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Album of the Month

Pic: CLIFFORD PRINCE KING



Kelela

Raven

Warp Records

Aquatic Afrofuturism

SIX YEARS after her monumental debut LP 'Take Me Apart', Kelela's voice hits as it always does, in whispery, diaphanous textures that carry an impossible emotional weight. This time around, however, she's chosen not to wait for the remix album before dropping melancholic bangers, singing directly over hard-hitting breakbeats in rave-ready tracks produced by the likes of AceMo and LSDXOXO. When she's not in full-on club mode, Kelela's voice wades

through languid atmospheres of synth, leaving rippling echoes in its wake. 'Raven' flits between the sweat of the dancefloor and the fog of the chillout room, channeling both in an aural manifesto of aquatic Afrofuturism.

Kelela's brand of Afrofuturism on the record parallels the oceanic mythmaking of Detroit techno pioneers Drexiciya. As the story goes, the Drexiciyans built an underwater utopia after being born from pregnant

African women left behind to drown during the Middle Passage. A Drexiciyan line might be drawn connecting the stunning album artwork — a Black woman's face floating amidst a monochrome sea — and the sonic narrative in opening track 'Washed Away'. After three minutes of vaporous synths and impressionistic crooning ("The mist, the light, the dust that settles the night / The hope, the longing, fade away, blurry eyed"), the track submerges with a splash, the sound of bubbles muffling the music.

The rest of the album continues this pelagic sound design, presenting an interpretation of the Drexiciyan myth which centres their Black femme originators rather than the underwater utopia that ensued. Chopped by LSDXOXO, the breakbeats in 'Happy Ending' gradually reveal themselves through the watery murk before syncopated kicks jet forth. Kelela sings with an optimistic yearning: "Could be a happy ending after all / It's deeper than fantasy." She takes a more confident stance on the album's dancehall-inflected third single 'On The Run', singing over a wobbly three-chord progression and swaying bassline: "Nothin in this world could stop us right now / Nothin in this world could make this wrong." Halfway through, a faint dub siren signals entry into a new aquatic layer, her voice pushing through an even thicker filter.

LSDXOXO offers more breaks on 'Contact' alongside Asmara, producing one of the record's more danceable songs. With an infectious swing, its 2-step kicks weave playfully around Kelela's sultry intonations: "Oh it's a sauna / Here if you wanna." (The official lyrics document includes a "splashing sweat" emoji). By the end of the song, things are gradually speeding up before spilling into the next track 'Fooley', its final snare echoing into an expanse of sub bass. This is 'Raven' at the benthic zone, synth stabs bubbling up from the cracks as a heady trip-hop beat sets the scene for Kelela's dreamy voice: "Far away from / Submerged sound." She resurfaces in 'Holier', an airy bit of ambience before the title track.

Produced by the trans-Atlantic duo of New York's AceMo and London's Fauzia, 'Raven' is a requiem whose expansive musical trajectory belies its four-and-a-half-minute runtime. It begins as a whisper, with a minimalist two-chord progression that crescendos into a rousing chorus of piano, overdubbed vox, and reverb. Then the beat drops, and the hypnosis is complete. The headiness of the first half turns to pure body, a four-on-the-floor kick rolling with an acidic bassline before morphing again into a Jersey club kick pattern.

Kelela reclaims vulnerability against a dehumanising narrative of strength: "Took all my labour / Don't tell me that I'm strong." The album's title track encapsulates Kelela's artistry, a sonic statement drawing from all corners of the Black Atlantic, whose staying power lies in the murky waters between the personal and the political. **JAMES GUI**



Tolouse Low Trax

Leave Me Alone

Bureau B

Coherent chaos

Detlef Weinrich has left his Düsseldorf home and moved to Paris. His fifth full length, 'Leave Me Alone', also finds him leaving behind the rigid rhythms and faithful motorik beats that previously defined his sound. In their place are more playful rhythms. They are still slow and industrial, but also take in dub, hip-hop and MPC-enabled machine funk. There's a sense of paranoia wunning through these tracks, from the fractured vocals and uneasy drum stutters of 'Impure Nature' to the lurching bass and electronic meltdown of 'Muddy Floors'. In between though are plenty of lighter moments that relieve the tension, such as the farty synth blasts on 'A Great, Strange & Moving Work' or the strangely compulsive and drunken loops of 'White Flicker'. Whatever the mood, Weinrich strings, weaves and jumbles together unlikely sound sources into amazing loose rhythms. **KRISTAN J CARYL**



