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INSIDE:
WHY ARE THERE SO MANY NEURODIVERGENT PEOPLE IN DANCE MUSIC? / HOW FASHION & DANCE MUSIC COLLIDE IN TOKYO / WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE CHILLOUT ROOM? / EIGHT ACTS TAKING KUDURO TO THE NEXT LEVEL / GAME CHANGER: EVERYTHING BUT THE GIRL 'MISSING (TODD TERRY REMIX)' / WORTHY WINNER: ANOTHER GLASTONBURY TRIUMPH & LOTS MORE

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PHOTO: OLIVER KGH



Iceboy Violet

Not A Dream But A Controlled Explosion

Fixed Abode

Gothic grime

ICEBOY VIOLET'S 2022 MIXTAPE, 'The Vanity Project', was a breathtaking debut — bringing together a who's who of outré producers and their chameleon-like raps, it was unlike anything else last year. Amidst the chaos of bass and broken drum patterns, though, the Manchester-based artist crafted a persona of fragile vulnerability that held the tracks together. "There are points where I will, in as vivid detail as I can in thirty seconds, explain some of the best and worst things that I've been through," they said in an interview with *The Quietus*. "That's a core part of my music — forcing myself to be vulnerable to connect with people. It lets them do the same thing. Sometimes you just need permission." Their follow-up, 'Not A Dream But A Controlled Explosion', is just as striking and emotional, but something has changed. Where 'The Vanity Project' felt like a tour of contemporary club contortions, 'Not A Dream But A Controlled Explosion' is more focused. This is thanks to the fact that the record is produced entirely by Violet and works with only a few central motifs as its building blocks: choral chord samples, sub-bass pulses, and walls of feedback abound. Imagine one of Burial's night bus sojourns ending up amongst the ruins of

a countryside church at midnight (with nothing but Merzbow playing through the coach speakers). There are two flavours of what it's tempting to call Violet's 'Gothic grime' across the record. On the one hand, you have the minimal — nearly ethereal — introspection of tracks like 'Black Gold', 'Wounded Coogi', and 'Paris, Bradford'. On 'Wounded Coogi', for example, a broken kick pulses over the silhouette of what were once beautiful chords as if a hymn had been disassembled and pieced back together on the floor of a rave. On the other hand, there are tracks with a nearly violent intensity. Sampled sighs are turned inside out on 'Refracted' as guest Orlandor's voice bounces across the stereo like a ping-pong ball covered with nails. And on one of the few club-friendly tracks, 'Ekklipse', a dembow rhythm staggers underneath Violet's syrup-slowed voice as they warn about an imminent slaughter. These two approaches come together in 'Pablos Cathedral'. The track starts with Violet yelling into the void as a wall of reverb sounds back. But then the record's most ferocious rhythm comes barging in, reminding me of the global club-meets-techno bangers that former collaborator Nick León does so

well.

What is also noticeably different here is how Violet raps. Their voice is distorted and warped, fed through pedals and delayed to the point where it threatens to short-circuit. The lyrics themselves are less important than their overall effect. They channel their inner Kendrick in 'Control'-mode on 'Street Dogs Have Wings' where sub-bass and syllables stack atop each other in a Jenga tower that feels like it'll collapse into an Everest of effect pedals, for example. This makes their already dense lyricism even harder to parse as single lines surface from the brackish murk of their productions. This doesn't dilute the impact though; try not to get shivers when they rap, "I want your words to fool me" on 'Wounded Coogi' or "I hope that you know you need me" on 'Pablos Cathedral'. At under 17-minutes, 'Not A Dream But A Controlled Explosion' is a short and (extremely) intense listen. It's both darker and dreamier than 'The Vanity Project', but also allows a more complete look at who Violet is as a musician. These are wonderfully weird and challenging tracks, underlining that no one is writing UK rap in such a strange and singular way. **HENRY IVRY**



El Kontessa

Nos Habet Caramel

Billnæs

Subverting tradition

Cairo-based DJ, producer, and multidisciplinary artist El Kontessa joins the current vanguard of SWANA female producers wielding fierce beats that subvert tradition. The audacious and acerbic ‘Nos Habet Caramel’, her debut album, melds shaabi and baladi tradition with futuristic club and pop sounds, creating slick and slippery pastiches that often veer in a myriad of directions at manic pace. On ‘Ghaltet Meen *دطل غ نيم*’ scattered darbukas fashion a breakbeat beneath snatches of vocal stabs before the whole thing nosedives into rampant and rushy gabber. ‘Bingo *وچ نيب*’ surges with a caustic beat, while ‘Asanser *ري س ناسا*’ mutates from baladi to breakneck drum & bass. El Kontessa’s style, a sort of hyper-Mahraganat, isn’t immediately accessible, but quickly reveals itself as an exciting and essential queering of electro-shaabi’s typically male-centric canon. Salacious, unpredictable, and uncompromising in attack. **TAZMÉ PILLAY**



