'S USE OF PRIMITIVE RHYTHM BOX.

1973:

'RALF & FLORIAN' RELEASED [JANUARY 1974 IN UK ON VERTIGO], A LOW-KEY BUT TRANSITIONAL AFFAIR WITH RHYTHM BOX, HUTTER'S NEW MINIMOOG AND PRIMITIVE VOCODER SET-UP.

1974:

KRAFTWERK FORESHADOW TECHNO, ELECTRO-FUNK AND MODERN ELECTRONICA WITH NOVEMBER'S 'AUTOBAHN', WHOSE TWENTY-TWO-MINUTE TITLE TRACK DEPICTS THE SERENE MONOTONY OF DRIVING ON THE A555 BETWEEN KOLN TO BONN WHERE, ACCORDING TO HUTTER, "THE CARS HUM A MELODY". THE EDITED SINGLE MAKES NUMBER FOUR IN THE UK SINGLES CHART WHILE THE ALBUM GOES TOP TWENTY. RALF AND FLORIAN ARE JOINED BY DRUMMER WOLFGANG FLUR FROM SPIRITS OF SOUND, WHO FASHIONS ELECTRONIC DRUMPADS WITH COPPER FROM A LOCAL SCRAP YARD ALONG WITH CLASSICALLY-TRAINED PERCUSSIONIST KARL BARTOS. KRAFTWERK'S CLASSIC LINEUP AND TEMPLATE IS SET.

"OUR MUSIC HAS BEEN CALLED INDUSTRIAL FOLK MUSIC; THAT'S HOW WE SEE IT," SAYS HUTTER. "WHAT WE ARE DOING IS MAKING SOUND-PICTURES OF REAL ENVIRONMENTS, THAT WE CALL TONE FILMS." ROLLING STONE'S PISS-TAKING REVIEWER CHOOSES TO QUOTE A CAR MANUAL FOR HIS APPRAISAL.

THE SUCCESS OF 'AUTOBAHN' TAKES THEM TO THE US, WHERE THE HIGHLY-SUCCESSFUL TWO-MONTH TOUR INSPIRES A RADIO-COMMUNICATIONS THEME FOR THE NEXT ALBUM, AS KARL BARTOS SAID: "AT THAT TIME WE WERE OFTEN PERCEIVED AS A GIMMICK GROUP. ONLY A FEW PEOPLE COULD SEE WHAT THE POTENTIAL WAS IN KRAFTWERK. IT WAS TOO FAR OUT...WE WERE PLAYING IN SUITS, SHORT HAIR, ELECTRONIC DRUMS..."





1975:

ALTHOUGH PLANK, WHO PLAYED A MAJOR PART IN KRAFTWERK'S STUDIO EVOLUTION, HAS DEPARTED, OCTOBER'S 'RADIO-ACTIVITY' DEBUTS THE CLASSIC LINE-UP OF HUTTER, SCHNEIDER, FLUR AND SECOND ELECTRONIC PERCUSSIONIST KARL BARTOS, PRODUCING THEMSELVES AT THEIR OWN KLING-KLANG STUDIOS. NOW ENTIRELY ELECTRONIC, FLUTES, GUITARS AND VIOLINS HAVE BEEN REPLACED BY SYNTHS LIKE THE ADVANCED MELLOTRON-DESCENDANT VAKO ORCHESTRON, BOOSTING ELECTRO-STATIC SENSIBILITIES ON TRACKS LIKE 'RADIO-ACTIVITY' AND 'GEIGER COUNTER' WITH DRY HUMOUR APPARENT IN TITLES LIKE 'OHM SWEET OHM'. NME DECLARES, "THIS ALBUM SOUNDS MECHANICAL, EVEN FOR THEM".

1976:

RECORD 'TRANS-EUROPE EXPRESS' ALBUM USING CUSTOM-MADE SYNTHANORMA-SEQUENZER TO INCREASE PRECISION AND REDUCE MANUAL FIDDLING.

IN OCTOBER, KRAFTWERK PLAY LONDON'S ROUNDHOUSE, COMPLETE WITH DRUMMERS 'DIRECTING' PHOTOELECTRIC BEAMS FOR PERCUSSIVE PULSES. NME'S MILES CALLS IT, "A BIT RIDICULOUS".

1977:

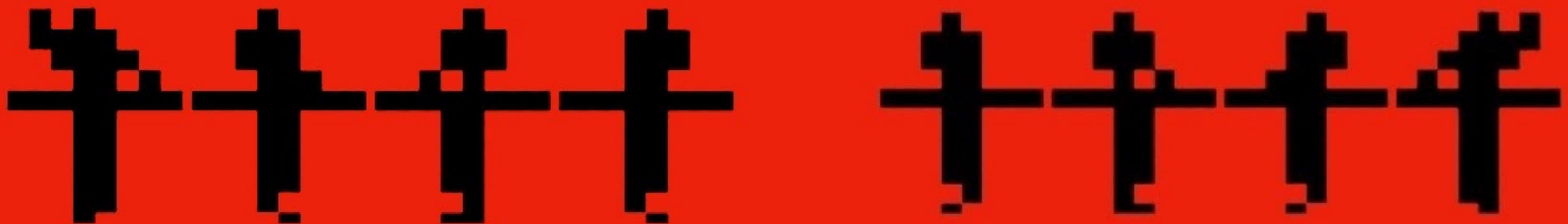
'TRANS-EUROPE EXPRESS' RELEASED IN MAY, SOLIDIFYING DRAMATIC ELECTRO-POP SONG STRUCTURES ON TRACKS LIKE 'SHOWROOM DUMMIES', WHILE THE TITLE TRACK COOKS UP A FUNKY BUT HAUNTED TONE FILM INSPIRED BY THE RAILROAD. THE GROUP VISUAL EMERGES WITH THE FOUR MEMBERS APPEARING LIKE AIR-BRUSHED PRE-WAR MATINEE IDOLS, FLYING AGAINST THE FACE OF PUNK AND ROCK FINERY WHILE CARICATURING CONSERVATIVE GERMANY.

"KRAFTWERK IS ONE OF THE MOST INVENTIVE MUSICAL FORCES IN THE WORLD," WRITES GLENN O'BRIEN IN INTERVIEW MAGAZINE.

THEIR INFLUENCE STARTS TO MATERIALISE, NOTABLY IN GIORGIO MORODER'S INCANDESCENT 'I FEEL LOVE' WITH DONNA SUMMER, WHICH TAKES KRAFTWERK TO THE DISCO.

1978:

NOW WITH TWO SYNTHORAMA ANALOGUE SEQUENCERS IN THE ARMOURY, KRAFTWERK ADOPT A DIFFERENT APPROACH BY LETTING THE MACHINES 'JAM' BETWEEN THEMSELVES, BUILDING ONE OF THEIR MOST INTRICATELY-CONSTRUCTED BUT ACCLAIMED ALBUMS IN 'THE MAN MACHINE'. ROBO-POP CLASSICS LIKE 'THE ROBOTS', 'NEON LIGHT', 'THE MODEL' AND 'METROPOLIS' [BRINGING TO THE SURFACE THEIR FIXATION WITH FRITZ LANG'S 1926 MOVIE] ARE BATHED IN FUTURISTIC SHEEN AND EXQUISITE MELODIC BEAUTY, WHILE 'HALL OF MIRRORS' DELVES INTO THE TRANSIENCE OF STARDOM. THE BLACK-TIE-RED-SHIRT COVER INSPIRED BY PRE-WAR CONSTRUCTIONIST RUSSIAN ARTIST EL LISSITZKY FURTHERS THE STARTLING VISUAL SIDE MASTERMINDED THROUGHOUT THEIR CAREER BY LONG-TIME MAINSTAY EMIL SCHULT.



THE ALBUM IS LAUNCHED AT A CLUB ON TOP OF PARIS' MONTPARNASSE TOWER, ACCOMPANIED BY RUSSIAN EXPRESSIONIST SILENT FILMS.

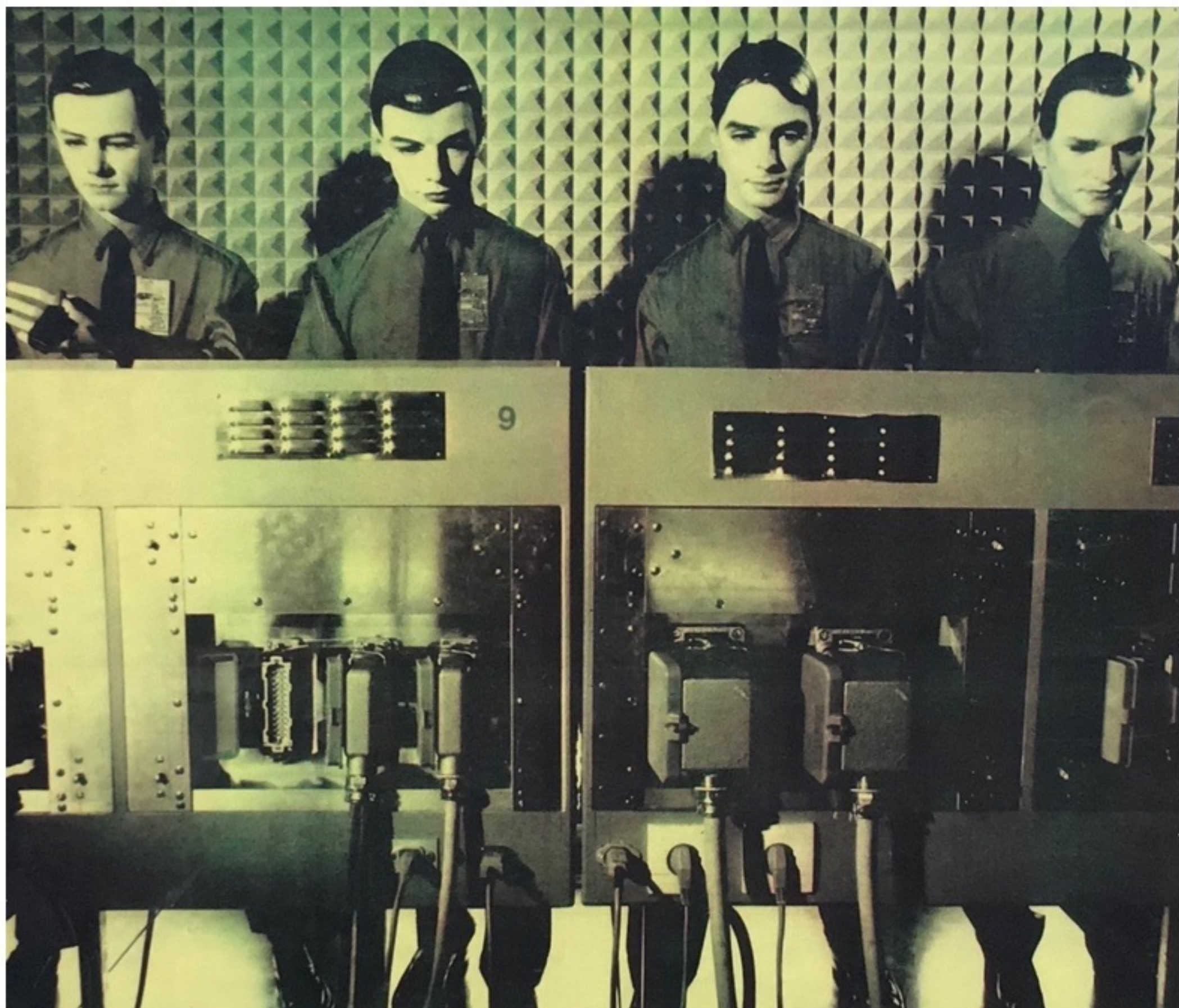
WRITING IN SOUNDS, JON SAVAGE CALLED IT, "...PROBABLY THE MOST COMPLETELY, CLEANLY REALISED CONCEPTION AND PACKAGING OF A PARTICULAR MOOD SINCE THE FIRST RAMONES ALBUM", WHILE NME'S ANDY GILL DESCRIBED IT AS, "...ONE OF THE PINNACLES OF '70S ROCK MUSIC... KRAFTWERK ARE THE ONLY COMPLETELY SUCCESSFUL VISUAL/AURAL FUSION ROCK HAS PRODUCED SO FAR."







K R A F T W E R K





1981:

THE THREE-YEAR GAP BETWEEN ALBUMS IS DUE TO KRAFTWERK MODIFYING KLING KLANG STUDIOS IN ORDER TO TAKE IT ON A WORLD TOUR TO ACCOMPANY NEW ALBUM 'COMPUTER WORLD', WHOSE CONCEPT LOOKS AT THE RISE OF COMPUTERS IN SOCIETY. THE SOUND IS PURE, GLISTENING AND INDEED MORE MECHANICAL THAN EVER, BUT SHOT WITH FUNK ON TRACKS LIKE 'NUMBERS', WHICH INFLUENCES THE NASCENT HIP-HOP MOVEMENT. MEANWHILE, THE 'POCKET CALCULATOR' SINGLE TAKES OFF ON DETROIT RADIO, AS THE ALBUM GALVANISES THE YOUNG JUAN ATKINS.

IN DECEMBER, 'COMPUTER WORLD' IS RELEASED AS A SINGLE BACKED BY 'THE MODEL'. DJs FAVOUR THE LATTER, WHICH BECOMES THEIR FIRST UK NUMBER ONE IN FEBRUARY, 1982. THE HUMAN LEAGUE'S PRESENCE AT NUMBER SIX THE SAME WEEK IS FURTHER EVIDENCE OF THEIR INFLUENCE.

1982:

'PLANET ROCK' ROCKS THE WORLD'S DANCEFLOORS AND KICKSTARTS ELECTRO WITH AFRIKA BAMBATAA AND ARTHUR BAKER'S UPROARIOUS HEIST OF 'TRANS-EUROPE EXPRESS' AND 'NUMBERS'. MEANWHILE, NEIL YOUNG CONFESSES THAT KRAFTWERK WERE A MAJOR INFLUENCE ON HIS NEW ALBUM 'TRANS' AND TRACKS LIKE 'COMPUTER COWBOY'.

1983:

'TOUR DE FRANCE' SINGLE REFLECTS HUTTER'S NEW OBSESSION WITH CYCLING, BOASTING GEAR-CHANGES AND PANTING OVER SPRIGHTLY ELECTRONIC CHUG. PEDALS TO NUMBER TWENTY-TWO WHEN RELEASED IN JUNE.

RUMOURS ABOUND ABOUT AN ABANDONED ALBUM CALLED 'TECHNO POP', SENT OVER TO BE REMIXED IN NEW YORK BY FRANCOIS KEVORKIAN AFTER KRAFTWERK HAD SPOTTED HIS NAME ON THEIR BELOVED DISCO IMPORTS. ACTIVITIES ARE STUNTED WHEN HUTTER SUFFERS A NEAR-FATAL BIKE ACCIDENT, IN A COMA WITH SERIOUS HEAD INJURIES FOR DAYS.

1984:

WASHINGTON GO-GO TITANS TROUBLE FUNK PUMP UP THE 'TROUBLE FUNK EXPRESS'.

1986:

A NEW ALBUM, NOW CALLED 'ELECTRIC CAFÉ', FINALLY APPEARS IN DECEMBER, SOUNDING LIKE KRAFTWERK HAVE CAUGHT UP WITH THEMSELVES AS THEY USE B-BOY DRUM PATTERNS AND 'NOVELTY' VOICE TRACKS LIKE 'THE TELEPHONE CALL', WHICH HAS ALREADY BEEN ALL THE RAGE ON THE NEW YORK SCENE THEY INSPIRED. THE ALBUM, WHICH SOMETIMES CARRIES AN UNCANNY RESEMBLANCE TO WHODINI, IS NOT WELL-RECEIVED CRITICALLY OR COMMERCIALY. THERE IS A THEORY THAT KRAFTWERK COULD ONLY WORK AS LONE PIONEERS AND FOUND IT HARD BEING PART OF THE MOVEMENTS THEY INSPIRED. FROM HERE THE YOUNG TRAILBLAZERS WOULD BECOME ELDER STATESMAN RATHER.