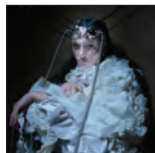
E-Unity

BBB<3

TEMET

From Paris with Love

The last time Parisian producer E-Unity dropped a project, dancing in the club was illegal. Luckily, that hasn't deterred him from cooking up plenty more endorphin-loaded club nuggets in the months since. Following up much-lauded EPs for Oscilla Sound and Intramuros, the French selector has taken his signature leftfield dalliances to even loftier heights with a second jaunt on Simo Cell's TEMET imprint. Relaying the sound of Paris-via-Bristol in seven parts, 'BBB<3' is a flawless grab-bag of mutant dancefloor gear that draws on broken European techno, psychedelic house, dub, and ravey post-hardcore, with the addition of gaseous pads and lush melodies. Highlights include infectious chromatic bubbler 'Nami' (feat. Kamohelo), 'Avray Link,' with its quivering closed hi-hats, and the craftier slow burning 'One FM', all of which promise there is plenty left in the Frenchman's tank. **OLIVIA STOCK**



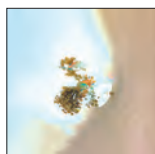
Evita Manji

Spandrel?

Pan

Cronenberg goes to Berghain

The world is a much darker place than before for Evita Manji. Following the tragic passing of their partner SOPHIE in 2020, Manji would experience their city Athens enveloped in flames. 'Spandrel?', their debut album, sees the residual smog of both these experiences sink their tendrils into Manji's usually bright baroque pop sound, turning toward a corrosive aesthetic steeped in the pain of personal loss. 'Spandrel?' pulsates with layers of hydraulic rave synths and grotesque industrial sounds atop ephemeral ambience. Manji's voice floats above the carnage, enough to keep breathing while embracing their inevitable drowning. Their body becomes a site for the exploration of destruction and grief. "You're burning my insides," they sigh through the rubberised, carcinogenic synths of environment paeon 'Oil/Too Much'. One of pop's most audacious new disruptors. **TAZMÉ PILLAY**



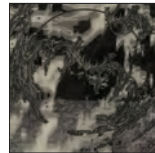
Sam Goku

Things We See When We Look Closer

Permanent Vacation

Ethereal electronic rhythms

Sam Goku has emerged as a DJ and producer with a distinctly cultured sound over the last few years. It is rooted in the contrasting influences of his German and Chinese heritage: the physical structures of European club music and the wistful melodies and traditional instruments of the far east. This sophomore album finds him honing further in on that across 11 richly layered, often serene yet dynamic tracks. He crafts artful deep techno, suspensory bass music and hazy ambient all with the same deft touch. Watery droplets or a distant bird call bring tracks to life in the most naturalistic of ways. Every single sound feels so pristine that you can't help but picture some sort of future sci-fi utopia when listening. Such is the elegance of Goku's production that this album will also work well under close headphone inspection. **KRISTAN J CARYL**



Fiesta Soundsystem

Sinking

YUKU

Adventures in breakcore

Since 2020, Prague-based label YUKU has built an impressive catalogue of leftfield breakbeat and craggy techno, with artists like Om Unit, Flying Lotus and Machinecode all on its roster. Joining the list this month is Fiesta Soundsystem, whose forays into breakcore continue to grow darker and more sophisticated with each release. Rarely does 'Sinking' allow a track to settle into a predictable pace. Rather, it navigates a constantly shifting terrain, like a murky forest crammed with 190bpm loops and thunderous 4/4 textures. Shimmering synths evoke Aphex Twin's uncanny world in '2nd (x)-elfout'. 'diaphanousdiaphophrisis' revels in an acid-tinged squelch. 'glisten dot soft' achieves a dizzying cacophony, with metallic chimes echoing over sudden eruptions of jungle drums. Fiesta Soundsystem's tight grip on his compositions ensures that they remain enthralling throughout. **BECCA INGLIS**