Genesis Owusu

Struggler

OURNESS/AWAL

Multi-genre muscling

Kofi Owusu-Ansah aka Genesis Owusu made no small splash with his 2021 debut ‘Smiling With No Teeth’ — an unflinching exploration of identity, depression and racism through funk, punk and hip-hop, which saw the Ghanaian-Australian artist clean up at the ARIA Awards that year. On follow-up album ‘Struggler’, Owusu tilts head-first into synth-punk and electroclash anthems — echoing The Faint, Liars or tour partners Bloc Party — bursting with melodic distortions and tight, tidy percussion. Owusu is also keen to show off his range, serving some whiplash-fast genre-shifts in the form of R&B (‘Stuck To The Fan’), slow jams (‘See Ya There’) and even hints of breakbeat (‘What Comes Will Come’). With big shoes to fill ‘Struggler’ doesn’t quite meet the muscle of its predecessor, but serves as an eloquent companion piece, capturing a battle back from the brink. **OLIVIA CHEVES**



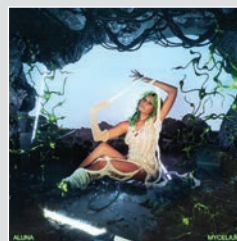
Lindstrøm

Everyone Else is a Stranger

Smalltown Supersound

Upping the tempo

‘Everyone Else is a Stranger’ sees the cosmic disco stalwart positioned in nightclub mode, reflected by the upbeat, relatively swift seven-minute running time of lead single ‘Syreen’. You’ll hear that unmistakable Lindstrøm melancholy, though, in the company of driving tempos and long, dreamy breakdowns. It’s a return to the format of diving deeper with a smaller selection of tracks, though overall more functional and less broad than a four-track album might suggest. The 10-minute ‘Nightswim’ explores the album’s most expansive soundscapes, often diverting into extended cosmic outtakes. Meanwhile, ‘The Rind’ lays down a galloping pace and proceeds to layer it with Pink Floyd-esque psychedelic synths. It’s a predictable deployment of Lindstrøm’s sonic toolbox that borders dangerously on bland, lacking a proper conceptual payoff. However, it’s the dancefloor where the true appeal of ‘Everyone Else Is A Stranger’ will be judged. **ANGUS THOMAS PATERSON**



Aluna

MYCELIUM

Mad Decent

Tribute to dance and community

Aluna Francis’ second album takes its name from the foundational network of fungi. ‘MYCELIUM’ bears the fruits of her mentoring work encouraging Black ravers to meet and head to the dancefloor, where she’s seen a dearth of those faces. It’s made for the singer/producer/DJ’s most collaborative album, featuring apt co-writes/guest spots with BIPOC and LGBTQ+ acts including MNEK, TSHA and Pablo Vittar. ‘MYCELIUM’ is a more house-focused affair than her debut and celebrates dance’s Black roots. The ballooning grooves of ‘Beggin’ with Chris Lake literally beg for replay, as does the fat bass of MK link-up ‘Kiss It Better’. Francis’ emotive singing atop the brooding tech-house of ‘Playin Wit Ya’ (with Walker & Royce) and her silky swoons on ‘Mine O’ Mine’ (with Jayda G) show her at her best in collaborations. A spirited tribute to dance and community. **CHARLOTTE KROL**



DJ Marky

The Time Is Right

Shogun Audio

Love letter to d&b

So much is made of DJ Marky's prodigious skills in the booth that it can be easy to forget he's an accomplished producer too. The Brazilian artist's tracks have a similar verve to his DJ sets, and his 2004 LP alongside XRS, 'In Rotation', is a liquid-funk classic. Nineteen years on, 'The Time Is Right' feels like a new chapter.

Album highlight 'Hugs', with Daddy Earl and Tyke, is an enormous mix of rousing dancehall choruses and ill bass blurts, while 'Dance Again' has jazzy piano and an addictive Javeon lyric. 'The Spaceship Connection' shows Marky's passion for '80s soul, and 'The Beat Of Love' is a surprising delve into disco — but 'Wrong Hands', with L-Side, bristles with menacing titanium-coated rhythms.