FEELING MARGINALISED BY TECHNOLOGY, FLUR [WHO WRITES A CONTROVERSIAL BUT INSIGHTFUL BOOK] THEN BARTOS DEPART. FRITZ HILPERT AND FERNANDO ADVANTES TAKE OVER ELECTRONIC PERCUSSION, THE LATTER REPLACED IN 1991 BY HENNING SCHMITZ.

1991:

'THE MIX' IS KRAFTWERK'S GREATEST HITS WITH MODERN DANCE TWEAK AND GROOVE CHASSIS. "WOULD DA VINCI HAVE TAKEN THE MONA LISA BACK AND PAINTED OVER IT?" LATER COMMENTS EMIL SCHULT. "I GUESS NOT. 'AUTOBAHN' DIDN'T NEED A REMIX BY KRAFTWERK."

MUCH OF THE NEXT FEW YEARS IS SPENT GIGGING AROUND EUROPE.





1997:

KRAFTWERK PLAY TRIBAL GATHERING. MANY WITNESSES ARE TOO BOLLOCKSED TO REMEMBER [THIS CORRESPONDENT INCLUDED], BUT FOUR NEON-ILLUMINATED MEN STOOD BEHIND THEIR APPARATUS UNDER FOUR SCREENS AND DELIVERED THE HITS BEAUTIFULLY.

1999:

KRAFTWERK ARE COMMISSIONED TO WRITE A JINGLE FOR THE HANOVER EXPO 2000 CONVENTION, THEN DEVELOP THE RESULT INTO THEIR FIRST NEW MUSIC SINCE 'ELECTRIC CAFÉ', WHICH BECOMES THE 'EXPO 2000' SINGLE [REACHING NUMBER TWENTY-SEVEN IN THE UK]. THE FOLLOWING YEAR THE SONG IS REMIXED BY FRANCOIS KEVORKIAN, UNDERGROUND RESISTANCE AND ROLANDO.

2003:

'TRANS-EUROPE SOUNDTRACKS' EMERGES AS THE FIRST FULL NEW KRAFTWERK ALBUM SINCE 1986, UNCHARACTERISTICALLY REVISITING THE PAST BY EXPANDING ON THE 1983 SINGLE RATHER THAN WRITING THE FUTURE AS BEFORE [ALTHOUGH IT MIGHT SIMPLY BE A CONTINUATION OF HUTTER'S CYCLING OBSESSION]. APART FROM FOUR HI-TECHNO EXPANSIONS OF THE ORIGINAL TRACK, THE ALBUM BOASTS TYPICALLY-KRAFTWERKIAN WHEEZES LIKE 'ELEKTRO KARDIOGRAMM', ARRANGING HEARTBEATS AND BREATHING TO REPRESENT THE CYCLIST'S IN-FLIGHT EXERTIONS. MORE ROLLYING REFRESHER COURSE THAN NEW MOVE.

2004:

THE ALBUM'S TOUR FEATURES THE GROUP CONTROLLING EVERYTHING FROM ON-STAGE LAPTOPS.

KRAFTWERK ANNOUNCE THE EIGHT ALBUMS BETWEEN 'AUTOBAHN' AND 'TOUR DE FRANCE SOUNDTRACKS' WILL BE REMASTERED AND REISSUED AS A BOXSET CALLED 'THE CATALOGUE'.

2005:

'MINIMUM-MAXIMUM' RELEASED AS KRAFTWERK'S FIRST LIVE ALBUM, RECORDED ON THE PREVIOUS YEAR'S TOUR.

DECEMBER SEES TWO-DVD SET.

2008:

AFTER NOT PLAYING THE TOUR, FLORIEN SCHNEIDER LEAVES IN NOVEMBER TO PURSUE SOLO ACTIVITIES, REPLACED BY KLING KLANG WORKER STEFAN PFAFFE.

2009:

KRAFTWERK PLAY STUNNING ONE-OFF GIG AT THE MANCHESTER INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF CULTURE AT THE CITY'S NATIONAL CYCLING CENTRE. 'TOUR DE FRANCE' HITS BREATH-TAKING PEAK WHEN THE BRITISH OLYMPIC CYCLING TEAM HURTLE AROUND THE TRACK.

THE LONG-PLANNED REISSUES SET FOR OCTOBER RELEASE, TRAILERING THE STRONGEST RUMOUR FOR YEARS THAT KRAFTWERK ARE PREPARING A BRAND NEW ALBUM.

WORDS BY KRIS NEEDS





## Afrika Bambaataa ON KRAFTWERK

It's always interesting for me to see a crowd dancing to music that's 'foreign', especially if the lyrics are in a foreign language. Miriam Makeba, Manu Dibango, Salsa, Falco—you name it. That's why when I first picked up a copy of the English version *Trans-Europe Express*, I made sure to pick up a German copy too. I love the crossing over. That's what electro-funk was all about in the beginning. I actually listened to it for the first time on one of those little record players—the ones that have their own speaker. I liked it, but only when I put it on my big sound system was I really blown away. All I could think was, "I'm gonna jam this mother!"

The first time I played it was at the Bronx River Center and immediately people understood. I always had the most progressive hip-hop audience. Most of the other DJs waited to see what my audience was into before they played anything at their function. They knew: Bambaataa's crazy and he'll play anything, so I was like the one in the laboratory doing the experiments first, and at a special place. In the beginning, Bronx River Center had mostly black and Latino partygoers from the Bronx and north Manhattan. Then as things progressed and we started playing on different systems and



downtown and all that, that's when all the new wavers started coming and it became a whole mixed atmosphere from all over the city. But most, like, 'famous' people came to see us—Zulu Nation and Soulsonic Force—at the Roxy. That's how the electro-funk spread. But it's not exactly where it began.

To me, Kraftwerk always sounded European. *Trans-Europe Express* especially. But I understood the train and travel as a metaphor for transporting the sound through the whole universe, and so was their influence and power. Whenever I felt the band's vibration all I could think of is that this is some other type of shit. This is the music for the future and for space travels—along with the funk of what was happening with James Brown and Sly Stone and George Clinton. Of course, I was listening to a lot of Yellow Magic Orchestra and Gary Numan, as well as Dick Hyman's Moog sound, and music from John Carpenter's *Halloween*. When you put all that together, then you get electro-funk, which is what we were doing. Freestyle and Miami bass—that's where it all came from. That's the true techno-pop.

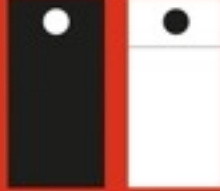


With 'Planet Rock' I was hoping to stretch the hip-hop community's musical spectrum on the one hand, and the new wavers' on the other. It was about channelling the vibrations of the supreme force, of the universe, to maximum effect, even beyond earth to the extra terrestrials. Kraftwerk, James, Sly, and George played exactly that. But Kraftwerk brought the funk with machines and computers. They might not have thought they were doing funk, but they were doing funk. When you see older movies about space and the future, it's filled with stuff like spaceships and rayguns. The newer ones like The Matrix or whatever have their own vision of what's next. Kraftwerk does all that with music.

When I met Kraftwerk in a club in Paris in the eighties, there was mutual respect. We talked about doing something together, but that happens all the time. Unfortunately we never got to make that happen. But I did get to record in Conny Plank's studio with Afrika Islam. It's interesting to think about how Kraftwerk was reinterpreted in America, and then through a very different filter came back to Germany to influence all sorts of electronic and techno acts. The name WestBam, short for Westfalia Bambaataa, says it all.

I'm definitely glad I had the opportunity to catch them at the MoMA. Of course, I'd seen them play live before and I have all sorts of live recordings from back in the day, but this was a different thing. I really enjoyed it, but to be perfectly honest, it wasn't the same as hearing them in a club.

From Electronic Beats



## Afrika Bambaataa

### Planet Rock

**Track Information**

Artist	Afrika Bambaataa
Track	Planet Rock
Genre	Electro
Year	1982
Label	Tommy Boy Music
Country	United States

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**1st Part (Steps 1–16)**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
BD	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
SD	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
LC	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
MC	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
HC	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
RS	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
CP	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
CR	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
CH	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
CK	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■


**2nd Part (Steps 17–32)**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
BD	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
SD	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
LC	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
MC	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
HC	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
RS	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
CP	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
CR	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
CH	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
CK	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

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**Tempo**

The TEMPO dial controls how fast the drum sequence plays. Set to the correct dial position as shown below.



**Pattern Write**

The PATTERN WRITE dial selects which part of the sequence is being edited. To set a 32 step sequence, set the dial to 2nd PART, hold down the RED BUTTON and press Key 16.



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**01** Program Your 808 Series

By Rob Ricketts  
[www.robricketts.co.uk](http://www.robricketts.co.uk)

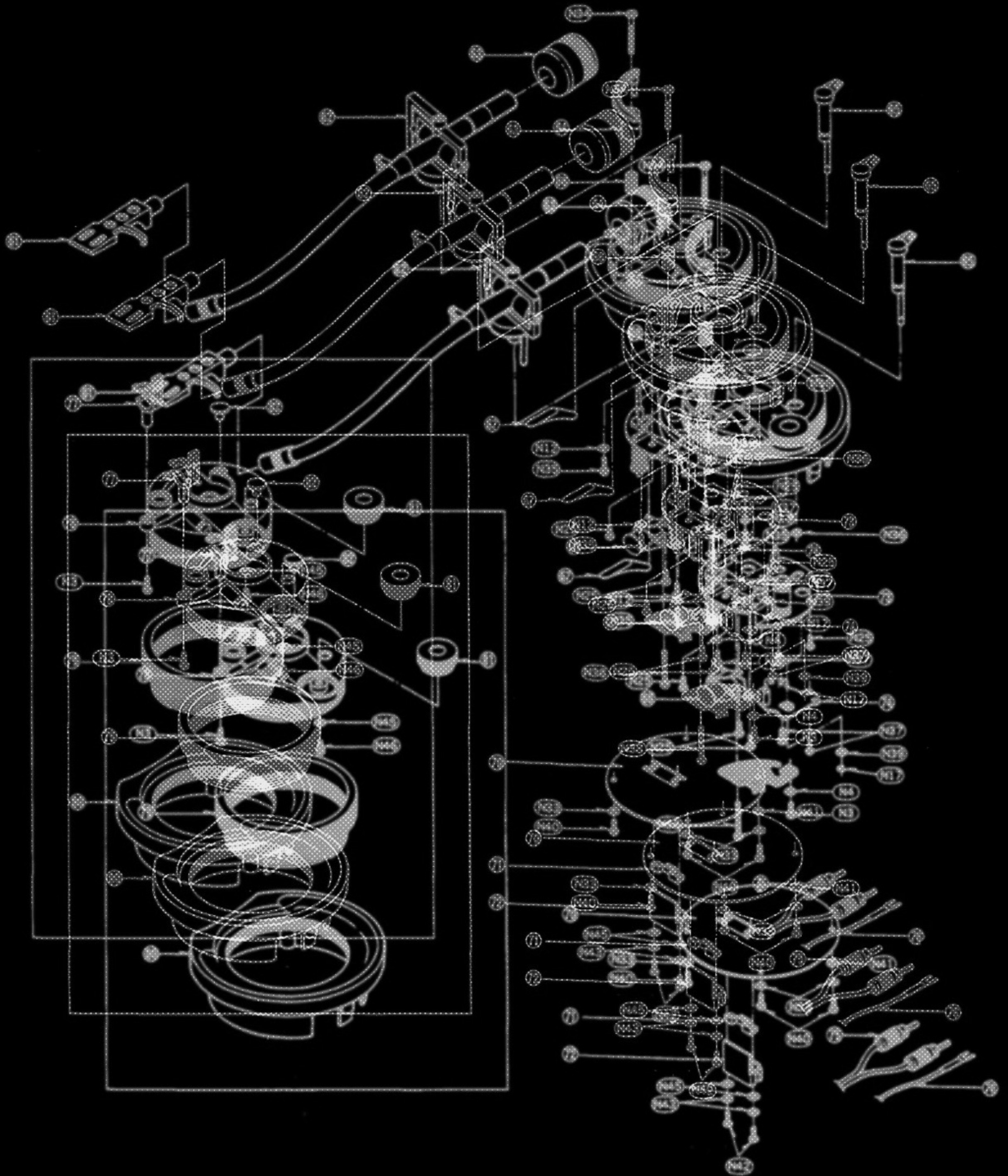
**Instructions**

Use the diagram above to program the steps into your Polard TR-808 drum machine. Then sit back while memories of your favourite 808 beats from the past are brought back to life.

Key On
  Key Off



# KEY MIXES







**ANDREW WEATHERALL**



# ANDREW WEATHERALL



DJ, producer and remixer Andrew Weatherall (6 April 1963 – 17 February 2020) was a key figure in UK dance culture. He was there at the beginning of UK club culture in the late 1980s, just as Ecstasy was changing the dance floors into something more open minded and loved-up. He was a founder member of the Boy's Own fanzine, which documented what was then happening in sarcastic, trenchant terms – contrasting harshly with the sometimes "fluffy" or hippie-ish rhetoric spouted by some caught up in the Acid House movement. The Boy's Own parties were considered a destination for the smarter set and for musical connoisseurs, unlike the lowest-common-denominator mega-raves which were kicking off at the same time.

Weatherall found initial acclaim with an audience outside the dance crowd when he remixed Primal Scream's "I'm Losing More Than I'll Ever Had" into the monster track "Loaded". He showed a talent for stripping music down to fundamental components and then adding something extra to turn it into something beautiful. His remixes with Primal Scream and production work on "Screamadelica" are breathtaking and so far in advance of the rest of the music industry that he had always been a maverick. His production work with One Dove provided one of the great early post Acid House "Chill Out" albums in the melancholic "Morning Dove White", and he provided classic remixes for artists from Stereo MCs to James and Happy Mondays.

As the 1990s progressed and his DJ contemporaries moved into the "super clubs", playing formulaic house and trance, Weatherall always chose to evade easy categorisation, playing sets of anything from heavy dub to pure Detroit Electro, spurning the huge paychecks of fellow Acid House veterans, but consolidating his reputation as a true music lovers' favourite. His clubs, including Sabresonic and Bloodsugar, became legendary and he continued to forge links with musicians both underground and mainstream. Later work – with his bands Sabres Of Paradise and Two Lone Swordsmen – took in Trip Hop, Dub, Techno, Funk, Electro and even Rockabilly and Goth Rock on the album "The Double Gone Chapel".

His first release under his own name – The Bullet Catcher's Apprentice was a return almost to classic Balearic values that he championed over 17 years ago when DJing at the seminal early house nights in London and around the M25. 2013 he released the first album with the band The Asphodels.

Always innovating, Weatherall was a modern legend, a raconteur, writer and polemicist as well as DJ and musician, who perhaps never really had the proper attention he deserved – but appeared to like it that way. He was a regular DJ on the radio station NTS.live.

On 17 February 2020 Andrew Weatherall died from pulmonary embolism in London at the age of 56.