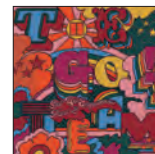
Orbital

Optical Delusion

London Recordings

Poppier leanings

Brotherly duo Orbital's trajectory over a 30-year career has at points seen them take the pedal off their acid house and techno throbbers to experiment with alternative electronica. They've been hard to pigeonhole. 1993's 'Orbital' (aka 'The Brown Album') was too fidgety to fit neatly into techno, while 'Snilvisation' (1994) didn't quite fit the rhythmic moulds of d&b. On their 10th album, the group have crafted some of their most accessible tunes ever. Take 'Are You Alive' featuring Penelope Isles and the Anna B Savage-featuring 'Home'. Traditional pop structures underpin them, albeit backed by Orbital's emotive sampling and darting rave rhythms. Elsewhere, 'Snilvisation's' fluttering breakbeats are recalled on 'Requiem For The Pre-Apocalypse' and Orbital go techno-punk on the gritty, Sleaford Mods-aided polemic 'Dirty Rat'. A moreish album — their best in years. **CHARLOTTE KROL**



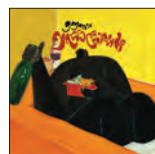
The Go! Team

Get Up Sequences Part 2

Memphis Industries

World travellers

Every couple of years, at the point where time and genre collapse, The Go! Team resurface from their clattering sonic basement with an album somehow even more unhinged than the last. Seventh instalment, 'Get Up Sequences Part 2' is no exception, though some might argue the Brighton mob have wound in the springs and tightened up the sprockets an inch or two. Along for the ride are a litany of guests from across the globe, including NYC rapper Nitty Scott who flexes his deconstructed, double-dutch rhymes on 'Whammy-O' along with West African all-girl group, Star Feminine Band without whom 'Look Away, Look Away' would likely devolve into pan-flute pandemonium. As with any Go Team! project, it's a real goldmine of patchwork instrumentation, cultural collaboration, and rallying collective action. They've struck a rich vein. **OLIVIA STOCK**



Gayance

Mascarade

Rhythm Section

Buttery smooth beats

Gayance, aka Aisha Vertus, makes a jazzy splash from Montreal with her debut 'Mascarade'. The first-generation Haitian with Brazilian roots throws a bit of Afro-Caribbean rhythmic flair to her dance-influenced odes to self-discovery: there's shades of 2-step in tracks like 'Dead End', Detroit techno in 'Nunca Mais', funk carioca in 'Shore Apart', not to mention a jazzy melodic sensibility that unifies these tracks. 'Clout Chaser's Anthem' contrasts her liquid smooth vocals with hard-hitting broken beats, harmonising with Montreal scene veterans Janette King and Hua Li in a heartrending track suited for both crying in the club and vigorous head-nodding ("But you don't want nothing / But you never come into my heart space"). With 'Mascarade', Gayance makes a jubilant debut that showcases both her own rhythmic sensibilities and her scene's burgeoning talent. **JAMES GUI**



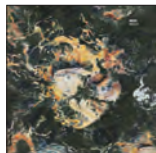
Claude Cooper & Brain Fog

More Myriad Sounds

Friendly Recordings

Bristol meets Brooklyn

Bristolian producer Claude Cooper's debut album, 'Myriad Sounds', blew a few minds when its gritty-yet-sophisticated mix of psyche-jazz and breaks appeared last year. Now, all those wonderfully weird sonics have somehow been made even more out-there via Brooklyn vocalist Brain Fog, who adds his brilliantly strange and on-point musings, with Cooper tweaking the original instrumentals. This isn't a novel update of 'Myriad Sounds', though. It sounds like an entirely new album — because it essentially is. It's also a fierce, kaleidoscopic trip, harnessing the original's barrelling punk-funk and making it even punkier and funkier. Brain Fog's growled, fearless performances are key to this, and hearing him frenetically tear through everything from Poundland to scones to WikiLeaks is constantly exciting, all underpinned by Cooper's wild jazz universe. **TRISTAN PARKER**