Displaying a deep love for drum & bass in its many forms, with hooks for days, this is Marky's definitive statement. **BEN MURPHY**



Kaidi Tatham

The Only Way

First Word Records

Heavyweight digital jazz

Few names resonated quite as loudly and for quite as long from the West London broken beat scene of the early 2000s as Kaidi Tatham. His were more than mere heavyweight club tracks (though they have often been that too); futuristic, heavily jazz and boogie influenced, and as a bewilderingly talented multi-instrumentalist, he's continued to craft layered and complex soul ever since those heady days of pivotal clubs like CoOp.

This fifth solo album, out on First Word, encompasses all those aforementioned vibes. This album gleams. Highlights — and there are many — include the album title track 'The Only Way' with Uhmeer on the mic, son of the iconic 'Jazzy' Jeff Townes, and 'Fricassee', a free-wheeling banger punctuated with meandering piano and the kind of groove that would have had the regulars at CoOp climbing the walls. **BEN ARNOLD**



Nathan Micay

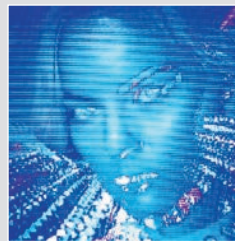
To The God Named Dream

LuckyMe

Raving in widescreen

Hearing that the latest album from Canadian producer and DJ Nathan Micay is inspired by "classic RPGs" and library music shouldn't be a surprise. This is the man who, after regularly playing Berghain, found himself soundtracking big-name TV shows, notably the gritty HBO/BBC drama 'Industry'.

His early tunes, stretching back to UKG-indebted EPs from 2012, have a subtle filmic quality, but now Micay happily lets the technicolour-feel of screen endeavours flow through the electronica of 'To The God'. It's an upfront record, referencing old rave and incorporating pristine pop, downtempo and ambient ('Don't Wanna Say Goodbye'), and RPG salutes (including the title track). Catchy-as-hell single 'Fangs' announces itself with nostalgic, trance-like synths and no-frills breakbeats, ensuring its inclusion in various edgy films and shows. Despite its cinematic atmosphere, the fun Micay clearly has on his new album suggests that making his own music remains his biggest passion. **TRISTAN PARKER**



Eve Maret

New Noise

Curious Music

Prolific experimentalism

'New Noise', Eve Maret's sixth studio album in as many years, is a sharp stylistic pivot from the ambient soundscapes that inhabited last year's 'Earth and Space'. The Nashville-based experimental composer and performer pushes her own vocals to the fore, channelling a distinct pop sensibility while simultaneously digging deeper into the sharper experimental noise.

There's an impressive range of modular synthesisers and live instrumentation across the album's swift 25-minute run-time, alongside a versatile range of spoken-word poetry, field recordings, and beyond. Maret is fearless in her versatility, drawing her wild grab-bag of sounds together into a release that somehow features a strong conceptual throughline. She's a fascinating artist, and while 'New Noise' might prove an obtuse entry-point for many listeners, it's an album best enjoyed when listened to as part of her larger body of work. **ANGUS THOMAS PATERSON**



antenasia

Warped Lucky
 Tabula Rasa Records
Best kept secret

While it's a crying shame that anteniasia aren't better known outside their native Japan, we suspect Everything But The Girl are secretly glad about the fact. After all, probably not so many people would have got quite so excited about Tracey Thorn and Ben Watt's first joint album in 24 years if they'd known that during the same period the duo of vocalist san and producer Nerve had put out seven albums that mirrored in style and matched in quality the bittersweet soul and downtempo beats of mid-'90s Everything But The Girl. Eighth album 'Warped Lucky' should hopefully be the one that gets them the international attention they deserve, with the emotive vocals and sophisticated production in songs such as 'Humming On The Moon' and 'Gone Angels' showcasing exactly what most of us have been missing out on for years. **PAUL CLARKE**



Goldie

Timeless (The Remixes)
 London Records
Still timeless

To those of a certain age, Goldie's 'Timeless' is a defining album in our youth. To those who've followed? Well, it's still timeless. Which begs the question: how to remix it? The answer is, mostly lightly. There are classics from back in the day: Doc Scott's heavenly take on 'Kemistry', Photek's classic rub of 'Still Life', Nookie's '94 amen attack on 'Inner City Life' (alongside a newer take). Break leads the way for the new school, flipping 'Inner City Life' with modern d&b bass. J Kenzo's 'Tribute Remix' remix of 'Jah' is also respectful yet impactful, doing similar. These modern tunings hit. But Searchlight delivers a jazzy, live-sounding twist on 'Sensual' that steps beyond, channelling not just Goldie's inimitable melody of old, but also his pioneering spirit. And Trevino reminds of his lost genius, transforming 'Inner City Life' into grooving old school house. **JOE ROBERTS**