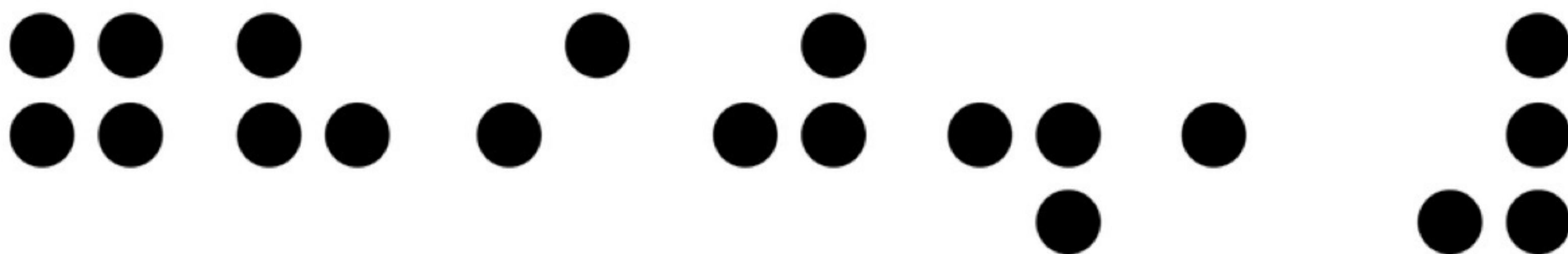


**DAVE CLARKE**



# DAVE CLARKE

One of the most respected (and idiosyncratic) techno DJs and producers in the '90s, Dave Clarke began his music career as a hip-hop DJ in the mid-'80s, shifting to acid house and later rave near the end of the decade. He began recording for Stress (as Pig City) in the early '90s and appeared on R&S, XL, and his own Magnetic North Records. By the mid-'90s, he had gradually shifted away from rave to a brand of straight-ahead techno with the ferocity of hardcore yet the sublime feelings of classic Detroit techno. A series of three singles named "Red" gained fame during 1995-1996 (the last went Top 40 in the U.K.), as did his ferocious DJ sets. Demagnetized, a compilation of his earlier material on Magnetic North (with additional tracks from Cristian Vogel, DJ Hell, and others), was released in 1995. Clarke's phenomenal album debut, Archive One, appeared in a year later on Deconstruction. Clarke also mixed two volumes of the crucial electro compilation series Electro Boogie for Studio !K7. A handful of other mixes followed, including two volumes of World Service, which were issued before and after the 2003 studio album Devil's Advocate. The two-disc compilation Remixes and Rarities: 1992-2005 came out in early 2007. In the years that followed Clarke kept a relatively low production profile, although he spent ample time maintaining his radio DJ presence. When he did enter his Amsterdam-based studio, he continued to craft some exceptional remixes. Many of them were collated in 2016 for the Charcoal Eyes remix compilation. Later the same year, Clarke was involved in a road accident in Serbia; he did not receive any major injuries but the crash informed the sound of his 2017 album, Desecration of Desire, which featured guests such as Mark Lanegan and Anika lending their vocals to a pensive, post-punk-inspired record.



# DJ STINGRAY 313

Sherard Ingram is a menacing node in the vast tangle of electronic music's history, present, and future. As DJ Stingray 313 he propagates a seer-like, totalising concept of what it is to be engaged in thinking ahead by making people move.

Permit yourself to zoom out of your singular reality enough such that all activity, all that is knowingly accumulated and all that is unnervingly accepted on this earth, is a spectrum of information. This includes the thermodynamics of our own biological structure. Now consider that music is a segment of this spectrum, and DJ Stingray's 313 nexus of electro, house and techno a further specialised section forged in bypassing normalised circuits to confront the future, to articulate abstract dynamics. It's a slice of information, it is a bandwidth. Ingram's crucial and distinctive function in this system is to decode his particular nexus as a speculative software for others, and to encode its conspicuous qualities as a feedback system with the rest of the spectrum. If it sounds intense, it's because it is, and it's still just about sweating it out at a club.

A Detroit native, Ingram is an established figure in electro and techno from its earliest days. His Urban Tribe project is testament to this. First appearing on the genre-defining 1991 compilation 'Equinox,' Urban Tribe has come to call Anthony Shakir, Carl Craig, and Kenny Dixon Jr. members of the group. Though perhaps what has thus far come to be Ingram's most finely calibrated and entirely natural manoeuvre was under the wing of Drexciya's James Stinson. Performing with Drexciya's live unit, Ingram took the 'Drexciyan DJ Stingray' identity and conjured a torrential storm from the DJ booth.

These days, relocated to Berlin, Germany, DJ Stingray 313 still working on pushing his own sound, always searching like a scientist for new inspirations and aesthetics to make his DJ sets and productions so unique.



**DJ STINGRAY**





# HELENA HAUFF

A former resident of the Golden Pudel club in her hometown Hamburg, Helena's profile and global standing has grown exponentially since the release of "Discreet Desires" in 2015, purely on the strength of her authenticity and her expertly curated DJ sets spanning acid, electro, EBM, techno and post punk. Gigging incessantly (and still lugging a box of records across the world) Helena's reputation earned her an invitation to join the BBC Radio 1 Residency, she was the subject of cover features for Crack Magazine and DJ Mag, she played headline sets at Sonar (b2b with Ben UFO) and Dekmantel, and at the end of 2017 Crack Magazine declared Helena "The Most Exciting DJ In The World (Right Now)" and her ballistic BBC Essential Mix was voted the best of 2017.

Born and raised in Hamburg, a self-confessed child of the 90s, Helena was obsessed with the music she discovered via the television on channels such as MTV and VIVA. She recalls her grandmother buying Technotronic's 'Pump Up The Jam' at the flea market for her and watching coverage of iconic electronic music festival Loveparade in Berlin on TV. She has fond memories of borrowing CDs from the local library and making her own mixtapes – these days an archaic practice but from a curatorial standpoint these were her earliest outings as a DJ. Helena picks out Miss Kittin & The Hacker and Toktok vs. Soffy 0 as inspirations but it was the self-titled album from 2001 by electro icon Radioactive Man that was "a real eye-opener" providing the stimulus for her to dive in and immerse herself in the music and culture.

At university Helena studied first for a Fine Art degree, but whilst she enjoyed the emphasis on experimentation and artistic freedom, she realised that she didn't have an innate need to make visual art, the prerequisite for a career in that oeuvre according to her lecturer. However, she did have exactly that compulsion in regards to DJing: "I was obsessed with DJing, there was no question that I had to do it. It wasn't about the money, I just wanted to DJ somewhere," she explains. Next Helena enrolled on a degree in Systematic Music Science and Physics. Heading in almost the polar opposite direction to her Fine Art background, it was a highly technical syllabus incorporating maths, physics and acoustics but perhaps on some level this juxtaposition of science and art has shaped her approach to coaxing music from her machines





**HELENA HAUFF**





# RICHARD FEARLESS

Best known as the leader of Death in Vegas, an eclectic electronic rock band whose music spans genres such as shoegaze, dub, and psychedelia, Richard Fearless (whose real last name is Maguire) has long been active as a DJ and remixer, in addition to producing solo material. Since the 1990s, Fearless has contrasted the guitar-driven sound of his band with DJ sets heavy on electro and Detroit techno, as heard on his disc of the 1999 mix CD *Heavenly Presents: Live at the Social, Vol. 3*. He began releasing solo material during the 2010s, issuing the expansive techno full-length *Deep Rave Memory* in 2019.

Fearless formed a band called Dead Elvis in London in 1994, and the group signed to Concrete in 1995, releasing their trippy debut single "Opium Shuffle." The estate of Elvis Presley became aware of the group and asked them to change their name; now branded Death in Vegas, their debut album still retained the title *Dead Elvis*, and was released in 1997 to critical acclaim and moderate commercial success (the disturbing video for "Dirt" received notable airplay from MTV).

By this time, Fearless had become an in-demand remixer, having reworked tracks by Saint Etienne, Ruby, David Holmes, and others. In 1999, DiV released their sophomore album, *The Contino Sessions*, a darker, more rock-leaning effort than their trip-hop and big beat-heavy debut, featuring guest appearances from Iggy Pop, Jim Reid of Jesus and Mary Chain, Bobby Gillespie of Primal Scream, and others. During the same year, Fearless mixed the second disc of *Heavenly Presents: Live at the Social, Vol. 3*, a double CD that also featured a mix by Andrew Weatherall. *Scorpio Rising* followed in 2002, featuring guests such as Liam Gallagher and Paul Weller, as well as the shoegaze track "Girls," which gained exposure the following year when it was featured in the soundtrack to the film *Lost in Translation*. The group's fourth album, *Satan's Circus*, was released on Fearless' own label, Drone, in 2004 and, unlike their previous albums, did not feature any guest vocalists.

Following this album, Fearless completed remixes for Oasis, Yoko Ono, Kasabian, A Place to Bury Strangers, and many others. He also moved to New York City and began working on DiV's fifth album. *Trans-Love Energies* finally appeared on Portobello Records in 2011. Since the release of this album, Fearless' remixes (for artists including Daniel Avery and Tiefschwarz) have been more dance-oriented than the guitar-heavy work of his main band, and in 2014 he resurrected his Drone label and began releasing solo singles as well as acid techno 12"s by Gabriel Gurnsey (of Factory Floor) and Michigan producer D'Marc Cantu. In 2015, Fearless became associated with reissue-heavy German label Bureau B, which released a 12" of his remixes of "Speed Display" by Moebius/Plank/Neumeier. Fearless also compiled *Kollektion 04*, a selection of material from the label's extensive catalog. Detroit techno-influenced single "Overview Effect" appeared by the end of the year, and two additional 12"s, "Night Blind" and "Sweet Venus," followed in 2017. Full-length *Deep Rave Memory*, recorded in Fearless' Metal Box studio overlooking the Thames, was released in 2019.





# THE MIXES

**Andrew Weatherall** : There is literally hundreds of DJ Mixes by Lord Sabre on the internet but for electro goodness check out the ElektroTeknik, Brussels, Belgium set from 2003 and the Haywire Sessions on Groovetech Radio circa late 90s and early 2000's when Weatherall was particularly into Electro. Honourable mentions to check out are the 20 Machine Funk Greats mix and the mix done for Carl Finlow's birthday.

**Dave Clarke** : "The Baron of Techno" as John Peel called him is a phenomenal DJ who was deep into the Electro scene in the 80's. Clarke has a tonne of killer mixes on his Soundcloud with a nice mixture of Electro and Techno - check out his Essential Mixes for an excellent starter. Of note here are three mixes that were available as mix cds and vinyl packs. Electro Boogie 1 which is still my most played CD and was a massive game changer for me when I bought it, with incredible mixing and track selection, Welcome to the Future Indeed. Electro Boogie Vol 2: The Throwdown is just as good with Clarke showing off his skills with a cut up segment and a stellar tracklist including IF's Space Invaders are Smoking Grass, Dopplereffekt and Anthony Rother. Thirdly is the World Service 1 Electro CD (the release was a double cd with one side being a techno mix and side 2 being Electro). The Electro mix perfectly captures the sound of the time with tracks by Japanese Telecom, Mr Velcro Fastener, Adult's mighty Hand to Phone and Electroclash anthem Emerge by Fischerspooner. This CD and the vinyl pack were massive favourites when I lived in Glasgow on Bank St and were the soundtrack to many, many parties.

**DJ Stingray 313** : One of the best DJs around, Stingray slays it every set but here are a few of his best for your listening pleasure. First up we have his Essential Mix from 2019 which is a surgically precise hyper kinetic mix of quality Electro and Techno. Secondly, is his mix for the Resident Advisor Live series from 2017 which is two and a half hours of absolutely stonking tunes. Thirdly is his mix for Mixmag: In Session series again from 2017, this is a masterclass of a mix recorded live with a very up for it crowd which on occasion makes this old electro head's hair stand up on the back of his neck. Stingray has also done B2B sets with the next DJ Helena Hauff which have been described as "Unforgettable" amongst other superlatives.

**Helena Hauff** : The Hauff as she has become known is an incredible DJ and digger with a deep knowledge and love for the music she plays out. Also she is an all vinyl DJ so props to her for lugging those record boxes around every weekend. As mentioned previously Helena has done B2B sets with Stingray with the Dekmantel set from 2016 being a brilliant introduction to the pair. There is as well her award winning Essential Mix from 2017 which is just sublime and a very worthy winner. Next up is the Obscure Object mixtape on the Blackest Ever Black offshoot. Krokodilo Tapes - A C90 cassette with the A side filled with future machine music of the highest quality. Side B takes things on a nosier tip but still worth a listen but its the A side that really stands out. There is a plethora of Helena Hauff sets on the net so pretty much any set you choose will reward you with an experts knowledge of Electro, Techno and EBM. The 3hr set for Blueprint Records birthday party is one to grab though for the mix between genres. Last but not least, are the Kern Mix and Fabric Mix CD's which showcase Hauff's love of contemporary Electro/Techno perfectly.

**Richard Fearless** : A couple of mixes from the Death in Vegas frontman, the first is another Essential Mix this time from 2002 and another stellar mix of electro capturing perfectly the zeitgeist of the time with tracks from International DeeJay Gigolos, Soma, Breaking Records and Bunker. Next up is the Fearless mix for Crack Magazine entitled 'Ballardian Dreams' and described by the magazine as Richard Fearless evoking the industrial hellscapes of science fiction author J. G. Ballard, for this cold but alluring mix. Lovely stuff indeed.

**Freddy Fresh** : Fred produced 2 hours of magic for the Essential Mix in 1998 taking about 175 hours to create this sorcery , about 90 tracks in total and a huge one for me, I listen to this almost weekly still and it never ceases to amaze me. Fred kindly agreed to answer a few questions on the making of the mix and the impact it had on him. Interview at the end of this section.





**RICHARD FEARLESS**





**THE ESSENTIAL MIX BY FREDDY FRESH**





# FREDDY FRESH INTERVIEW

In 1998 Fred recorded his seminal essential mix for BBC Radio 1 which still holds the record for the most tracks played with a certain Jeff Mills AKA The Wizard just behind him.

Some background for the readers - the essential mix is a 2 hr radio show on BBC Radio 1 that started in 1993 and was hosted by Pete Tong and still continues to this day. It is aired around 2 - 3am on a Sunday Morning so is the perfect soundtrack for those who have been out, are heading home or are just chilling at home. It was also an incredible way for music fiends that were just a bit too young to get into clubs or raves to hear killer mixes from djs and producers they were listening too or had read about and it was a common thing to trade essential mix recordings at school or talk about them when you saw your friends on Monday at school and listen to them repeatedly whilst getting stoned with your friends. However it was always a real kick in the teeth when you loaned your tapes to a friend and they put sellotape over the pushed in tabs on the cassette and recorded over it with something awful like Gabba or a happy hardcore set.

Freddy's Mix was aired on the 1st February 1998 ( it has also been replayed on the essential mix) and was a absolute revelation for 19 year old me - a massive mix of electro, hip hop, freestyle, Italo, Techno and Synth Pop. I genuinely sat stunned listening to the mix of tracks for the whole two hours and when my C120 cassette stopped recording I flipped it back to side A and listened to the mix in whole again. It became a talking point for my friend group as word slowly filtered around about it and tapes were recorded or swapped ( No Soundcloud or even Lime wire yet folks).

**SS : What have you been up to recently?**

Same as always living in studio and running my labels mostly digital and bandcamp yet some vinyl still here <https://freddyfreshfreddiefresh.bandcamp.com/>. Also I do mixes like this all the time like this one <https://soundcloud.com/freddy-fresh/freddy-fresh-at-a-kult-komound-weekender>

I run Analog Records, Electric Music Foundation, Howlin' and Sockett records and we just celebrated 32 years (First Midwest techno record label, analog), I also sell rare vinyl and work on new books about records and breakbeats (books here) <https://freddyfreshfreddiefresh.bandcamp.com/merch>

**SS : I have read that the mix took 175 hours to complete ? is this correct?**

Well yes or a bit more as I originally did a straight turntable mix and was actually walking to the post office with that to mail it to London and as I was walking in the street an ambulance came through and I had my portable tape recorder, I recorded the ambulance sirens, and ran back to the studio to add that bit into the mix and then thought, damn, a million people may hear this mix, (I was told that by the label in England, and as Im from Minnesota I figured I could do better, hence I really worked harder on the mix for a long stretch off time).

**SS : How and where was the mix recorded? And can you tell us the idea behind it?**

I had recently moved my studio to a garage (attached photo) and right after I moved there my house burned down (where I had the studio before). I attribute that to divine intervention. Anyhow I have always been an SP1200 and MPC 2000 freak and have always loved those machines, so I did a technique whereby I used turntables and MPC 2000 to "make this mix" it was a long tedious process albeit an extremely fun one. Regarding the ad-libs and vocal skits, I didn't want to be another bragging Disc Jockey boring people with "I've done this and I've done that", I wanted to make a sort of collage experiment that would be something that would interest myself. So I added loads of vocal bits and tried to create a "mood".