Marsh

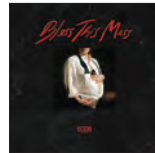
Endless

Anjunadeep

Luxurious club cuts

Marsh's music stood out as transcendent from the start. His melodies refract into genuine emotional resonance, playing well to the LA-based producer's affinity for the deep, dreamy ambience he draws on to embellish grooves. With the release of his third album, he's become one of the prized producers on the Anjunadeep imprint, as well as a generally beloved purveyor of the progressive genre. 'Endless' is his most polished album to date, full of dense musical arrangements that don't detract from its visceral dancefloor impact. Paradoxically though, it also feels like his least ambitious. Marsh pushed into deeper territory on his sophomore 'Lailonie' LP, while here it's back-to-back cuts for the club. The stylistic deviations into d&b and trance don't amount to actual experiments. Still, moments like 'Sleep' are mesmerizingly lush.

ANGUS PATERSON



U.S. Girls

Bless This Mess

4AD

Curious funk, disco and soul

Meghan Remy hasn't rested on her laurels. In 15 years the Toronto-based songwriter has released eight albums evolving from no-wave lo-fi to off-kilter funk, disco and soul. 'Bless This Mess' is the lovechild of 2018's melody rich 'In a Poem Unlimited' and its 2020 beat-and-vocal follow-up 'Heavy Light'. It's a dizzying strut through steamy, electro disco and clavinet-driven soul that spurs on funk. Written during and after Remy's pregnancy in the pandemic, 'Bless This Mess' hears her take stock of the world amid personal change. 'Screen Face', a slow-mo funk jam, muses on the tribulations of digital communication in a distanced relationship. 'Tux (Your Body Fills Me, Boo)' anthropomorphises party garb collecting dust as nightclubs are shut. Its stomping pulse, vocoder warblings and slap bass scream for a return to the dancefloor. Despite upheaval, Remy finds her feet. **CHARLOTTE KROL**



Live

Girl In The Half Pearl

In Real Life

Enviably musicality

It's been two-and-a-half years since Los Angeles-based Live graced us with her debut album, 'Couldn't Wait To Tell You', distilling far-reaching ideas into a varied but coherent collection of experimental-leaning tracks. Between then and now, her reputation as a formidable studio force and on-stage innovator has grown significantly; 2022's artist residency at London's Laylow offered an ideal platform to try out fresh tones and approaches. At least some of that experience has informed 'Girl In The Half Pearl', the difficult second LP that continues on the same exploratory form. Spanning slick, smooth and sexy R&B, alt soul, warm jazzy d&b fed through a veil of distortion, lo-fi leftfield synth-first pop, with audible hip-hop and ambient influences, it wouldn't be a stretch to say the end product is a thing of enviable musicality and exceptional beauty.

MARTIN GUTTRIDGE-HEWITT



Khotin

Release Spirit

Ghostly

Downtempo impressionism

Dylan Khotin-Foote surfaced, mid-2010s, as an unsung talent in the era's washy, online lo-fi house scene, less famous but no less skilled than your DJ Seinfeld and Ross From Friends. Like a number of his contemporaries he soon ditched house, revealing on 2018's lovely 'Beautiful You' a transition towards the sluggish and beatless. This lost him DJ bookings, then the pandemic consummated his divorce from the club. But he's ok with it, and he even named his latest album after a World Of Warcraft idea, as if to underline his recent embrace of lonerdom. Anyway it's gorgeous stuff, typically soft and frayed at the edges, but always deliciously simple. The internet sleuth's lament 'Computer Break (Late Mix)' is a bleary, catchy centrepiece, while 'Techno Creep' and 'My Same Size' chug along at tempos Andy Stott would be pleased with. **SAM DAVIES**



Maelstrom & Louisahhh

Sustained Resistance

RAAR

Existence is resistance

"Burn it to the fucking ground," growls Louisahhh on 'Burn' before a flurry of distorted 808s hammer your senses. Noisy and full of rage, at 37 minutes long, 'Sustained Resistance' — written with French producer Maelstrom — seethes with the intensity of a punk album. Instead, it takes in electronic grind from dark industrial, as on state of the nation diatribe 'America', to pounding, acerbic breaks. Louisahhh declares on the teeth-rattling 'I Am Not A Casualty' that "The cure for the pain is in the pain". Therein lies the catharsis in this outpouring of ugly truths. There's a rapaciousness to closer 'Enough', Thunderdome-sized gabber kicks pounding as Louisahhh cries "Will it ever be enough?" Is it about addiction? Pleasure? Resistance? The demands of modern life? "Don't stop if it kills me," she cries, before stopping the track and album dead: 'Enough'.