Laura Groves

Radio Red
 Bella Union
Angelic ambience

Laura Groves grew up in West Yorkshire opposite a radio tower and wrote much of her first album in the shadow of two more transmitting towers in London. Staring up at them gave her a sense of "escapism", "comfort" and "melancholy" that she searches for in her own music. All those words can be used to describe 'Radio Red', which is an often icy synth fusion of pop, indie and folk defined by her own crystal-cut and impossibly pure vocal tones. There is a hymnal quality to most tracks. Clean electronic minimalism and the occasional fingerpicked guitar provide a backdrop to Groves musing in isolation about the return of a lost love, the value of true friendship and the pain that can come as a result of broken communications. Despite the heavy themes, the sophisticated synths and tender delivery provide the quiet late-night comfort Groves was aiming for. **KRISTAN J CARYL**



Andrew Hung

Deliverance
 Lex Records
Pressing the Buttons

The self-portraits adorning all of Andrew Hung's solo albums aren't the only human face he's displayed since he and John Benjamin Power called time on Fuck Buttons in 2015. Whereas Power has continued to hide behind his machines pushing sonic extremes as Blanck Mass, Hung has opened his heart as a songwriter heavily indebted to emotive early '80s post-punk. Debut album 'Realisationship' resembled The Cure under the lights of electro-pop disco, while 2021's decidedly darker and more despairing 'Devastations' was more like Depeche Mode after opening their latest electricity bill. 'Deliverance' cuts a line between the two, showing a knack for making rocky guitars sound like ravey synths and vice versa on tracks like 'Soldier' and 'Never Be The Same', while 'Love Is' ends the album with a wall of sound as face-melting as Fuck Buttons at their finest. **PAUL CLARKE**



PICT: SEB PETERS



Saoirse

fabric presents Saoirse

fabric

Michelin-star mixing

SAOIRSE was so excited about this mix that she organised a celebratory scavenger hunt at Glastonbury two weeks before its release. She scattered masks with her own face on them around the festival grounds, hiding within them “little pots of gold” containing unreleased tunes, guestlist passes and other “little surprises”. By the end of the weekend Instagram was filled with punters raving behind Saoirse masks, including one who removed hers to reveal that she was in fact the former Spice Girl Mel C.

This is as good a primer as you're likely to get on the phenomenon that is DJ, producer, label head, queer festival co-founder and DJ Mag cover star Saoirse Ryan. She's shamelessly fun, popular with both club heads and pop stars, and anyone else willing to put a bit of time and effort into engaging with her output.

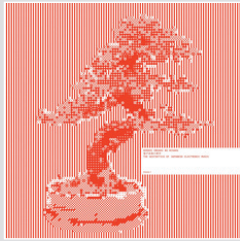
She's also a scavenger herself of sorts, a dedicated crate digger who spent 15 years haunting record shops long before anyone on the global DJ circuit even tried to pronounce her name. In fairness to her excitement about this release, fabric is part of her very being. It was around 10am, some time in 2008 that 23 year-old Saoirse, a jobbing DJ from Dublin holidaying

in London, was drawn to the fabric dancefloor. Ricky V was on the decks in Room 1 when it hit her: she would move to London — and she wouldn't look back. Fifteen years later and the DJ has recorded her own fabric mix. It starts with 'Flex', a recent release by veteran Welsh producer and Freerotation resident Duckett. It's a proper post-funk groove. You have to just surrender to the chugs of rhythm and let it work away on you. That turns into 'Yellowtail' from Geeneus's 2009 UK funky cornerstone masterwork 'Volumes: One'. Those first two tracks are mixed together so expertly that they effectively become one song. Before long you're in, locked into the beats like a kid on a rollercoaster. She begins to lift you skywards with DJ NORMAL 4's 'Transcendental Training Tactics', which does what it says it will, introducing dreamy swathes of chordial synth-wash and preparing you for an hour of lovely celestial floating.

Speaking of, Shanti Celeste — a DJ friend and kindred spirit who's never far from a Saoirse set — provides one of three exclusive tunes (four if you cop the vinyl) here in the shape of 'Fluffy', a skippy fidget-spinner of a track that comes in penultimately, just before Saoirse's own 'RM 1'.

“I've never been the kind of person that thinks I'm going to reinvent the wheel,” Saoirse told DJ Mag in that cover interview at the start of this year. “I trust myself to make a good club tool.” It sounds like modesty, but her recent, early forays into production have yielded many an excellent DJ tool. Hear works like 'Chubby', 'Trust' and one she's called '(.) (.)' which is, quite simply, the tits.

