

Bittles' Magazine | Record Review

While all of you are out Xmas shopping I have been leaving all my present-buying to my assistant (Whiskers, the cat) and have utilized all the time saved by immersing myself in fantastic new music. And, while I used to think that the vast majority of music released in December was crap, I am glad to report that this is not the case. By **JOHN BITTLES**

For instance, we have some fantastic new singles and EPs in the form of the downright dirty funk of **Romare**, stoner rock by **Warpaint**, epic soundscapes from **Mogwai**, tongue in cheek rock from **Mars Needs Women**, a remix by **Recondite** so good that I smiled for the first time in weeks, and lots, lots more. Oh, and if I know you, please don't expect anything better than mice for Christmas this year. Turns out Whiskers spent all my present money down the pub. Never trust a cat!

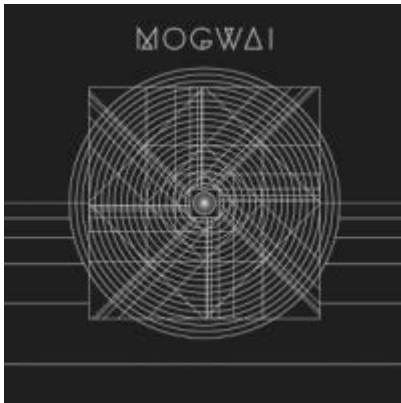


This month we'll start with the laid-back druggy grooves of the mighty **Warpaint**. Fans of their self-titled album from January will be instantly familiar with the hushed, stoner-funk of the track *Feeling Alright*. This month though the song has been placed into the very capable hands of London trio **Daughter** who twist it inside out and back again to turn it into a glistening synth-pop gem. Dark and nocturnal-sounding, the remix takes the languid groove of the original and leads it by the hand into a darkened alley in order to duff it up a little and nick its pocket money. Trip hop beats, a jet-black feel and an eerily spectral vocal combine majestically to create shadowy piece of indie-pop goth. Turns out a little bit of darkness suits **Warpaint** very well indeed!



After a string of releases for the much respected *Black Acre* label, funky noise assassin **Romare** steps firmly into the 'big time' with his stunning debut release for electronic institution *Ninja Tune*. The title track *Roots* is a deep, driving dance floor groove that is, quite simply, funky as fuck. A

throbbing bassline, ample samples and a sleazy disco air work perfectly in unison to create a masterpiece of a track which you could well imagine being the highlight of a set by the likes of **Mr Scruff**. B-side *Pusherman's* crazed experimentalism ain't too bad either, but for anyone who loves a good groove or has fond memories of the mighty *Mo' Wax* it will be all about lead track *Roots*. And I don't think it is an over-exaggeration to claim that this song may well be the best thing *Ninja Tune* have put out all year.



This December also sees Scottish post-rock purveyors **Mogwai** follow up the excellent *Rave Tapes* with the six track *Music Industry 3. Fitness Industry 1*. The three original songs unfortunately are nowhere near as exciting as **Mogwai** at their very best and do sound like off-cuts from the album. All of which leaves it to the remixes to step in manfully and save the day. The **Blanck Mass** refit of *Re-Murdered* is a deep, throbbing slice of electronica that hits all the right buttons for those who like their techno druggy-sounding and slow. Yet, it is the spectral majesty of the **Pye Corner Audio** version of *No Medicine For Regret* that is the complete star of the show. Stunningly beautiful, the track uses a slow, clanking beat which hides behind gorgeously evocative synths to create a track that makes you feel like you are in the presence of genius. Easily one of the most spell-binding pieces of electronic music you will hear all year, I cannot recommend this enough.



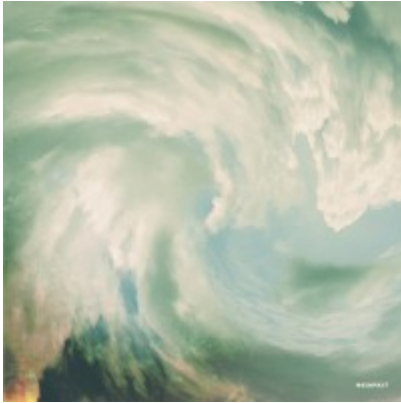
For those of you who like a bit of rock'n'roll mayhem in their lives, may I present the wonderfully named **Mars Needs Women**. Hailing from Hamburg, the trio use a wealth of experience and influences to create a form of guitar music that sounds refreshing to the ear. Their new 7inch *Lover From Mars* is so good that after listening to it twenty times in a row I decided there and then that I needed to from a band. The song brims with a nostalgic sense of slacker cool while sounding like it should be blasting from a jukebox in some 1950s gang film. B-side *Don't Peak Too Soon* is equally vital, as it struts into our lives with a garage rock swagger and a switch-blade hidden behind its back. This short and spiky two-tracker perfectly whets the appetite for the album coming in February.