JOE ROBERTS



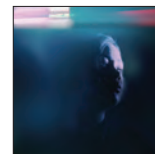
Tour-Maubourg

Spaces of Silence

Pont Neuf Records

Nostalgic grooves

Belgian-born, Paris-based producer Tour-Maubourg gained a lot of fans through 2020's 'Paradis Artificiels', a quietly moody slice of jazz-house with a few clubbier numbers. Having recorded the follow-up in solitude might suggest that 'Spaces of Silence' would be yet moodier and overtly self-reflective, but in fact, it's actually a more open, relaxed and upbeat record. Jazz-house and related territory are still the main focus, but there's more funk present (such as on the groovy, smile-inducing 'I Never Will', which has an air of Mr Scruff to it), although the strongest tracks are still the St Germain-channelling, nu-jazz numbers, particularly 'Just Believe'. Despite this, there's nothing quite as immediate as older big-hitters like the atmospheric 'Ode To Love' or the hook-driven house of 'Manhattan To Brooklyn'. It feels happy enough with its own, gently uplifting contribution. **TRISTAN PARKER**



Chasms

Glimpse of Heaven

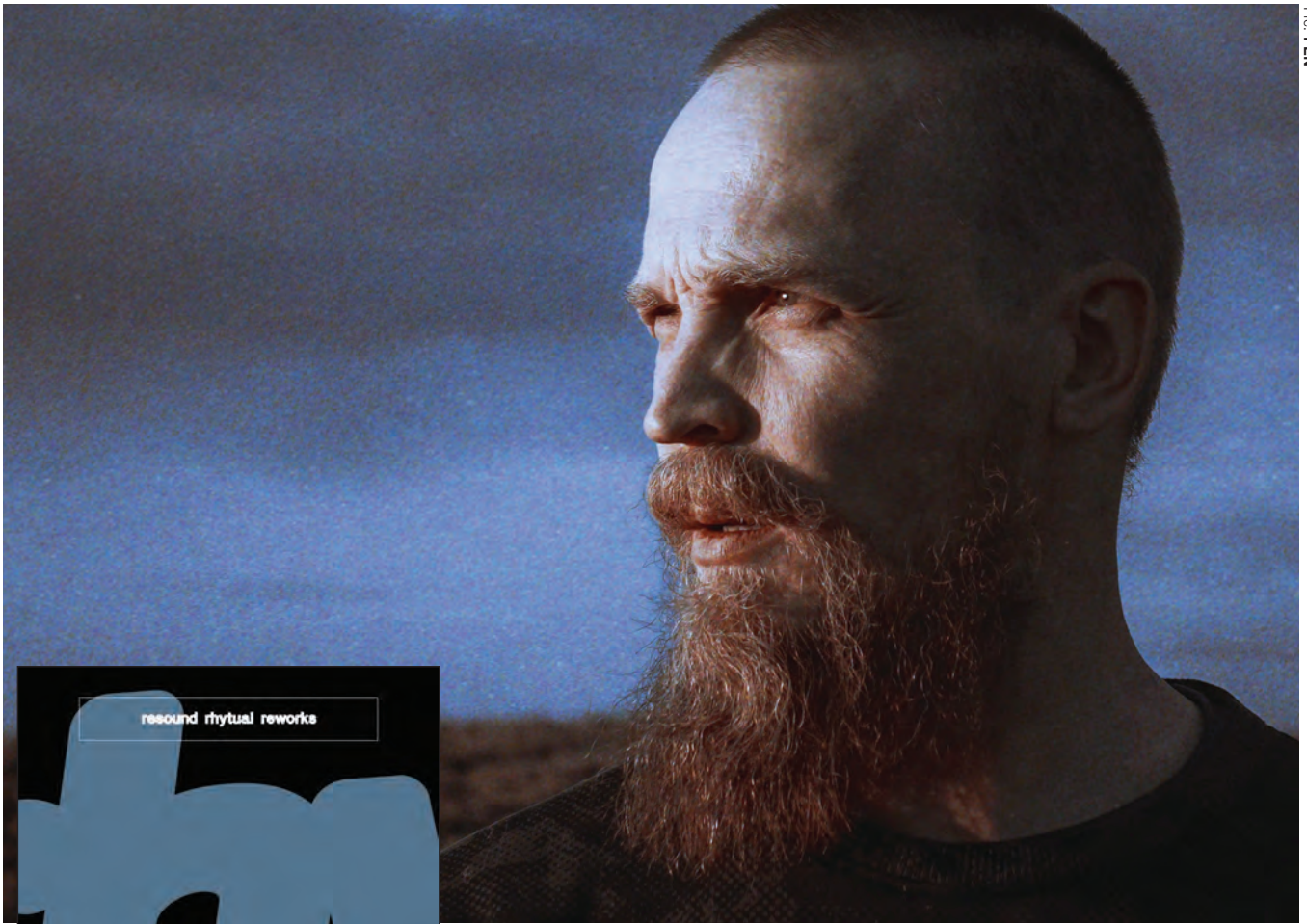
felte records

Quiet progression

Jess Labrador, aka Chasms, has a track record for introverted music. Having dealt with incredibly personal themes in the past, for example on 2019's grief-stricken 'The Mirage', she's long-since made a name for herself as someone who understands the human experience and how to interpret emotions as sound. Nevertheless, her music is also highly expressive, even if tracks are usually defined by subtlety. 'Glimpse of Heaven' pushes that narrative to recovery, or at least the redemption and self-awareness needed to step forward and move on from a difficult past, and represents a quiet musical progression of sorts, too. Yes, we're still in deep, dubby downtempo territory, steeped in dark, brooding atmospherics, but Labrador's voice reflects growing openness and the idea of accepting the self, a theme the songs themselves often address.

MARTIN GUTTRIDGE-HEWITT

Compilation of the Month



Pic: PEN

Resound

Rhytual Reworks

Straight Up Breakbeat

The resound of Resound