She has a fine ear for a tool too. This mix is full of them, to the point that moments of even fleeting melody — such as Bassiani resident Hamatsuki's dub techno beauty 'Shrink' — feel like godly beams of light in a cloudy sky. The real ecstatic peak is 'Herzsprung 1', a trance tune by the underrated Oliver Huntemann and Stephan Bodzin collaboration Caunos. It's all wobbly arpeggios and sunrise chords so good you'll be reaching for the heavens like Paul van Dyk. But the peak only hits thanks to Saoirse's compositional restraint in the buildup. The tools are the main course; trance is the pudding. Except we're the ones laughing, because secretly we love a club tool. **SAM DAVIES**



V/A

Denshi Ongaku No Bigaku / 電子音楽の美学 (The Aesthetics of Japanese Electronic Music) Vol.1

Cosmocities

Dreamy delights

French label Cosmocities has released everything from house to hip-hop to broken beat since 2019, but founder Matt Soulie has always been obsessed with the music of the Far East. This new 13-track compilation serves up the fruits of his many years digging for just that. And, frankly, it proves what you likely already know — that Japanese artists bring a signature beauty, profound grace and sonic subtlety to anything they touch. That could be the brain-cleansing ambience of Inner Science's 'Alight' which is, we hope, what heaven sounds like. It could be the heat-damaged synth smears of Sauce 81's downtempo delight 'Sign of Secret Love', or the delicate dancing keys of Kuniyuki's deep and shuffling jazz-house number 'Free'. All these tracks, and the rest, are impossibly lush and dreamy, immersive and ethereal. Happily, a second volume is arriving at the same time. **KRISTAN J CARYL**



V/A

INTL.PDCOMP002

Pressure Dome

Welcome to the Pressure Dome

Bristol-based Pressure Dome do a fine line drawing together international beatmakers and this, their eighth various comp, shines a light on their roving ear. There's gnarly dubstep, courtesy of Beatrice's 'Fortunately', while Trois-Quarts Taxi System's 'Sur le Gouffre' is a dark stepper and DJ Durbin's 'Deftime' provides soundsystem-friendly heft. Conversely, Dubplanet X's 'Azie' is slow and percolating, as is 'Broken Signs' courtesy of Fels, while Design Default's 'Mecha Eden' pairs Eastern flute with glitchy, fidgety drums. Elsa chucks deep breathing and scratching into mid-paced club bumper 'Left My Feelings', Tano's 'Keep Your Distance' pumps the subs and LWS' 'Day 7' sounds like a nuclear meltdown. Possibly our fave though is Zara's 'Zwer', somewhere between All Saints's 'Pure Shores' and Aphex Twin's 'Selected Ambient Works'. A panoply of global influence, it all finds focus thanks to Pressure Dome's Bristol prism. **JOE ROBERTS**



Speedy Wunderground

The Dubs - Vol 1

Speedy Wunderground

For the club

Celebrating their tenth trip in orbit, Speedy Wunderground is marking the occasion with a new compilation series. 'The Dubs' is the ultimate Dan Carey collector's kit, featuring a selection of remixes by the label founder, producer and DJ. Recorded under his Mr Dan and Savage Gary monikers, the 20-track compilation pulls together remixes from across the Speedy roster. Kicking off with a murky spin on Archie Bronson Outfit's 'Mr Dan's Dead Duck Dub', the record sets itself up as a joyride through some of the label's most seminal singles. Among them are previously reworked versions of Kae Tempest and Loyle Carner's 'Guts', PVA's 'Savage Gary's Christmas Dub' and Black Midi's 'Savage Gary's Dbdbdb'. It would be a reach to say the set broke new ground in either dub or indie, but it succeeds in reconstituting Speedy's back catalogue for the club crowd. **OLIVIA CHEVES**



V/A

All Together!!

MATE Records

Timeless 4/4

Madrid's MATE Records turns five, and to mark the occasion is dropping a double 12" of warm, timeless house primed for midsummer. Flexing muscle, the label has enlisted an impressive roster for productions and brought two bestsellers back from the archives due to high demand: the sludgy funk of 'Ready To Go' by The Blaxploited Orchestra — making great use of the lyrics to Ecstasy, Passion & Pain feat. Barbara Roy's anthem 'Touch and Go' (see: JX's 'Son of a Gun') — and Garret David's swinging, twinkling groover 'Sassy Lead'. Add deep chunkiness from Byron The Aquarius, bumbling bass and playful percussion courtesy of The Winelambs, the loose tops, heavy kicks and throbbing lows of 'Let Your Body Take Control' by Tilman (how about that organ hook?), and Rafa Santos' blissful groover, 'Lysergic Trip'. In short, a celebratory package. **MARTIN GUTTRIDGE-HEWITT**