**SS : It does say on Discogs that you also played additional instruments on the mix and edited most of the tracks. What equipment did you use and can you talk us through the processes?**

Well as I mentioned I used an MPC to sample, but as you can see in the photo I have loads of old synths and drum machines, seeing that my MPC samples as well as sequences (drives all my machines in sync) It was a no brainer to just "play along with the tracks and songs as they played in realtime" This is something I do all the time as before I was able to procure these instruments I had to improvise and do mostly everything in several passes or takes as I rarely had tracking devices. So I got pretty good at "playing" along with the songs on keyboards and adding drums etc.. to sort of spice up sections of the mix.. so people that sought out the songs that I used on my mix found out that their versions sound different then the versions I put on the mix. In other words I wanted exclusivity and things not easily duplicated, I wanted a Freddy Fresh stamp on this mix.

**SS : How beneficial was the mix for you in terms of bookings or being offered work? You have described it on your Band camp as a 'Game Changer'.**

Well in this era I was just beginning to make some noise in the UK and European market and had already been touring from my analog records days, so touring was always happening, but major labels sniffing around was NOT happening until I started with Eye Q records and this mix pushed things along from a 7 to a 9 on the attention scale (much of this was due to Fozia Hill the promotions woman at Eye Q records who told me the mix needed to be good.)

**SS : Any new electro producers grabbing your attention currently?**

There are so many amazing producers it kinda blows my mind, I've always been a fan of Anthony Rother but yes Ive just discovered Unité November here <https://hoodwinkrecords.bandcamp.com/album/complex-manufacturing>, for example.

**SS : One thing I have always loved about Electro is to me no matter how old it is it still sounds like it has been beamed in from the future. Do you agree?**

Yes it is the vibration as all music has a vibration that takes us all into another realm. This is true, Or not (as you feel).

**SS : I see that you were a lecturer at the McNally Smith College of Music teaching Ableton and DJ skills which must have been very rewarding to pass on your skills and knowledge?**

It was a lot of fun indeed and I learned much in 9 years teaching there.

**SS : What are you looking forward to in the near future, any new projects or gigs you are excited about?**

Every week I am in my analog studios here in Minnesota and I run a small wedding company with 3 dj's and we are all kick ass DJs (If I dare say that) So I make loads of music just like always and sell rare records here

<https://www.discogs.com/seller/freddyfresh/profile> and I just made a new book open breakbeats as well on link above bandcamp

**SS : If you had to grab one record from a fire what would it be?**

Kool DJ AJ - Ah That's the Joint on White Diamond Records.

**SS : Finally thank you Fred for taking the time to answer some questions and of course thanks for the music.**

My Man Nic.







# FREDDY FRESH ESSENTIAL MIX TRACKLIST

1. INTROS
2. HIDDEN RHYTHM - SIT BACK, RELAX [NU GROOVE-109]
3. JOSH VIRGIN - THE MASKED (MAN) [EYE Q]
4. JOSH VIRGIN - ALL TIME MASTER [EYE Q]
5. WARP 9 - NUNK [PRISM]
6. C.O.D. - IN THE BOTTLE [EMERGENCY]
7. NAIROBI - FUNKY SOUL MAKOSSA [STREETWISE]
8. BOOK OF LOVE - MODIGLIANI [SIRE]
9. MAN PARRISH - TECHNO TRAX [RAME HORN]
10. MAN PARRISH - BOOGIE DOWN BRONX [SUPERSCOOP]
11. FATBOY SLIM - THE SOUND OF MILWAUKEE [SKINT]
12. NITRO DELUXE - MENTAL TRANSFORMATION [CUTTING]
13. ANTHONY ROTHER - SEX WITH THE MACHINES [KANZLERAMT]
14. KOTO - VISITORS [MEMORY]
15. NANCY MARTIN - CAN'T BELIEVE [ATLANTIC]
16. MFSB - LOVE IS THE MESSAGE/LOVE BREAK [CBS]
17. FASCINATION - DON'T YOU THINK IT'S TIME [VINYLMANIA]
18. JIVE RHYTHM TRAX - 122 B.P.M. [JIVE/ARISTA]
19. RADIO - FEST OUTDOOR IN HUMACOU PUERTO RICO [DJ STEFFAN]
20. FREDERICO FRESH MEETS FRESKA ALL STARS - BEDROOM BREAKS
21. DJ LOUIE LOU - BRONX SCRATCH MIX
22. LIL' JAZZY JAY & COOL SUPREME - B-BOYS STYLE
23. FANTASY 3 - IT'S YOUR ROCK [SPECIFIC]
24. DOUGY BOYS - FLY GUY [CAPITOL]
25. BAD BOYS - K-LOVE [GADGETS]
26. INVISIBLE MAN - 149TH STREET GROOVE [BUTTERBEAT]
27. FREDDIE FRESH - DA BIRD [BUTTERBEAT]
28. FREDDIE FRESH - BONUS BEATS [ANALOG]
29. INFORMATION SOCIETY - RUNNING [WIDE ANGLE]
30. MONET - MY HEART GET ALL THE BREAKS [LIGOSA]
31. ARTIST UNKNOWN - ACAPPELLA VD1
32. SOUL SONIC FORCE - PLANET ROCK [TOMMY BOY]
33. KRAFTWERK - NUMMERN [KLING KLANG]
34. QUEEN - THE PROPHET SONG [ELEKTRA B]
35. C.O.D. - IN THE BOTTLE [EMERGENCY]
36. MAN PARRISH - HIP HOP, BE BOP (DON'T STOP) [RAM'S HORN]
37. KOREAN CHILDREN'S CHIOR - CHUNAN SAMKURI [URANIA]
38. B BOYS - GIRLS [VINTERTAINMENT]
39. JUST FOUR - GAMES OF LIFE [EXPRESS]
40. MAJESTIC PRODUCTIONS - DROP METHOD [MAJESTIC CONTROL]
41. M.C. SHAN - BEAT BITER [BRIDGE]
42. MARLY MARL - MARLY MARL SCRATCH [NIA]
43. SUPER KIDS - THE TRAGEDY [NIA]
44. DJ PHANTOM - B BOY BREAK [PHANTOM]
45. KEYMATICS - BREAKING IN SPACE [RADAR]
46. IMAGINATION - STATE OF LOVE [ELEKTRA]
47. MC HOLLYWOOD - HOLLYWOOD'S WORLD [ABDULL-AKBAR]
48. JIMMY SPIDER - SUPER RHYME [DAZZ]
49. CRASH CREW - ON THE RADIO [BAY CITY]
50. DISCO FOUR - WE'RE AT THE PARTY [PROFILE - 7016]
51. EARTH PEOPLE - DANCE [APEXTON]
52. INTERCITY - GROOVIN' WITHOUT DOUBT [KMS - 008]
53. CARL CRAIG - MY MACHINES [PLANET E]
54. FUTURE SOUND OF DETRIOT - UNTITLED
55. FREDDY FRESH AND FRIEND - MISC SOUND EFFECTS
56. APHEX TWIN - PHLOAM [R&S]
57. RENEGADE SOUNDWAVE - THE PHANTOM [MUTE]
58. APHEX TWIN - DODECCAHEEDRON [R&S]
59. APHEX TWIN - DIGERIDOO [R&S]
60. APHEX TWIN - ISOPROPHLEX [R&S]
61. APHEX TWIN - PHLOAM [R&S]
62. POLYGON WINDOW - QUOTH [WARP]
63. MARCUS SALON - ROOM TO MOVE [TZ]
64. SUBHEAD - GROUNDED [SUBHEAD 011]
65. MESCALINUM UNITED - WE HAVE ARRIVED
66. JEFF MILLS - THERA EP [AXIS]
67. P.C.P. - THE MOVE [R&S]
68. JOEY BELTRAM - ENERGY FLASH [R&S]
69. AIR LIQUID - IF THER WAS NO GRAVITY [RISING HIGH]
70. AUTO KINETIC - GOOGLEPLEX [ELECTRIC MUSIC FOUNDATION]
71. DJ SLIP - FALL OF JUPITER [PAROTIC]
72. APHEX TWIN - POLYGON WINDOW [WARP]
73. JOEY JUPITER - VIBE TRIBE [TRICK]
74. MENTAL OVERDRIVE - THEME OF ST. BAFFS (THE BELLS) [R&S]
75. J.V.C. FORCE - STONG ISLAND [B-BOY]
76. SCHOOLLY-D - P.S.K. "WHAT DOES IT MEAN"? [SCHOOLLY D]
77. ERIC B. & RAKIM - MY MELODY [ZAKIA]
78. DIMPLES D - SUCKER DJ'S (I WILL SURVIVE) (SUCKAPELLA) [PARTYTIME]
79. Z-3 MCS - TRIPLE THREAT [BEAUTY AND BEAT]
80. MASTER O.C. AND KRAZY EDDIE - MASTERS OF THE SCRATCH [NEXT PLATEAU]
81. BIRDSONG AND DUGOUT BOYS - THE SUCKER MC'S [SINGH]
82. TROY THE WONDERBOY AND ELECTRIC ONE-THOUSAND - BOO AMAZING WONDERBOY [BOOS BEAT-COBBLER MARY HILL MUSIC]
83. KURTIS BLOW - AJ SCRATCH [MERCURY]
84. SPOONIE GEE - LOVE RAP [ENJOY]
85. MAJESTIC MC'S - BITE ON THE DUKE [LEMON TWIST]
86. KAOS - CRANK UP THE BASS - HOBO SCRATCH [ISLAND]
87. JAZZY JAY - COLD CHILLIN - IN THE SPOT [DEF JAM]
88. THE ART OF NOISE - BEAT BOX II [ZTI]
89. MALCOLM MCLAREN - WORLD'S FAMOUS [ISLAND]
90. KURTIS BLOW - STARLIFE [MERCURY]
91. KURTIS BLOW - DO THE DO [MERCURY]
92. SYL JOHNSON - DIFFERENT STROKES [7]
93. PUMPKIN - HERE COMES THAT BEAT [PROFILE]
94. STACY LATTISAW - ATTACK OF THE NAME GAME [COTTILLION]
95. M.C.B. - IT'S YOUR SCRATCH (DO WHAT YOU WANNA DO) [SUNNYVIEW]
96. TREACHEROUS THREE - GET UP [SUGAR HILL]
97. MALCOLM MCLAREN - MADAM BUTTERFLY [CHARISMA]





# THE FACE

ELECTRO THE BEAT THAT WON'T BE BEATEN

MAY 1984



# THE FACE



## ELECTRO - THE BEAT THAT WONT BE BROKEN.

Rapid and solid, fast and frantic, the Electro beat is the new Sound of the City – as stimulating as the urban jungle that spawned it. Dismissed as a craze, a novelty, denounced as sinister robot music devoid of ‘real’ emotion, it proved to be a tough seed that took root on England’s pavements. And with it came a style and an attitude; a zany improvisation on the digital pulse of the age. David Toop tracks the rise of the Beat Box and asks: Wotupski, Bug Byte? Paul Rambali meets the Future Tribe, the B-Boys. B for British. Photographs by Steve Pyke and Patricia Bates.

### PHASE 1: THE HIP-HOP WON’T STOP

Trevor Birch is a B-Boy. That’s ‘B’ for Bad, Beautiful, Black, Breaking, the Bronx. But in Trevor’s case, ‘B’ for British. He couldn’t tell you which subway line leads to the New York borough north of the Harlem river that has given him, at 18 in East London, an activity, an identity. But he has heard the records, seen the look, knows the moves.

He practises them up to four hours a day, during lunch breaks at the Community Project where he works with his old school-friend Gengiz Ozkadi painting murals, and later in the evening in the bedroom at Ozkadi’s council home. To records like Newcleus’ Jam On It and One For The Treble by Davy DMX, taped from Radio Invicta on Sunday nights because they can’t afford to buy the records – thus pirating the pirates – they rehearse the flamboyant gestures of a satellite subculture, dancing a zany improvisation on the micro-electronic pulse of the age.

And every Friday night they travel six miles to the Electric Ballroom in Camden. Both wear yellow peak caps and identical red and blue Adidas jogging suits over... it’s impossible to say over what because they never take them off, never even unzip their anoraks. Oblivious to the writhing bodies around them, they stand facing each other on the crowded dancefloor, waiting for the mutant crack of the Linn Drum, the signal that galvanises them into tense, jerky spasms, swapped back and forth like a ball of invisible voltage.

“We like doing it,” says Trevor. “We don’t do it for money. It keeps us from doing something stupid.” He picked it up three years ago from his elder brother, when it was called Robot Dancing. At the Tidal Basin club near his home, he kept abreast of the dance style that evolved into Body-Popping and Break-Dancing. He has never been to Covent Garden, where at times late last summer it seemed there were more Break Dance crews than tourists to fund them. He and Ozkadi call their crew Technical Poppers, and they like to keep their moves up their sleeves. Once, at the Kensington club in East Ham, Trevor made the error of showing off his best style. “So many people took my moves that I had to go home and start all over again!” Competition is fierce, reputations are waiting to be made and lost. The threat of ‘Pirates’ or ‘Biters’ – people stealing your moves – is always present. The Technical Poppers, who never make their best moves at the Ballroom, have eight or so friends locally with other crews. “They’re looking for a challenge, but I don’t think we’ll oblige them.”

Right now, their main concern is tracksuits: Hummel red and blue tracksuits with diagonal white stripes that they’ve seen in a local sports shop. Trevor asks if I know of any clubs that want to promote a crew in return for the price of two Hummel tracksuits. They’ve got to have those suits. In two weeks’ time, there is the third heat of the All-London Independent and Team Body-Popping, Cracking and Break-Dancing Championship. The Technical Poppers reckon they have a good chance: “We’ve seen everybody else’s moves, but they ain’t seen ours!” But first, they need those suits.





"You ought to have a flick book to explain it," says Robert Henry, a 22-year-old DJ and promoter who has been involved in organising the championship. "Popping by pros is a violent manoeuvre of the muscles. What they say is: You get tight, and you pop!" He clenches the muscles on his arm and releases them suddenly. "Cracking – that's a manoeuvre of the joints like when your elbow or shoulder cracks. This time his arm snaps at the joints, as though a knot were passing along from one to the next and across the chest." And Breaking is where you are more likely to be horizontal than vertical!" But there is no room to demonstrate the startling acrobatics that arose in the eight-bar rhythm breaks characteristic of late-Seventies soul and funk discs.

No doubt about it though, this is the biggest dance craze to hit the UK since Robotics. "So many teams have come out of the woodwork," enthuses Robert. "We always knew the UK had the same creative power as the Americans." The first heats were held at a club near Brick Lane in East London. "We wanted to put the show on where Body-Popping came from. It's like a concrete jungle around there; it's the nearest thing to the ghetto." Teams and individuals came from all over: Battersea, Catford, Dagenham, Balham, Leyton, Tottenham – "Any run-down area in London."

Robert has a theory: "It's caught on because it's such a radical form. It's expressive. All you need is the music and a street-corner, and you can get away from the pressures."

His theory isn't new but it fits. And it goes further. Young blacks in Britain who might five years ago have looked to reggae, with its potent figurehead of the late Bob Marley, for the trappings of cultural identity, now turn to the Bronx, to the Beat-Box and the Ghetto-Blaster. A style imported in the grooves of Planet Rock by the Soul Sonic Force in 1982, glimpsed on the faddish videos of mainstream pop and soul acts, a tough, city-spawned seed, has taken root on England's pavements. It has been nourished by the burgeoning electronic beat, rapid and solid, fast and frantic like the Swarmers on the third wave of Defender. It finds its spirit in raps like Gettin' Money by Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde.