FINNISH artist Ilpo Kärkkäinen, aka Resound, has a long and illustrious history. A precocious musician who played his first stadium gig aged eight (at least according to Discogs), he was producing electronic music by the mid-'90s and has since become a mastering engineer, his personal website offering tips for budding music makers – both free and via Patreon.

It's as one half of Loxy & Resound, however, that he's best known – the pair met in 2006 at Therapy Sessions, a monthly d&b party at East London's now defunct Herbal. Running the gamut from rolling jungle to techy steppers, the duo have cut a swathe through post-Millennium d&b, landing on Exit, Samurai, Metalheadz, Over/Shadow and R&S, to name just a few.

It's unsurprising then that Resound has been picked up by Straight Up Breakbeat – a Helsinki label whose name makes no bones about its dedication to modern jungle and d&b – for collaboration. After dropping two solo EPs for them, alongside another with Loxy, he returns with a 10-track reworking of 2019's 'Resound Presents Rhytual' EP.

Finland had a rich history of paganism before Christianity arrived, with Stone Age statues

and shrines still existing as a monument to the worship of various gods who personified aspects of nature. This pre-history mystery permeates 'Rhytual', informing its chant-like repetition, and strikes a chord once again as we emerge from the darkness of winter.

'Gnosis' was originally a hypnotic swirl, its drums a tribal accompaniment to facilitate inner trance. 'Rhytual Reworks' kicks off with a new take from Resound himself, the otherworldly, altered state still there but beginning to subside as the drums step forward and start the dance. This sense of an unfolding psychedelic journey builds, the central melodic motif of 'Gnosis' appearing among shape-shifting landscapes of sound. Skeptical's minimal robotics take it out of the forest and into a distant cyberpunk future. Dead Man's Chest's 4/4 hardcore builds to a gnarly 303 acid techno bassline, one more night in Hackney. And Blood Trust provides a masterclass in techy break science, deliciously fizzy cymbals hyping the ride.

