

## Interview | Craig Bratley

**Craig Bratley's** debut album ›Buy The Ticket, Take The Ride‹ is one of the most exquisite, engaging and spine-tingling house records that you will have the pleasure of hearing all year. Out on the 24<sup>th</sup> November on vinyl, or the 15<sup>th</sup> December on digital download, the album is a must listen for anyone who likes their music low-centred, and groovy. With a cheeky sense of humour (check out the hipster rap of *Dance With A Mannequin*), the record's ten tracks brim with a sense of playfulness and a lightness of touch that help make *Buy the Ticket* a delight from beginning to end. By **JOHN BITTLES**



Taking time out from a packed schedule, Craig very kindly agreed to a short interview where we talked about music, his record label *Magic Feet*, Cleethorpes, *Tsuba*, **Hunter S. Thompson**, and lots more. And, should you desire a soundtrack while you read, then [here's a link for a sneak preview of the album](#)

[By way of introduction can you tell us a bit about who you are and what you do?](#)

I'm Craig Bratley, Producer, Remixer and DJ. I'm currently based in Lincoln, England. I'm actually from Cleethorpes, a small seaside town on the east coast. Rod Temperton, the guy that wrote Michael Jackson's ›Thriller‹ is also from Cleethorpes, they really should make more of that angle.

[Your debut album ›Buy The Ticket, Take The Ride‹ is coming out on the 24th November. For someone who hasn't heard your music before, what can they expect?](#)

I know a lot of producers say this but, when I had the idea for the album I didn't want it to be a collection of club tracks. I like a lot of different music and wanted the album to reflect that and the music that's influenced me over the years, including ambient, electro, hip hop, Italo, House and Techno.

[The album is very analogue-sounding. Can you tell us a bit about how it was recorded?](#)

Thanks, that's something I was aiming for and I used quite a bit of analogue kit. I've got a couple of analogue synths and a few of the tracks were done using a modular synth I've been building. Some of the digital components like the drums were also sent out to hardware compressors and I use an analogue desk for summing, just to warm things up a bit.

[›Buy The Ticket, Take The Ride‹ is quite an evocative title. Where did it come from?](#)

I had a list of titles in mind then one night my girlfriend and I were sat in having a drink and the film ›Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas‹ came on. I heard that line and decided there and then that's what the album would be called. It summed up a lot of things that were going on or had recently happened.

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If you had to choose one song to epitomise the album which would it be, and why?

Maybe ›The Curse‹. It's a dance track but hopefully sounds as good outside of the club environment.

The rap on Dance With A Mannequin brought a smile to my face. Do you think it was a risk putting this song on so early in the album?

Did it? Wicked! I think *Mannequin* along with *Transmission One* helps set the scene and eases you in, analogue seduction.

The track listing also reflects how I think as a DJ. I quite enjoy playing longer sets where you have the opportunity to set the scene, starting off slow and gradually taking it deeper and increasing the tempo.

A real highlight of the album for me is ›Computer Controlled‹, which has a gorgeous dance floor tug that digs itself deep into the head. Can you tell us a little about how this song came about?

I was in the studio one afternoon and struggling to come up with anything. I decided I would set myself some parameters and limit myself to just one plug-in synth for the whole track. I got the parts down quite quickly and it pretty much wrote itself. As always it was the structuring that took up the majority of time.

Originally there was a vocodered vocal throughout the track but the only bit that made the edit was the vocal at the end.

The track ›Obsession‹ is one of those tracks that never fail to rock a club. What are the vital ingredients for creating a dance floor bomb?

It's all about the drums and bass. That relationship is vital in every genre of dance music, and a hook, something that's memorable.

I think for *Obsession* it was the vocal that made it stand out from similar style tracks. That dark vocal just takes it to the next level and makes it a bit more memorable.

›Birdshell‹ is another highlight on the album for me. I remember when it first came out on ›Instruments of Rapture‹ in 2010. How do you think this tracks works together with the newer tunes on the record?

I think ›Birdshell‹ has stood the test of time, albeit only 4 years and I think musically it sits well with the rest of the album. From a technical view point I can hear how my production has come on from when I made it and hopefully my skills and knowledge will continue to increase.

The two ambient pieces ›Transmission One (Intro)‹ and ›Analogue Dreams‹ which bookend the album almost seem as if they hold the entire record together. Do you have any plans to release more music like this?

Yes, I love making music like that. Sometimes you go into the studio and you don't feel like making a club track, it depends on your mood. The only factor I'm up against really is time. This past year or two I've been

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working on the album, remixing, Dj'ing, running a label and holding down a full time job as well as fitting in time with my family. I would say fitting in a social life but that has all but disappeared!

The press release for the album describes you as a »Dark and dirty disco champion«. Is this a fair summation of who you are?

Ha ha, yeah, it's not far off. There are other sides to me though.