"Everything is funny when you're gettin' money" they chant, adding a sardonic "Ha-Ha Ha!"

It has its fast-moving entrepreneurs in people like Morgan Kahn of Streetwave Records who, like Chris Blackwell with Island Records' ska and soul releases in the Sixties, is making this new sound accessible with his best-selling electro compilation albums. It is sustained by DJs like Herbie of the Mastermind roadshow, who mixes the electro albums for Streetwave and who, along with Paul Anderson of Trouble Funk, can be guaranteed to draw the crews.

It has even had its popular successes, if sometimes fake (Break Machine's recent Street Dance) or trite (the Rock Steady Crew's hit last year). And it has an audience hungry for information. Trevor Birch missed the New York rap movie Wild Style when it came out, but when the Rock Steady Crew performed at an electronics fair in Olympia last year, the Technical Poppers were there. They weren't the only ones. The hall was full of Biters, who must have been disappointed. "Their Breakin' was alright but their Poppin' was dry."

In a suburban semi in Wood Green belonging to their manager's parents, the Soul Sonic Rockers are gathered watching a video of their heroes, an American crew named Dynamic Rockers.





"That's wicked, man!"

"His body's like rubber..."

"Murder!"

On the video, a frazzled, black and white copy of a copy, one of the Dynamic Rockers is doing a Helicopter – called a Windmill in the US – followed by a Headspin.

"That's my move," says Eddie. "That's one of the hardest moves!"

The Dynamic Rocker comes out of the Headspin, flipping upright into a pose, legs and arms intertwined

"All Breakers gotta have a pose" laughs Eddie.

And all Breakers must have a nickname, too.

The nicknames of the Soul Sonic Rockers are Virgo (Eddie aged 19), Cream Cracker (Bee, 18), Sleepy Legs (Mussy, 18), Back Flip (Sonay, 16), Crazy Kid (Ozzie, 18) and Exterminator (Mus, 16). Nineteen-year-old Andrew's nickname is Chisel, because he sculpts the Soul Sonic Mixes they dance to, buying two or three US import singles a week with his dole money, and taking eight hours to mix a 45-minute tape with techniques culled from seeing scratching on TV and watching Herbie mix with the Mastermind roadshow.

Eddie and Bee, the two leaders of the crew, met at work in 1982 and formed what was then called the Breakers Crew. Outfitted in Tiger anoraks – "because," says Bee, "all the other crews were wearing Adidas and we wanted something unusual" – the Breakers Crew, which soon grew to comprise several of Bee's Turkish friends, began going to discos like Bananas, Buzby's, the Pink Elephant and the local Nightingale. By last summer, they were Breaking every weekend in Wood Green shopping mall or the West End.

"First time we went out, we got challenged," Bee recalls. A challenge works like this: "If we do fifteen Headspins and they do ten, they gotta walk away!" Simple.

They quickly absorbed the language of hip-hop: Back Spin, Head Spin, Helicopter (spinning on the shoulders), One-hand Glider (spinning on one hand), Body Slam (falling on the back), Scorpion (walking on the hands), Crab (it helps if you're double-jointed), Waving, Cracking, Popping. Jeffrey Daniel is the first person they can recall doing Robotics with a hint of Popping when Shalamar appeared on Top Of The Pops in 1980 and '81. And they admire the Dynamic Rockers because "they don't Pop, they Smurf and Break". There's an English way of spinning that used to get laughed at in America, they explain, because it was slower. American Poppers use their hands and feet simultaneously so it's harder to copy.



THE FACE No. 49



# THE FACE

MAY 1984 80p



FRESH!

# THE BEAT

THE BEAT THAT WON'T BE BEATEN



MADNESS GO TO HOLLYWOOD ■ QUINCY JONES ■ STYLE SHOWS A LEG!  
KEN LIVINGSTONE ■ ROBOTICS ■ MANCHESTER NIGHTLIFE ■ GERMAINE GREER

THE BEAT THAT WON'T BE BEATEN





Towards the end of last year, their parents started telling them off for dancing in the streets. Just then, as luck would have it, Ozzie's elder brother saw them and offered to be their manager. They changed their name to Soul Sonic Rockers, after Soul Sonic Force and Dynamic Rockers. Now they have bookings at Hombres and Studio Valbonne, a Thursday night residency coming up at the Royal Rooms in Edmonton, and their parents are happy. What about their girlfriends?

"They like it, man. They like the funny moves!" Mus gets up to demonstrate, Popping his hips in a curious square motion. "But they can't do it. Good thing. Guys hurt themselves enough!"

Nowadays, when people ask them to demonstrate a move, they decline. There are too many Biters around. "We learnt rough, really" muses Eddie, "off the streets. That's where it comes from: The best place for anyone to learn is on the streets. You gotta have all the people around you. Not at home by yourself."

As befits their emerging status, they all now have new red and yellow tracksuits; but, since that status is not yet assured, the same old Hi-Tee and Mitre trainers. "It doesn't matter what trainers you use," says Mus. "But you gotta have them. It shows you're a Breaker, you got the style." Like their Puerto Rican counterparts in New York, Algerians and Africans in Paris, the sons of Germany's 'Guest Workers' in Berlin, they have the style. An international style that suits any urban backdrop; fast and madcap like a video game, loose and light like the clothes, portable as a ghetto-blasters, plugged into the digital rhythm. They are the technological primitives, the Future Tribe. And, as Man Parrish predicted in 1982, they don't stop. Along with crews like Klymax, Phase 2, The Kleer Crew and Phinx, the Soul Sonic Rockers have come through to the semi-final of the All London Body-Popping, Cracking and Break-Dancing Championship. In the individual stakes, Horace Mills, Ricky Facey from Plaistow, a white teenager named Brian Webster who impressed everybody, and the well-known Soul Boy are all in the contest – which, incidentally, has as its mascot the '1994 Breaking Champ', a seven-year-old called Luke Skywalker.

At the finals in August at the Lyceum Ballroom, they will be competing for prize money of £2,500 – and the chance to emulate the professional success of crews like Zulu Rockers and Sidewalk, the first team to come out of the UK.

If the Technical Poppers win, Trevor Birch wants to use the money to go to New York, where it all started.

"I know they're not all that good but I wanna find out," he says generously. "If I go somewhere where the action is good – clubs open all night – I know I'll get better quicker." In the window of a sportswear shop in Canning Town is a red, blue and white Hummel tracksuit, the only thing standing between him and the biggest break of all.





## PHASE 2: THE BEATBOX BITES BACK

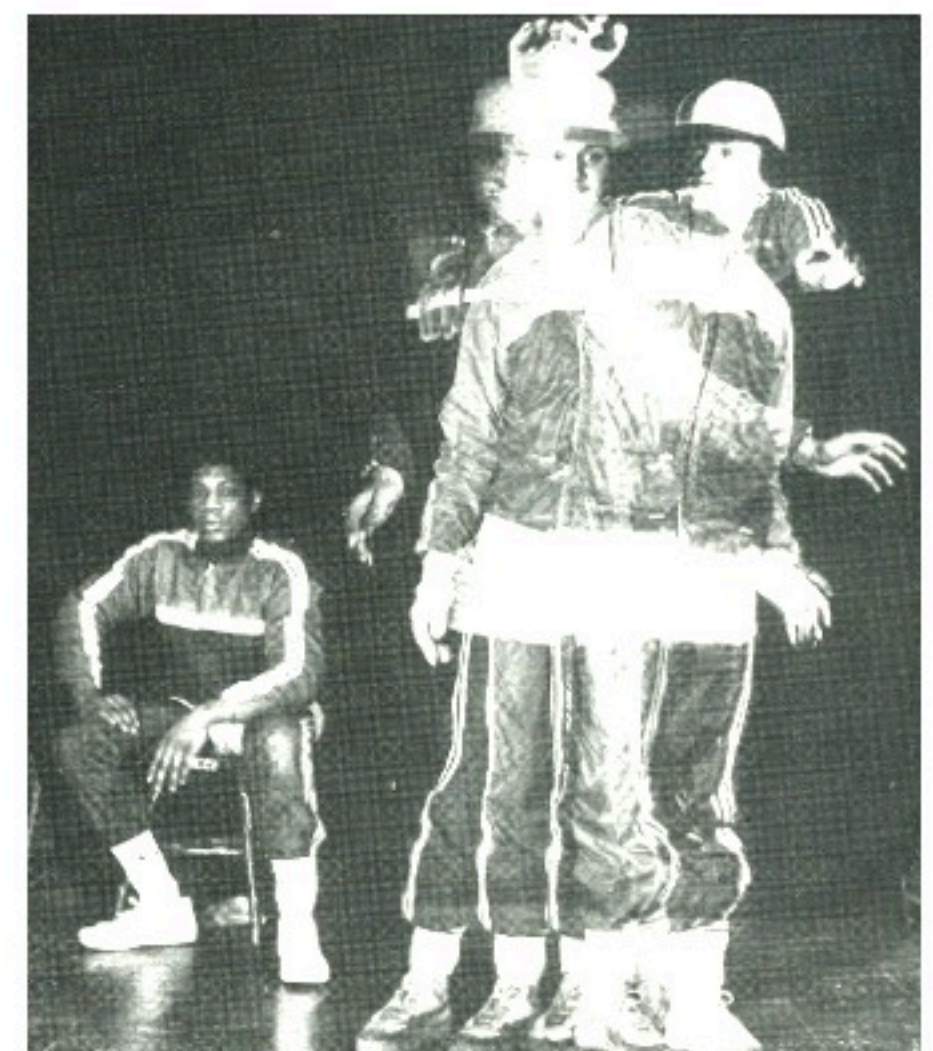
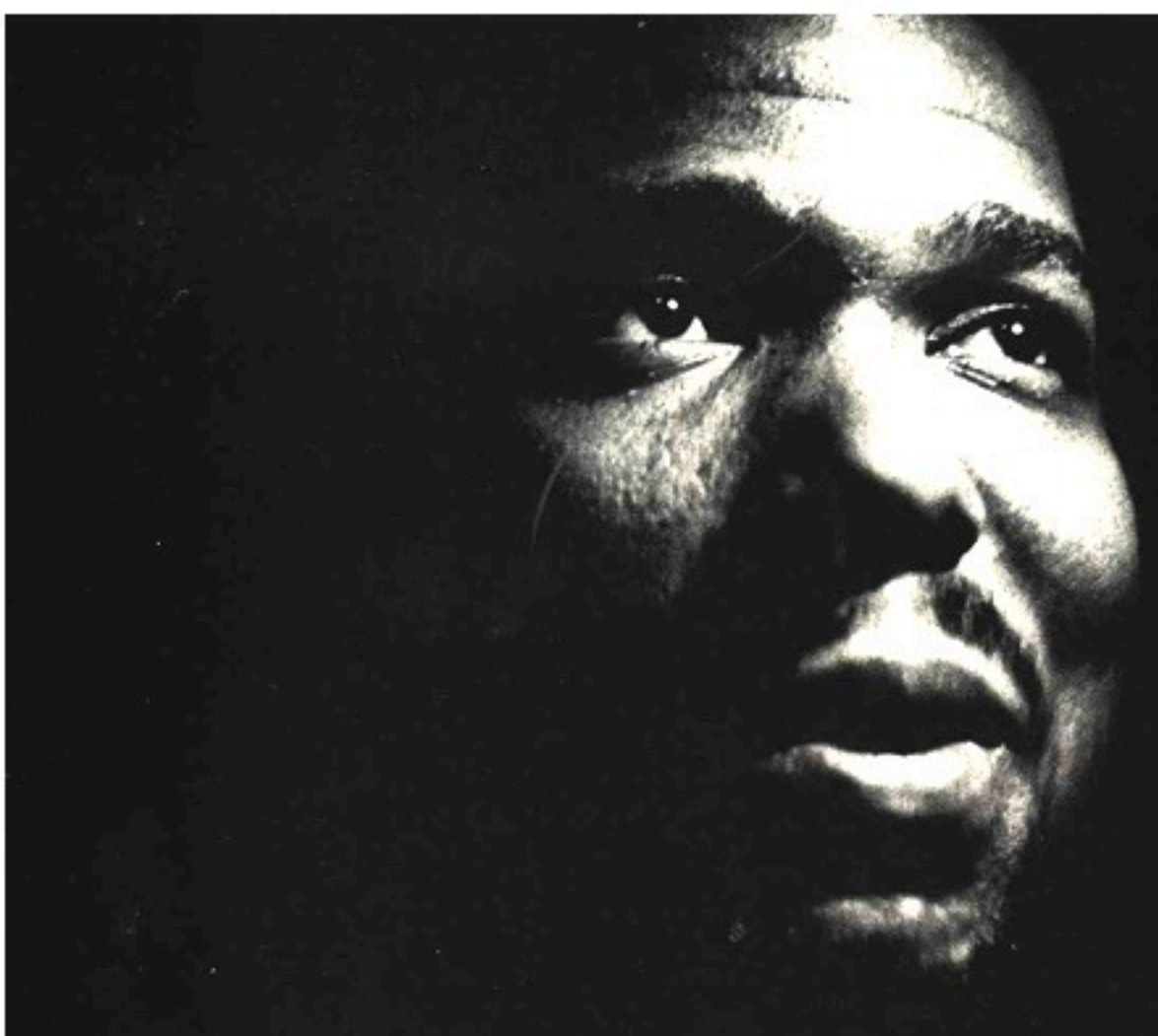
1984: 2am at The Funhouse and the giant video screen fills with the image of the Master O.C.'s hands scratching an Enjoy 12inch. O.C. and Krazy Eddie are vibrating the sound system for the Fearless Four, onstage (and ever-so-human) performing the robot raps of Problems Of The World, F-4000 and the one that made their name, Rockin It.

Twenty-four years earlier, one night in 1960, Bobby Robinson left his retail store – Bobby's Happy House Records on Harlem's 125th Street – got into his car and drove 60 miles to hear a tune called Wiggle Wobble.

Robinson, a black record producer who released material by many R&B artists, had heard about the song and the dance craze that went with it. He remembers it clearly: "It was a thing called the Wobble. It was a kind of dance like a wobbling duck and everybody was doing it." The song was a dance instruction novelty performed by Les Cooper, a piano playing ex doo-wop singer. Bobby recalls the mayhem it was creating with the crowds and the trimming he felt was in order: "It was a song where people listen – "You put your right foot forward and then you wiggle to the left" – and all this and that. So I said, 'The very first thing I wanna do is take all the words and throw 'em in the garbage.' So he had a fit. 'No! No! This is the instructions telling them how to do the dance.' I said, 'They know how to do the dance!'"

With his mouth shut firm, Les Cooper took Wiggle Wobble to a million sales and beyond on Robinson's Everlast label. It was far from being Bobby's only dance fad success. For the first release on a new label, Enjoy, he launched Soul Twist by King Curtis and over two decades later – on the same label – jumped the bandwagon again with I'm The Packman (Eat Everything I Can) by The Packman. The Packman wackawacked electronically rather than wiggle-wobbling acoustically, but dance craze records are consistent over the years. Duck mania or Pacmania – what's the difference?

Records, like I'm The Packman (tagged electro-funk in this country), have made the chips hit the fan. An already sharply divided soul scene in Britain has riven into war zones – discos with mutually hostile rooms for fissured sub-subcultures, guerrilla tactics from fanzines like Blackbeat, civil strife in Echoes magazine, enemy sympathisers in black music and heavy artillery from radio jock Robbie Vincent (a pithy dismissal, "that electro shit", in The Face). To the chagrin of white soul fans (traditionalists and jazz funkies) many electro-consumers are young blacks; despite its European/ Asian influences it is still a major representation of black and Hispanic teen lifestyle in today's urban America.