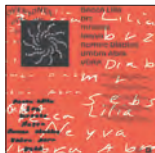
'Deus' previously paired stuttering footwork drums with a looping vocal invocation or prayer. Esc runs with the grandeur of the title, a torrent of awe-inspiring Amens raining down, the vocal reverberating to cathedral-sized proportions. Recue adopts

a more modern halftime framework, but trance chords and arps build to another transcendent trip, bright light breaking through dark clouds for a taste of the sublime. The reverence of 'Pagan' filtered through dBridge becomes a creeping menace, the beginning of ergot-induced visions in the stone circle as time and space fold. Inner Terrain's distorted 85bpm cosmic crawl is their final collapse, the abyss swallowing you whole.

Sun People flips 'Unsung' from ancient drum circle to deepest, darkest dub, Rhythm & Sound jamming with Autonomic on a travelator, and Unsung rolls out a Reese and distorted 808 bass to close, dreamy pads and a ghostly vocal hanging like mist over a '90s Grooverider-esque workout.

It's testament to the reputation and talent of Resound that 'Rhytual Rework' works. The 'Resound Presents Rhytual' EP is shot through with eerie mysticism, which lends itself to various interpretations. But this comp is as much about the remixers and the deep pool of talent, both established and rising, that it draws on. Like pagan monuments, there's something timelessly enduring and fascinating about d&b, which possesses an almost elemental quality. 'Rhytual' is built on just four tracks, yet it reaches to the horizon in all directions. Yes, there is straight-up breakbeat. But as these reworks show, d&b has evolved into something that encompasses so much more.

JOE ROBERTS



V/A
Portals
Other People
Nicolás Jaar's bootcamp experiments

'Portals' is 19 tracks of experimental noise, the result of a two-month workshop during which Chilean iconoclast Nicolás Jaar taught Ableton to a bunch of LA musicians, while members of The Rising Artist Foundation offered advice on how to navigate the music industry. The contributing artists are all relative unknowns, although Jaar's name appears among many on the ensemble single 'Xqst Corpz' – an interesting, burbling tune, though nowhere near as wild as the rest. Neyva's opener 'Para Siempre (Alien Version)' is a dreamy, ticking ballad worthy of a Pedro Almodóvar film. Becca Lilia's 'Visual Fighter' is punishing gabba, which is great (if you like that sort of thing) and brz's 'Isolatra' is a swirl of words and shuddering mechanical grumbles. It's a mixed bag, but the more you listen, the more it makes sense. **SAM DAVIES**



Jay Cunning
Hardcore Junglist Volume One
Knifeforce
Hardcore will never die

On this huge compilation of two DJ mixes and 20 unmixed tracks, Jay Cunning delves into the resurgent breakbeat hardcore scene, collecting tunes by modern artists inspired by the genre's early '90s heyday. "The scene and the music moved so fast that each style had little time to grow as the scene progressed at breakneck speed," Cunning reckons. "I'd say the Hardcore Junglist movement has more to give..." It's difficult to argue, as these mixes are a total thrill ride. Featuring revivalists like Tim Reaper, Pete Cannon, Coco Bryce and Dead Man's Chest, there are also unreleased gems from Ray Keith, Urban Shakedown and Blame, with time-stretching, apocalyptic riffs and hyperactive synth stabs all in evidence. It's unashamedly retro, but who cares when it's this much fun? Fans of the music (like this one) will devour 'Hardcore Junglist Volume One' voraciously. **BEN MURPHY**



V/A
The Chill Out Tent Ambient 1
Chill Out Tent
Lazy Sunday Soundtrack

Since the early '00s, Chris Coco's been trying to soundtrack the perfect lazy Sunday as both a producer and something like the spiritual leader of lethargic electronic music more generally. He hosts a Chill Out Tent at various festivals (complete with yoga classes) and has launched a series of albums under the same name. His second compilation is a case study in mellow textures and pulsing chords, as singular motifs come into focus across the 10 tracks – a sitar here (Koubabiki's 'Raven Born'), a vocal there (Samantha Whates Ida Wenøe's 'Lyla'), or a particularly memorable arpeggio (Ataurean's 'Hope Springs'). There are occasional hints of rhythm, (the humid hand drum loops on 'Leap Year'), but really this album is all about the soft spoken beauty of those festival sunrises when you aren't quite ready to go back to your tent. **HENRY IVRY**