1982 was the year when the funk warped out into hyperspace. An all-electronic black music had been a long time coming – Sly Stone was using drum machines in the early Seventies (check out Time on There's A Riot Going On); Stevie Wonder's Music Of My Mind and Talking Book albums established him as a synth innovator and Sylvia and Joe Robinson's All Platinum set-up in New Jersey used frosty electronic backdrops for the pop disco of The Moments and Sylvia herself. It was All Platinum, reconstituted as Sugarhill, Bobby Robinson's Enjoy and individual records like Vaughan Mason's Bounce, Rock, Skate, Roll which helped establish a new ambience in East Coast post-disco. Slow and heavy, it reflected South and West Bronx breakbeats. Like an update of Mississippi fife and drum rhythms filtered through the Isley Brothers it led to electronic pulse music only barely clinging to disco conventions. Free Expression's Chill Out in 1981 was a crucial record as was Jazzy Sensation on Tommy Boy. Jazzy Sensation convened hip-hop DJ Afrika Bambaataa and various of his MCs with disco DJ Shep Pettibone and producer Arthur Baker. The record had contrasting rap versions of Gwen McCrae's Funky Sensation – both used electronic percussion but one featured bass guitar and the other substituted synth bass. You could almost smell the smoke from burning bass guitars and drum kits.

Bambaataa's follow up, Planet Rock, was again a collaboration with Baker plus MC group Soul Sonic Force and keyboardist John Robie. Barn wanted to re-create the melodrama of B-Boy favourites like Kraftwerk's Trans Europe Express or Babe Ruth's For A Few Dollars More Morricone cover as well as using rhythmic ideas from Captain Sky's Super Sperm and Kraftwerk's Numbers. A big fan of Yellow Magic Orchestra (you can hear Barn and Jazzy Jay cutting up YMO's Firecracker on the notorious Death Mix on Winley), he was deeply impressed by Kraftwerk's music and image: "Kraftwerk – I don't think they even knew how big they were among the black masses back in '77 when they came out with Trans Europe Express. When that came out I thought that was one of the best and weirdest damn records I ever heard in my life... That's an amazing group to see – just to see what computers and all that can do."

Being a B-Boy or B-Girl was about being cool. Kraftwerk's four besuited Aryan showroom dummies were passion from the deep freeze. Like a massive joke at the other extreme from George Clinton's theatre of excess, they were fascinating to kids who had grown up parallel with the micro-chip revolution.

The music tracks for both Planet Rock and Play At Your Own Risk (a record by Planet Patrol) were recorded in one night. Baker remembers that the sound was partly defined by the lack of technology at that time. "There was no secret to that sound – it was just that we didn't have racks of shit. We had this one PCM [a digital delay unit]. In the last year and a half technology has gone haywire. When we did Planet Rock that was one of the first records to use a Roland... now everyone has a drum machine."

Funk used to need human metronomes like Hamilton Bohannon, Fatback's Bill Curtis and the J.B.s' John 'Jabo' Starks. Now it has the Roland, an analogue drum machine with a microprocessor memory which, along with more sophisticated (and costly) digital machines like the Linn Drum and the Oberheim DMX, has come to dominate dance music.

The usual whine about robotic machines (they are – that's why kids like them) is to a certain extent irrelevant. Even if drum machines hadn't existed, disco mixes would have forced somebody to invent them. Bass drums were being pushed further and further to the front of the mix and by 1979 (the last year of classic disco) a record like Walter Gibbon's mix of Colleen Heather's On The Run (West End) comes across like a four-on-the-floor bass drum solo with vocal accompaniment. The inevitable tiny inconsistencies become terrifying chasms in the pulse. Though drummers like Keith LeBlanc (producer of Malcolm X's No Sell Out) at Sugarhill and Pumpkin at Enjoy reintroduced bass drum syncopations it was only a matter of time before the new drum machines were following, then outdoing, their patterns. Sharon Redd's Beat The Street from 1982 (a record not generally considered electro-funk) has a bass drum playing 16th notes – impossible even for Kung Fu masters or Bionic Women.





One of the first Beat Box records – Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five's Flash To The Beat (Sugarhill) was an official remake of a bootleg released on Bozzo Meko Records, a live recording from Bronx River Community Centre. Flash To The Beat showcased Flash throwing down vicious fills on his ancient Vox percussion box – on the illegal version putting Einsturzende Neubauten to shame.

Flash To The Beat and Planet Rock grew out of hip-hop and were parallel to the late Patrick Cowley's hi-energy productions for Sylvester (derived from Giorgio Moroder's sequencer disco) and the electronic soul of D Train, Kashif, The Peech Boys and The System. Most of the latter type of records have proved acceptable to the 'serious' soul fraternity in Britain – luckily so, since an enormous amount of black music is now being almost exclusively made with analogue and digital equipment. It was the juvenility of electro, though, that stuck in people's throats.

Strange as it may seem, it's hard for some people to see pop culture as inspirational. Electro is craze music, a soundtrack for vid kids to live out fantasies born of a science fiction revival (courtesy of Star Wars and Close Encounters) and the video games onslaught.

Nobody can play Defender or Galaxian for long without being affected by those sounds – sickening rumbles and throbs, fuzzy explosions and maddening tunes – and when Gort and Gorgar began to talk the whole interactive games phenomenon took on a menacing aspect. Do they know you've just spent all your mother's money? Do they care that your fantasies are saturated with deep blue space wars and glowing violet electronic insects? All the electro boogie records that flew in the Planet Rock slipstream used a variant on imagery drawn from computer games, video, cartoons, sci-fi and hip-hop language. Just as The Cuff Links defined relationships through nuclear war images in their song Guided Missiles (recorded in the A-Bomb conscious Fifties), so, on Nunk in 1982, Warp 9 sang: "Girl, you're looking good on my video..."

Space breaking releases included Planet Patrol's Play At Your Own Risk, Tyrone Brunson's The Smurf, The Fearless Four's Rockin' It (with its spooky "they're here" intro taken from Poltergeist), Hip Hop Be Bop (Don't Stop) by Man Parrish, George Clinton's Computer Games album, Scorpio by Flash and the Furious Five and The Jonzun Crew's Pack Jam.

***"Man Parrish's record – produced by Parrish, a white Brooklyn-born synth-freak whose previous experience included porno soundtrack writing"***

Planet Patrol are a vocal quintet from Boston (a breeding station for asteroid funkies) originally called The Energetics, who applied their skills to a classic Baker/ Robie rhythm. The record mixed acoustic piano with synthesisers and dub delay effects – tagged onto the end of the instrumental is a brilliant acapella section which speeds and slows the hip-hop version of applause (a sort of macho dog bark).

The dog bark turned up again on Man Parrish's record – produced by Parrish (a white Brooklyn-born synth-freak whose previous experience included porno soundtrack writing) and Raul A. Rodriguez, a disco jock currently producing The Two Sisters on B-Boys Beware and High Noon.





The Smurf by Washington DC-born bass player Tyrone Brunson was pure dance craze instrumental. Smurfing was a New York dance inspired by one of the Saturday morning TV cartoon shows, a fertile source of imagery for graffiti artists and catchphrases for rappers. Smurfs, like all great historical figures, have a complex background. Originally based on characters from Spiro, a French comic of the Sixties, they became an international promo tool, a Dutch hit record (thanks to the genius of Father Abraham) and a series of dance discs. The latter included Letzmeurph Acrossdasurf by The Micronawts (actually a Village Voice critic, Barry Michael Cooper, with a dub mix by Bambaataa) on Aaron Fuchs' Tuff City label; Salsa Smurf by Special Request (a Tommy Boy collaboration between two contributors to NYC radio station 92KTU – Carlos DeJesus and Jose 'Animal' Daiaz, who also mixed Rhetta Hughes electro hi-energy Angel Man) and Smerphies Dance on Tellstar by Spyder D, a young man named Duane Hughes who, to my knowledge, is the only hip-hopper to carry a business card.

Another dance craze of the period was the Webo or Huevo (Spanish for egg). The Webo had its very own audio track, typical of '82/'83 madhouse dub mixes, called Huevo Dancing by Fresh Face. Huevo Dancing was a creation of veteran soul singer/ producer George Kerr and keyboardist/ guitarist Reggie Griffin. Its violent electric drums and seemingly random attacks on the mixing desk faders give it a special place in my heart. Both Kerr and Griffin were associated with the Sylvia and Joe Robinson empire and Reggie Griffin went on to make his own electro boogie record, Mirada Rock for Sweet Mountain Records, a Sugarhill subsidiary.

Also doing time at Sugarhill with some uncredited session work was Michael Jonzun, of the despised yet totally brilliant Jonzun Crew. Pack Jam on Tommy Boy is one of the toughest records of the last few years (I say that as a person old enough to have seen The Ronettes and Otis Redding live on stage). Like Miranda Rock ("I am a computer") or Tilt's Arkade Funk ("I am an arkade funk machine") there was no beating about the bush. Pack Jam was a video game record and if adults wanted to run scared that was their business. Many of the electro musicians and producers recognise their music as the fusion that it is – street funk and hip-hop mixed with influences from British synthesiser groups, Latin music and Jazz fusion – all thrown into the robot dancing, breaking and moonwalking meltdown. Lotti Golden and Richard Scher, producers/ writers for Warp 9, Chilltown and Ladies' Choice, called their first Casio-powered Warp 9 release Nunk, a hybrid of N-ew wave and f-UNK

Electro is closer to past Afro-American fusions than a lot of the Seventies disco promoted by British disc jockeys currently running anti-electro campaigns (Magic Fly by Space, for example, a regular on early editions of Robbie Vincent's Radio London show) and it is arguable that it shows stronger black music roots than certain popular jazz-funk or soft soul records of recent years. Everybody acknowledges the pioneering of Miles Davis and Herbie Hancock in combining electronics with funk, Afro, Latin and jazz (check out On The Corner and Headhunters) and Material's production on Hancock's Future Shock was obliquely inspired by Hancock's own mid-Seventies albums.

The current phase of electro, particularly electro-rap and scratch mixes, is like black metal music for the Eighties, a hard-edged, ugly, beautiful trance as desperate and stimulating as New York itself. Run DMC's records on Profile are direct-to-disc wall poems; The B-Boys, The Boogie Boys, The Beat Box Boys, Davy DMX, Pumpkin and DJ Divine – all physical graffiti on music history books. For the Cold Crush Brothers, the Mad Max warriors of rap, their Punk Rock Rap is a reflection of the exotica of white rock uptown in Washington Heights.

Nothing is sacred in the computer age. As computer programmers, copyright lawyers and corporations struggle to protect themselves against micro raiders and mashers, the vidkids swarm down from the top of the screen, hungry for the cosmic crash.

\*This article first appeared in The Face magazine May 1984





# ARABIAN PRINCE



# ARABIAN PRINCE



Kim Renard Nazel (born June 17, 1965), better known by his stage names Arabian Prince or Professor X, is an American rapper, record producer, and DJ. He was a founding member of N.W.A.

Nazel was born in Compton, California to the son of Joseph "Skippy" Nazel Jr., an African-American author and radio talk show host. His musical background came from his mother, a piano teacher and classical musician. His family tried its best to shelter him, sending him to a Catholic school and keeping him busy with football to keep him away from the gangs. The younger Nazel got his first experience with making music at the radio station his father hosted his talk show on; Nazel used the radio station's equipment to put together mixtapes that he would sell at school. Nazel went on to graduate from Junípero Serra High School in nearby Gardena.

Nazel took the stage name of DJ Prince and started selling mixtapes at school. While working at a luggage store at the Del Amo Mall, its owner, Sam Nassif, asked him to DJ a party at a community center. He kept performing there for several weekends and the success persuaded Nassif to invest even more in the place, renaming it "The Cave", where Nazel would continue to host for over three years and even after his N.W.A days. Nassif also funded DJ Prince's first record, "Strange Life".

He changed his stage name when he was 15 years old at the Skateland USA, the same skating venue credited for launching N.W.A a few years later, due to a fan's suggestion. He said about his name:







I called myself DJ Prince at first; back in the day, I always used to dress like Prince. That was the thing in the early '80s—either you dressed like Prince or you dressed like Michael Jackson. I used to wear the tight parachute pants, and I had the trim moustache, the whole thing. One day I was DJing at a skating rink. I was with Egyptian Lover, that was my boy, still is. This girl comes up to us and asks us our names. And he's like, "I'm Egyptian Lover." And I'm like, "I'm DJ Prince." She looks at me and goes, "I always see you two together. You should call yourself Arabian Prince." And I guess that just stuck.

Arabian Prince started working with Bobby Jimmy & the Critters in 1984. He also produced the hit single and album for J.J. Fad, "Supersonic".

In 1986, he was a founding member of N.W.A, but soon after fellow member Ice Cube came back from the Phoenix Institute of Technology in 1988, Arabian Prince left over royalty and contract disagreements. "I started off as a solo artist", he said, "so I was aware of what a royalty statement was. I knew that when these many records were sold, there is a quarterly statement. When you look at it, you can see how much money was paid and then share it. This was not the case. We were also never paid for touring." Eazy-E, Ice Cube and MC Ren remained as the main performers, DJ Yella was the turntablist and Dr. Dre was the main producer.

After leaving N.W.A, Arabian Prince began a solo career. His first album, Brother Arab, was released in 1989 with the single "She's Got A Big Posse"; Where's My Bytches followed in 1993.



In the mid-2000s, he started releasing music again, with his Professor X project on the Dutch label Clone Records. "I could not release the record under Arabian Prince", he said, "because I already had a single out, so I called myself Professor X on that record." In 2007, he performed as a DJ on the 2K Sports Holiday Bounce Tour with artists from the Stones Throw label. In 2008, Stones Throw released a compilation of his electro-rap material from the 1980s. One of his songs was included on the 2007 video game, College Hoops 2K8.

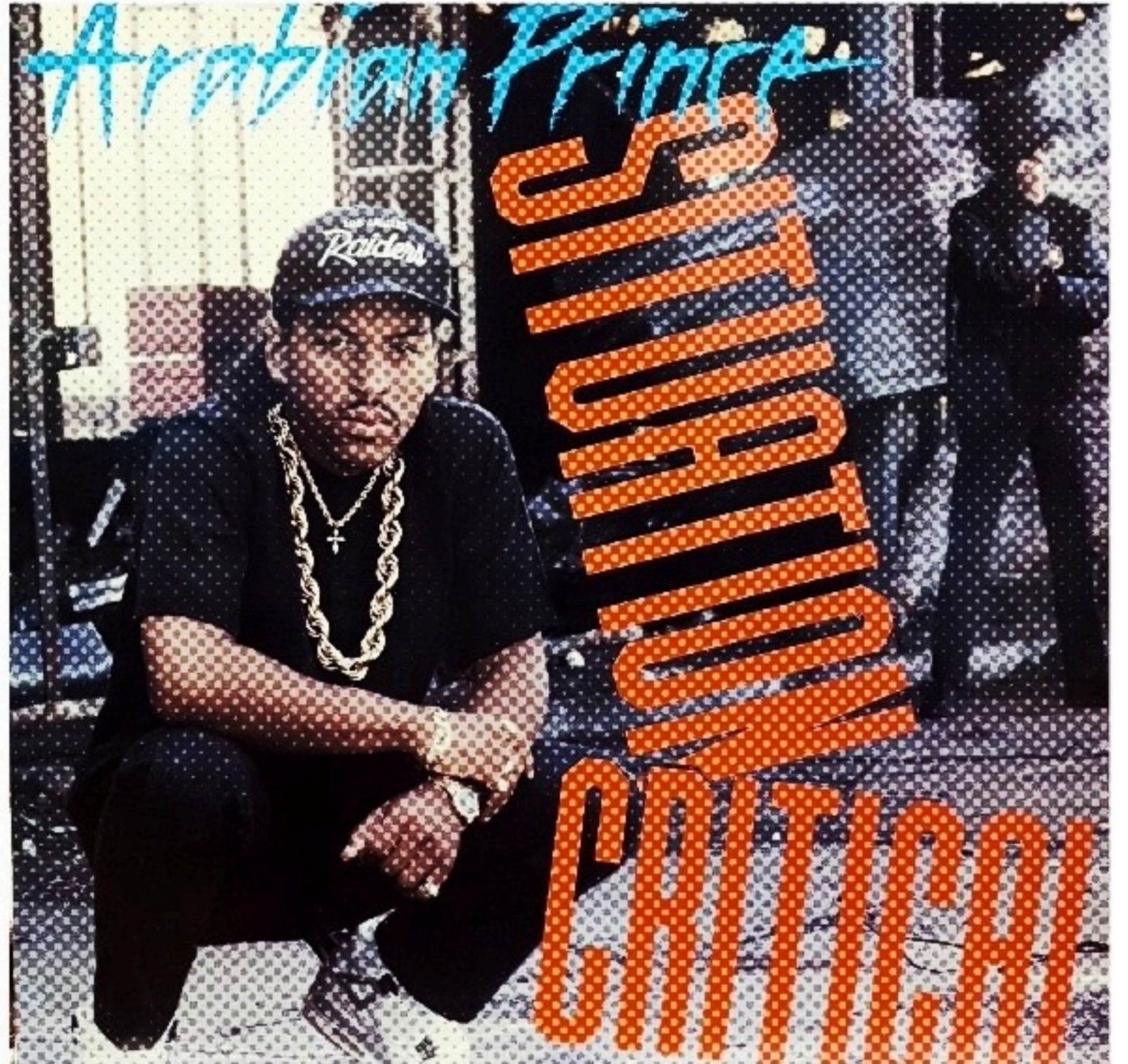
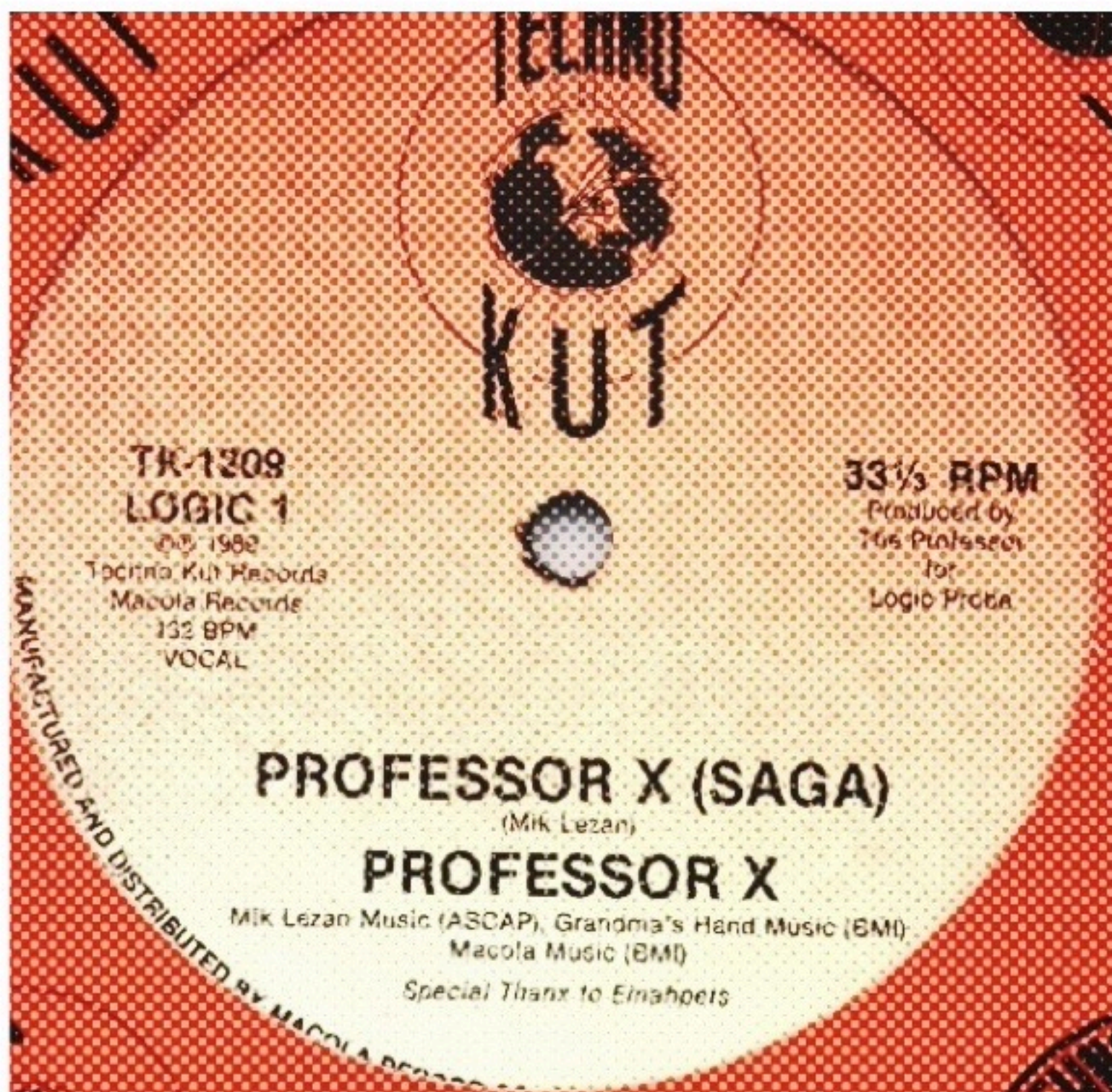
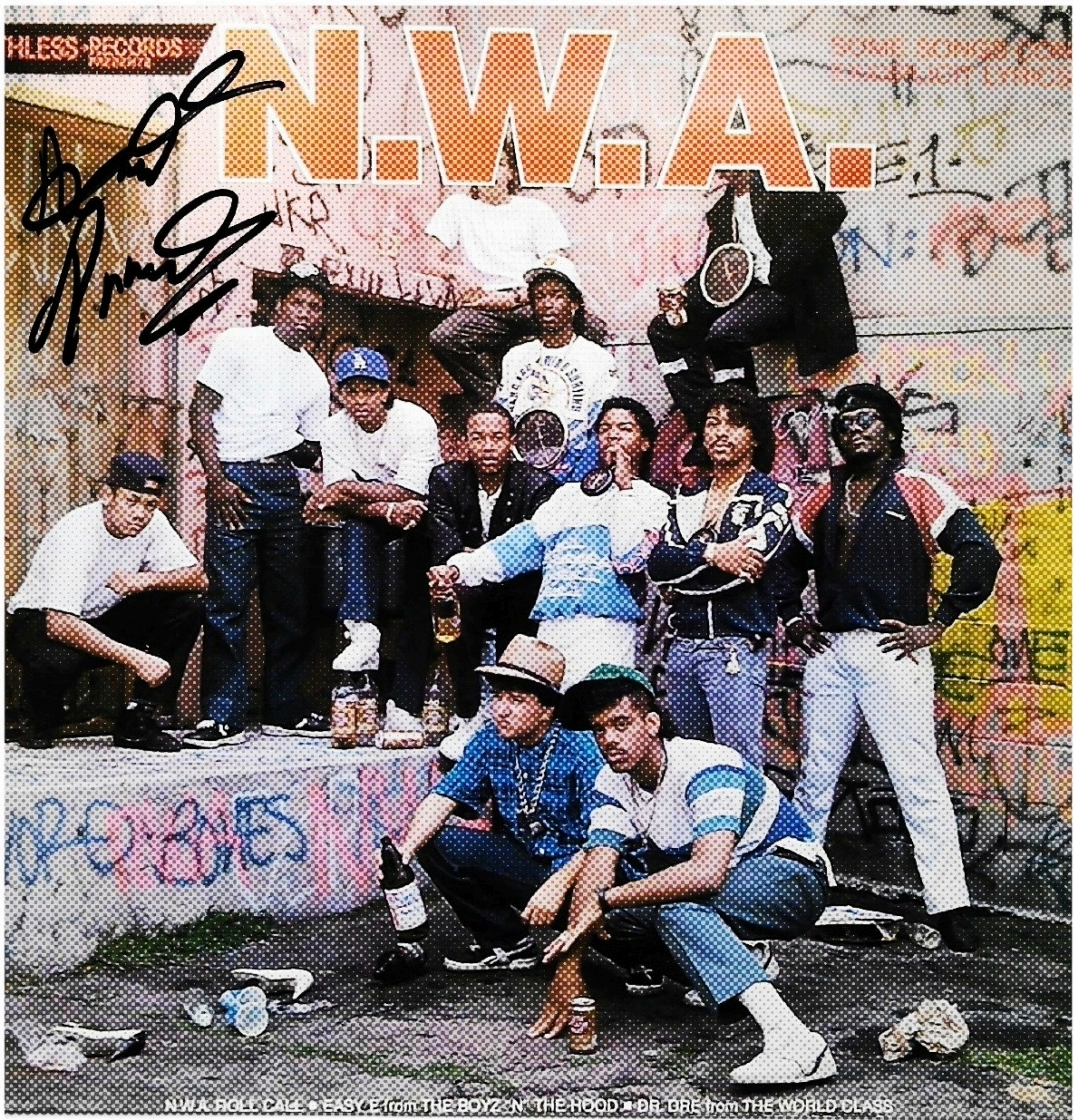
In 2015, a biopic about N.W.A. titled Straight Outta Compton was released; however, Arabian Prince was not portrayed in the film. The following year, N.W.A. was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, but again, Arabian Prince was not included nor mentioned.

In 2018, Arabian Prince appeared on the AmeriKKKant album of industrial-metal band Ministry. He made a second appearance on Ministry's 2021 album Moral Hygiene

Aside from his music career, he worked in special effects, 3D animation and video games.

After the release of the N.W.A film, Straight Outta Compton, in 2015, Arabian Prince said to VladTV: "A lot of the scenes in real life, I was there—I'm just not there in the film, which I'm like, if you're gonna write me out of a movie, shoot some other scenes. Don't write scenes where I was there." [18] Some of the pivotal scenes would be choosing the name for the band, the tour and the infamous Detroit concert. He also remembers himself as the main opposer to Jerry Heller about the royalties and the money, a role that in the film was instead given to Ice Cube.







**STREET  
SOUNDS**

**CRUCIAL ELECTRO COMPILATION**

# **ELECTRO**



Street Sounds was conceived from the need to expose and make available the latest, most upfront music from the streets of America to UK and European audiences. The concept was born from Morgan Khan's love of music as a fan and from his own frustration of not being able to get hold of certain tracks because they were either US imports, that cost up to 10 times that of a UK 12 inch single, or album AND that's if you could even find the import.

A Hong Kong-born Indian who grew up in London, Khan had worked in the UK record industry since the mid 1970's, working for such names as PRT Distribution (a division of Pye Records) and R & B Records, for whom at the time Imagination were the up and coming stars of the day.

Khan founded the independent Streetwave record label during 1981 to specialise in releasing electro and hi-NRG releases. Within a year of creation, Streetwave began the Street Sounds series of albums; compilations created from some of the hottest 12" imports of the day. These releases made available a selection of the most contemporary dance floor hits within the financial reach of those wanting to hear the freshest sounds.

In the early 1980's a 12" single was priced around £2 and you would pay over £4 for an import 12". The Street Sounds series offered usually 8 to 12 full-length 12" mixes for under a fiver. Understandably, the Street Sounds series was met with considerable enthusiasm and, some might say, mighty relief. This series would run for over 6 years and contain over 50 albums.

By far the most coveted of the Street Sounds releases were the Electro series. These albums introduced the UK to the developing hip-hop scene from America — a stroke of genius that brought electro and early hip hop from the underground to the UK high street and, one could argue, helped in the creation of the UK's hip-hop scene.

Let us not forget that the majority of record shops in the early 80's, where 'Mama and Papa' type shops, which were totally oblivious to the new music being listened to by a new generation. Also, until the birth of Street Sounds the perception of compilation albums were 'Ktel' type albums, featuring mainstream pop hits, or cover versions, sometimes so butchered in length, to fit as many tracks as possible on each album.

Street Sounds is the 'godfather' of the modern compilation album and its format became the template for the labels that came later. The concept of each album; to literally represent the sound of the moment; full length versions and the highest quality.

The compilation albums and tracks released by Street Sounds have directly influenced and defined hundreds of thousands of people's lives and have also been substantially responsible for today's mainstream and street music culture. Street Sounds has been accredited by numerous journalists and DJs, including Paul Gambaccini, Bob Kilbourn and James Hamilton as pioneering Electro, Hip Hop and House in the UK. Numerous publications and other media have documented the importance of Street Sounds to popular culture.