V/A
INSHA
Naug
It began in Africa

Brian Eno once plundered African music for 'My Life In The Bush Of Ghosts'; now Kenyan artists are producing indigenous versions of Eno's ambient style. However, the inspirations for the music on this compilation come from much further back than the early '80s, their roots being found in ancient ceremonies. That's most apparent in Nyokabi Kariuki's 'Anjiru' – where echo-drenched female voices sound like spirits whispering in the savannah – but it's decent headphones rather than an anthropologist's hat you'll need for getting the most out of the entrancing sonics on 'INSHA'. Barno's 'Calm, Chaos' weaves field recordings of bustling streets around plaintive piano, while the combination of traditional instruments with supple beats on tracks like Avom's 'Waza' or Ngat Maler's 'Nam Lolwe' makes for a beguiling mix of the earthy and ethereal. **PAUL CLARKE**



V/A
From Above Vol. 3
Lumière Noire
Eclectic European electronics

Genre-hopping Parisian electronic label Lumière Noire marks its fortieth release with a collection of new tracks, compiled – as on previous volumes – by producer, composer and label founder Chloé Thévenin. As with Lumière's general output, the selection here is an intentionally varied affair, although various strains of French electro find their way into more than a few tracks. There's also synthpop from Vega Vega, a John-Carpenter-on-a-Casio turn in 'Lost Boys', fuzzy electro-rock from Il Est Vilaine and plenty of quirky, downtempo house and techno, including the oddball 'Can't Remember' from Roe Deers and Rodion's hypnotic 'Mondi Lontanissimi', both highlights. But as varied as the tracks are, you could hear them all at the same time, at a wildly alternative club night, probably in Paris... which is pretty much the Lumière Noire vibe in the first place. **TRISTAN PARKER**



V/A
Sven Våth: What I Used To Play
Cocoon
Papa Sven looks back

For the past 40 years, Sven Våth has been an integral part of electronic music. He was in Ibiza seven years before the British contingent arrived, founded Frankfurt's seminal club Omen, and continues to play the biggest festivals. He has a knowledge of dance music at an embryonic level. 'What I Used To Play' spans 36 tracks from the DJ's early days, paying homage to everything from EBM to Balearic, from proto-techno to deep house classics. The tracks aren't particularly deep cuts – one side features New Order and Anne Clark while another houses Phuture and Model 500 – but this is a history of the strange contortions that came out pre-'90, when genres were still in flux. This is the most impressive licensing feat you'll see all decade, and who doesn't want a copy of 'Voodoo Ray' and 'Sueño Latino' on the same album? **HENRY IVRY**



V/A
Place: Tunisia curated by Azu Tiwaline and Shinigami San
Place:
Arabesque

The 'Place:' compilations shine a spotlight on the different sounds of electronic music's global village, while also showing how musical borders have collapsed – the individual tracks from the two curators of the Tunisia edition being cases in point. The rolling hand percussion amid the dub-drenched atmosphere of Azu Tiwaline's 'Ethereal Tribes' shows the influence of her Berber background, while the breakbeat assault of Shinigami San's 'Higgs' sounds like it was made by someone for whom East London is as exotic as North Africa is to someone in Hackney. Puritanist's 'Soulameya' is the sound of Saharan shadows, SKNDR crafts melancholy Balearica, Hamdi RydEr and Briki's techy tracks would rock dancefloors anywhere, while Mostafa Kölz's post-rock epic 'Diurne' ends up out of this world. **PAUL CLARKE**



V/A
Transmissions From Total Refreshment Centre
Blue Note
New jazz snapshot

Originally a Hackney gig venue, Total Refreshment Centre has since blossomed into a roving, interchangeable musical collective. Connected to London's exuberant new jazz scene, the musicians who form Total Refreshment Centre also hail from Chicago and Melbourne, and their musical tastes encompass dub, hip-hop and funk too, which they meld together in their live performances. This compilation brings together tracks from some of the alumni. On Soccer96 & Kieron Boothe's 'Visions,' Boothe's lithe raps deftly twist around the horns, warm bass and psychedelic synth, while Jake Long's 'Crescent (City Swamp Dub),' is a trippy post-rock meditation. Then there's the joyous jazz-funk of Zeitgeist Freedom Energy Exchange's 'Isa'. There's a sense of vitality and musical possibility throughout. **BEN MURPHY**