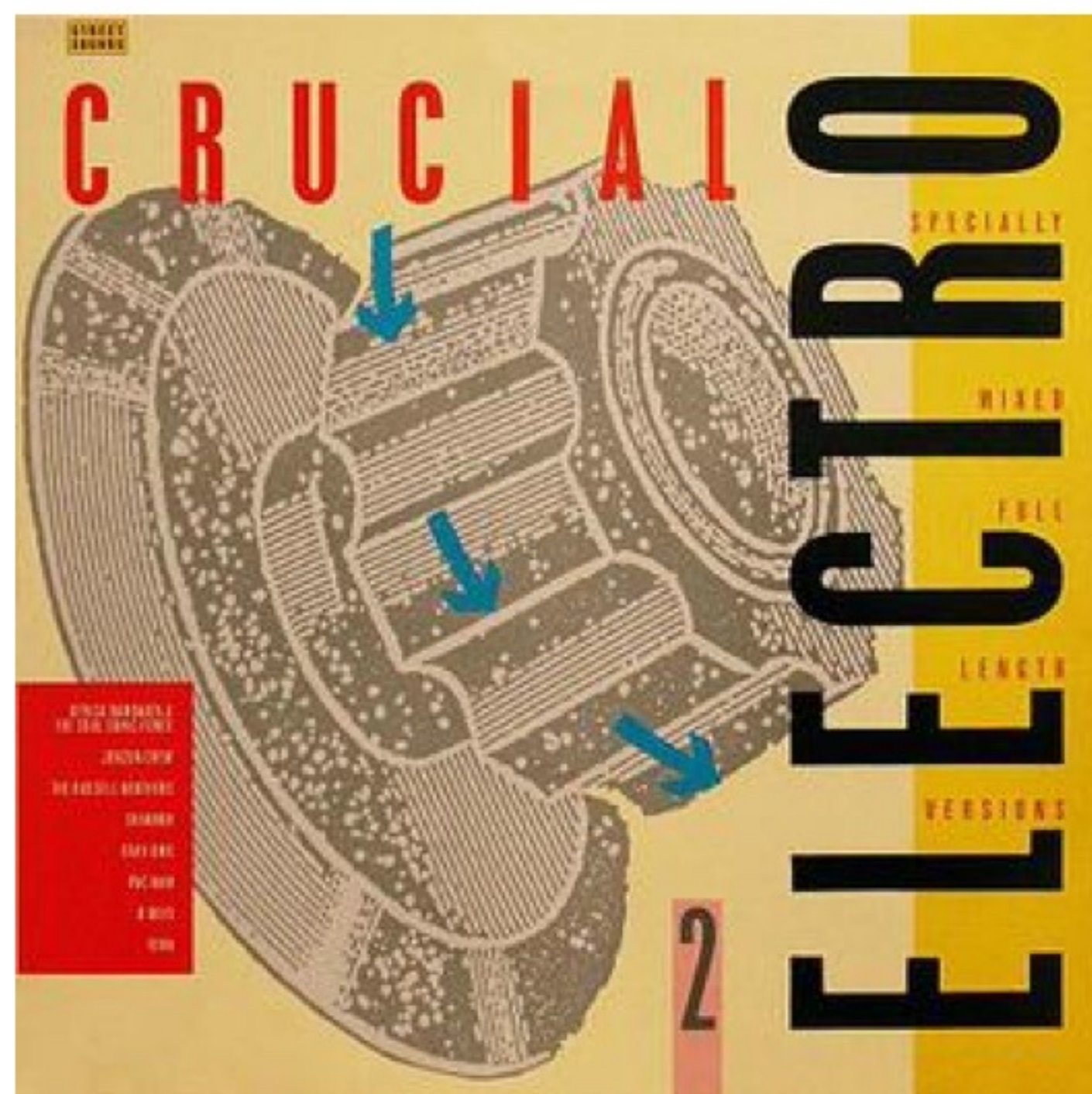
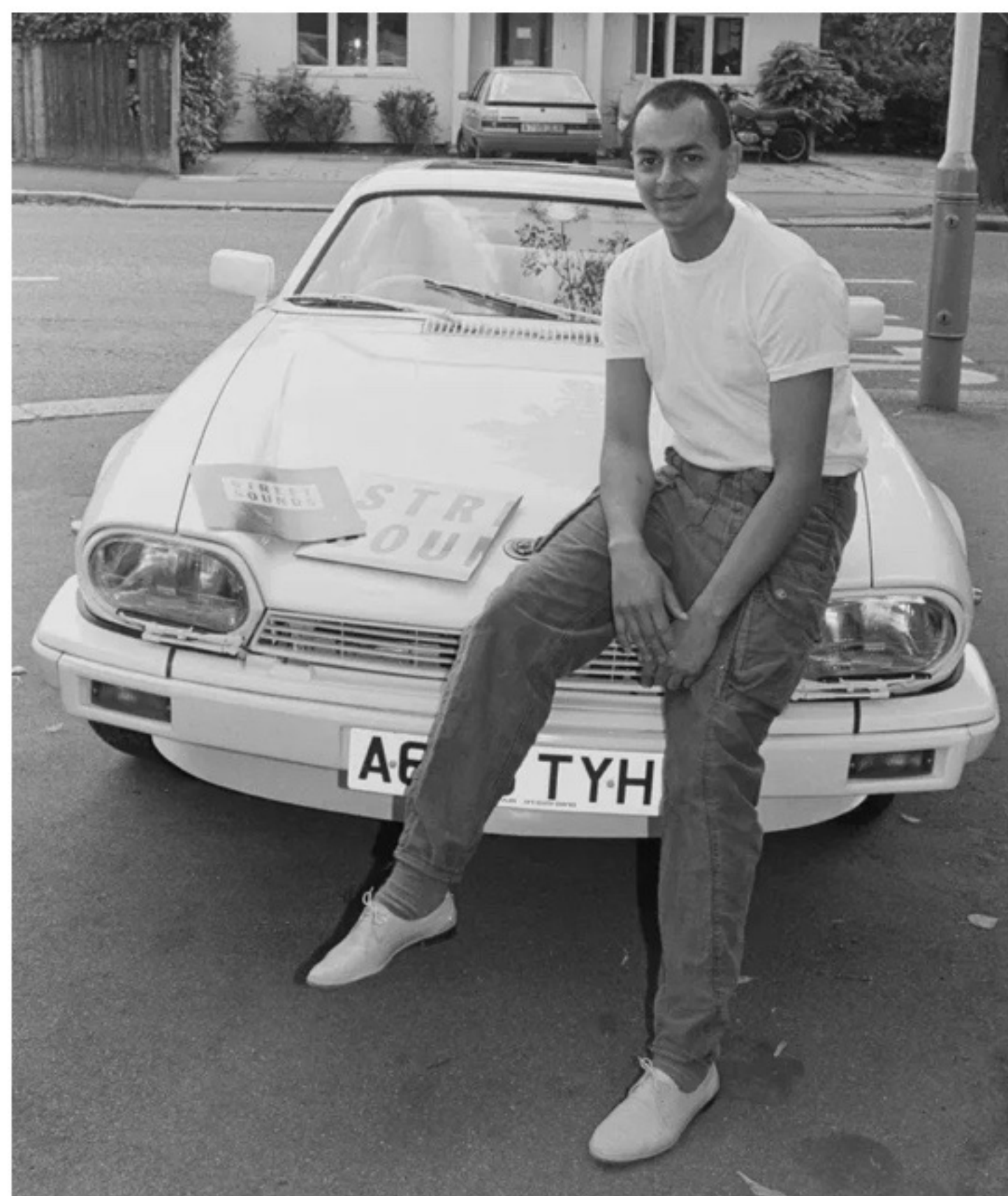
The reason for the colossal success of the Street Sounds albums was having tracks which were just coming on import, or were still only available as promotional records to the few key DJs, or having just been UK released, or tracks hard to get hold of in there full-length version. Numerous tracks featured on the Street Sounds albums were never even released as singles in the UK, or Europe. Street Sounds, or more precisely its sister label STREETWAVE were responsible for giving exposure to many artist, that would never have broken in Europe. One of these was Cheryl Lynn and her track "Encore", which CBS records had decided not to release and thank God, Streetwave did, with major commercial success!

Why there is such collective respect, support and love for Street Sounds? The reasons include, our heritage, the fact that we have our finger on the pulse of street music, made buying hot and expensive in demand American imports affordable & widely available for many people and we became the 'sound of the street'. Street Sounds is far more than just a record label and its distinctive yellow and black logo. Street Sounds is for many people a passage/journey from youth to adulthood, a way of life that helped shape their identity, that opened a new world of music and culture.

Electro & Hip Hop will live on because it is part of our DNA, the rite of passage of a generation into a new culture and world, a way of life that helped shape their identity and brought together diverse communities as one, united & bonded by a shared passion for Electro & Hip Hop!

Street Sounds played a crucial role in introducing Electro & Hip Hop music to the UK audience and an essential part in shaping the music landscape during the 1980's. The Street Sounds Electro albums have left an indelible mark on contemporary Hip Hop and Urban culture. Many artists and producers cite the series as a major inspiration.

Today, the legacy of Street Sounds continues to influence and inspire new generations of artists and music enthusiasts. The label's impact on the UK's musical heritage is undeniable, as it played a significant role in shaping the landscape of modern electronic and Hip Hop music in the country







**Electro**

**HIP HOP**

*specialty* *mixed* *full* *length* *versions*

**electro**

THE REGGAE MOVEMENT WITH BETOCCA, MURPHY  
 GUYANA'S VIKINGS  
 AFRICA'S VIBRATA AND TASTY  
 GRANDMASTER FLASH  
 MASTODON  
 ALLEN  
 DR. JAZZ & THE BIRDS  
 CAPTAIN JACK  
 WOLFELOUS MURKIN  
 ROSALYN GRANT  
 RASHID & THE M.C. DEVOY  
 M.C. BOON K.K. & STEADY "B"  
 THE M.O.A.B.E.T.  
 EAST RIVER Featuring M.C. DEE GRAY  
 MANQUERABLE  
 M.C. CHILL  
 JUSTICE  
 FAMILY OF DEY  
 SUPERIOR SOCIETY  
 JOKER & LADY  
 M.C. & Learning Station

**HIP HOP**

**ELECTRO**

**HIP HOP**

**VERSIONS**  
**LENGTH**  
**MIXED**  
**SPECIALTY**

THE M.O.A.B.E.T.  
 M.C. CHILL  
 JUSTICE  
 FAMILY OF DEY  
 SUPERIOR SOCIETY  
 JOKER & LADY  
 M.C. & Learning Station

**DOXANKIOMANTE**  
**THE**  
**STETSON**  
**MASHIN**  
**CAPTAIN ROCK**  
**M. JUCKELL & M. NYDE**  
**THE BOTS**  
**DISCOGUE**  
**AWESOME FORSOME**  
**TWO LIVE CREW**

**Electro**

**HIP HOP**

**versions *length* *full* *mixed* *specialty***

**electro**

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**versions *length* *full* *mixed* *specialty***

**electro**

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**AWESOME FORSOME**  
**TWO LIVE CREW**





**MUSIQUE NON STOP :**

**THE STORY OF THE TR 808**



# The TR-808 Story

## PART 1

### THE ORIGIN LATE 1970S, JAPAN

IN THE LATE 1970S, THE IDEA OF A 'DRUM MACHINE' WAS UNUSUAL. ALTHOUGH PEOPLE MADE MUSIC AT HOME, IT WAS TYPICALLY WITH A PIANO, ORGAN OR GUITAR. AND SINCE MOST HOUSEHOLDS DIDN'T OWN AN ACOUSTIC DRUM KIT, AN ELECTRONIC DRUM MACHINE WOULD GIVE FAMILIES AN EASY AND ENJOYABLE WAY TO INCLUDE RHYTHM IN THEIR MUSIC MAKING. IT WAS AT THIS POINT THAT ROLAND STARTED WORK ON DEVELOPING A RHYTHM MACHINE FOR THE MASSES...

### CR-78: THE FORERUNNER

LAUNCHED IN 1978, THE COMPURHYTHM CR-78 WAS ROLAND'S FIRST DRUM MACHINE THAT CREATED AND STORED PATTERNS. EVEN THOUGH IT WAS MEANT AS A RHYTHM ACCOMPANIMENT DEVICE FOR ORGANS—HENCE THE ABUNDANCE OF WALTZ AND BOSSA NOVA PATTERNS—IT BECAME FAIRLY POPULAR WITH ESTABLISHED MUSICIANS, INCLUDING PHIL COLLINS WHO USED IT SEVERAL YEARS LATER ON 'IN THE AIR TONIGHT'.

### THE ENGINEER'S DILEMMA

TASKED WITH PRODUCING THE CR-78'S SUCCESSOR, A YOUNG TEAM OF ROLAND ENGINEERS SAT DOWN TO EXCHANGE IDEAS. WORKING UNDER TADAO KIKUMOTO, HIRO NAKAMURA WAS ASKED TO DEVELOP THE ANALOG VOICE CIRCUITS FOR THE UNNAMED PRODUCT, WHICH WAS INTENDED TO HELP PRO-MUSICIANS CREATE DEMOS. BUT THERE WAS A PROBLEM: LATE '70S ANALOG TECHNOLOGY WASN'T VERY GOOD AT CREATING REALISTIC DRUM SOUNDS.

### THE SOUND

THE GOAL FOR THE NEW MACHINE, NOW CALLED THE TR-808, WAS TO INCLUDE REALISTIC-SOUNDING DRUMS. MEMORY CHIPS (NEEDED TO PLAY BACK SAMPLED RECORDINGS OF 'REAL' DRUM SOUNDS) WERE TOO EXPENSIVE, SO THE ENGINEERS USED ANALOG SYNTHESIS TO RECREATE THE SOUNDS—INITIALLY ON ROLAND'S SYSTEM-700 MODULAR SYSTEM BEFORE RECREATING THE PARAMETERS ON THE TR-808'S ANALOG CIRCUITRY. ALTHOUGH A SIMPLE CHOICE BORN OF NECESSITY, CHOOSING ANALOG OVER DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY WOULD HAVE A PROFOUND IMPACT ON MUSIC IN THE YEARS TO COME.

### THE SECRET WEAPON

TRANSISTORS WHICH HAD BEEN REJECTED AS 'OUT OF SPECIFICATION' WERE PURCHASED BY ROLAND AND USED AS PART OF THE TR-808'S SOUND GENERATING CAPABILITY. ALTHOUGH THEY WEREN'T FAULTY, THEY DID EXHIBIT SOME VERY PARTICULAR QUALITIES THAT HELPED GIVE THE 808 ITS DISTINCTIVE SIZZLING SOUND. IN FACT, THIS TINY COMPONENT, ALSO KNOWN AS AN 25C828-R, WAS SO IMPORTANT TO THE FINAL SOUND, THAT ONCE SUPPLIES WERE USED UP, THE TR-808 WAS DISCONTINUED. IT'S ALSO PARTLY WHY MOST MODERN ANALOG TAKES ON THE TR-808 DON'T REALLY STAND UP TO SCRUTINY.



## THE SEQUENCER

LOOK AT THE FRONT PANEL OF A ROLAND TR-808 AND YOU'LL SEE THE WORDS 'RHYTHM COMPOSER'—A REMINDER OF THE DESIGNERS' ORIGINAL INTENTION. THROUGH A ROW OF 16 DISTINCTIVELY COLORED BUTTONS, PEOPLE COULD EASILY PROGRAM (AND STORE) THEIR OWN BEATS WHICH MEANT THAT THE TR-808 BECAME AN ACCESSIBLE AND CREATIVE INSTRUMENT IN ITS OWN RIGHT. IT WAS ALSO THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF ROLAND'S 'TR-REC' METHOD OF CREATING A DRUM BEAT—WHICH IS STILL IN USE TODAY.

## 808: THE SPEAKER KILLER

SINCE THE 808 SOUND WAS ANALOG, MANY TONAL ADJUSTMENTS WERE POSSIBLE—LESS SIZZLE IN THE HI-HATS, EXTRA SNAPPINESS IN THE SNARE AND, CRITICALLY, MORE PUNCH IN THE KICK DRUM. BEING ABLE TO EXTEND THE DECAY OF THE KICK DRUM TO REVEAL MORE OF THAT WARM ANALOG TONE, GAVE THE TR-808 SOMETHING VERY SPECIAL INDEED—THE POWER TO MAKE PEOPLE MOVE. MUCH TO THE DELIGHT OF SPEAKER MANUFACTURERS, A CRANKED-UP 808 TRACK WOULD REGULARLY BLOW OUT SPEAKER CONES.

## PART 2

### PRODUCTION 1980-1982

THE ROLAND TR-808 WAS OFFICIALLY IN PRODUCTION FOR JUST TWO YEARS—FROM 1980 TO 1982. AROUND 12,000 UNITS WERE MANUFACTURED AND ALTHOUGH IT RECEIVED SUPPORT FROM EARLY ADOPTERS LIKE JAPAN'S YELLOW MAGIC ORCHESTRA, IT WASN'T CONSIDERED A COMMERCIAL SUCCESS. IN 1982, THE COMPETITOR LINNDRUM WAS LAUNCHED, HELPING SHIFT THE TREND AWAY FROM ANALOG AND TOWARDS DIGITAL SAMPLE-BASED DRUM MACHINES. THE TR-808 STARTED TO LOOK LIKE ITS TIME HAD COME AND GONE...BUT IRONICALLY, ITS PREMATURE DEMISE WAS MERELY THE BEGINNING.

### THE CREATOR TADAO KIKUMOTO

TADAO KIKUMOTO [菊本忠男, KIKUMOTO TADAO] WAS ROLAND'S SENIOR MANAGING DIRECTOR AND HEAD OF ITS R&D CENTER. HE DESIGNED THE TB-303 BASS SYNTHESIZER AND THE TR-909 DRUM MACHINE. HE WAS ALSO THE CHIEF ENGINEER OF THE ROLAND TR-808 DRUM MACHINE.

SINCE THE MID-1980S, THE TR-808 AND TR-909 HAVE BEEN USED ON MORE HIT RECORDS THAN ANY OTHER DRUM MACHINES

## PART 3

### CROSSOVER MID-1980'S ONWARDS - ACCESS ALL AREAS

ONCE THE TR-808 WAS DISCONTINUED, A FAMILIAR STORY UNFOLDED WHEN UNITS STARTED TO APPEAR IN SECOND-HAND SHOPS, SWIFTLY ACQUIRED BY YOUNGER ARTISTS WITH A PENCHANT FOR RISK-TAKING AND RULEBREAKING. FROM THE MID-EIGHTIES, THE 808 SOUND WOULD BECOME DEEPLY EMBEDDED WITHIN A VARIETY OF ELECTRONIC MUSIC SCENES THAT HAD ONE THING IN COMMON—THE MUSIC APPEALED TO THOSE WHO LOVED TO PARTY.

## PART 4

ELECTRO, POP, SOUL, HIP HOP, TECHNO, HOUSE, TRAP, MIAMI BASS AND BEYOND; YOU KNOW SOMETHING UNUSUAL IS HAPPENING WHEN THE SAME DRUMS ARE HEARD ACROSS A VARIETY OF DIFFERENT MUSIC GENRES. THE TR-808 HAS BEEN AT THE HEART OF SOME TRULY AMAZING TRACKS OVER THE YEARS, SPANNING AN EQUALLY AMAZING VARIETY OF MUSICAL GENRES.



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