The wonderful **Ana Helder** returns to *Cómeme* this month with the shit-hot *Fiebre De Marte EP*. Over the record's six tracks we get a special blend of tough disco beats together with *Cómeme's* signature sound of deranged funk. Make no mistake, these tracks will delight dance floor deviants everywhere. *Don't Hide Be Wild* has a devastating low-slung bass, *Otra Cosa* sounds like nothing else on earth, while *Cada Día Te Quiero Más* is one long sleazy groove. While a few of these songs may be a little out there for some, for those who are willing to approach their club fare with an inner funk and an open mind these tracks are aural gold.



Kompakt are at it again this month with not one but two new releases that will give your dancing feet a treat. First up label veterans **Voigt and Voigt** give us the head-turning antics of *Speicher 82*. A-side *Superpitch* is a dark, heads-down techno bomb that throbs, builds and then explodes in a glorious sea of noise. Over the flip *Supertrip* utilizes the same elements, but introduces a very welcome chorus of synths. Also be sure to check out the eerie disco house of *Rachanee* by one half of the above duo, **Reinhard Voigt**. Two tracks geared towards the more left of centre dance floors, this is perfect for when you are getting fed-up of so much repetitive-sounding techno and house.



Also out of Cologne's *Kompakt* stable this December is the *Easier EP* from melancholy house heroes **Weval**. The record contains four tracks of contemplative trance music that will be the perfect soundtrack to those 4am all alone on the dance floor moments. Earlier releases such as the *Half Age EP* on *Atomnation* explored a world of shoe gaze techno and ably highlighted just how talented **Weval** are. *Easier* is their debut release for *Kompakt* and sees them, if anything, upping their game. Opening track *Gimme Some* is a lush, slow-burner of a late-night groove that is so romantic-sounding you almost want to give it a hug and a smooch. The rest of the release is made up of the soft disco of *One*, the contemplative cry in the night of *Thinking Of* and the heart-stopping majesty of *Easier*.



One of the best things about listening to music is that sometimes a track will come along, as if from nowhere, to completely win over both your head and your heart. One such song is the excellent *I Know You're Ready* by **Kattison**. Out now on *Greco-Roman*, the tune manages that difficult trick of sounding melancholic and euphoric at the same time. A simple vocal which repeats the title throughout the track is accompanied by the type of sleazy house grooves that will have anyone with two feet dancing for months. The echoing synths, subtle beats and decadent air more than make *I Know You're Ready* cool enough for the basements, yet also huge enough for the bigger clubs. Backed by an acid style re-rub, it's safe to say that anyone with even a passing interest in house music will be playing this on constant repeat.



Fans of proggy-sounding house, **Ten Walls**, or emotional trance should leap right into the luscious beats of *Strange Days* by **Mind Against**. The title track bubbles and grooves with a gorgeous sense of deepness, so good it is hard not to fall head over heels in love. Trust me, if this came out on *Innervisions* people would rightly be raving about it for months. On the flip *Polarstern* is a superior piece of tech house which maintains a real sense of momentum and a dramatic air over its eight minute running time. The one to really raise those hairs on the back of you neck though is the fabulous **Recondite** remix of *Strange Days* which is as good a piece of electronic music as you will ever here. If you haven't listened to his *Iffy* album yet, then this is a great place to witness just how good this guy is.



ABSTRAXION

For those in the know the name **Abstraxion** will already be associated with superior electronic music that contains both heart and soul. This December sees him bring out the beautiful heart-break of the *I Can't EP* on *HAKT Recordings*. The title-track is an evocative slice of glacial electronica, while *Never Thought* is a quiet, meditative journey into the loneliness of the soul. That just leaves it to **Fairmont** and **My Favorite Robot** to round things off with their mixes of *Around Me*. The **Fairmont** version retains the despondent air of the original while **My Favorite Robot** take the tune into an echoing deep house groove. Proof, if ever it was needed, that house music does have a soul.



The snappily titled *EP1* is the debut release by **Second Storey** and **Appleblim** under their **Also** alias. Lead track *Sids Conundrum* starts out with a nice Detroit vibe before suddenly morphing into a highly functional slab of bass. The icy futurism of *Ashford Swaiths* is the stand-out of the three tracks for my taste though. With a bassline to die for, the track constantly ducks and dives, throwing you curveball after curveball, until you don't know whether to dance, clap or find it in your heart to accept this new God of dance. Seriously, this is six minutes of house music so good you constantly have to remind yourself to breathe.



This month we'll finish with two releases from über producer **Ripperton** under his **Headless Ghost** persona. The first of these sees two classic tracks receive the remix treatment from rising star **North Lake** and **Gerd** under his **NY Stomp** alias. First up **NY Stomp** takes *The Journey* and turns it into a wild and bumpy ride that will have any Chicago house fan shaking their booty with joy. Even better, somehow, is the **North Lake** revamp of *Neverending Stories*; a lush, *Innervisions*-ish slice of melodic house which will find favour with anyone who likes a bit of soul with their beats. Also, be sure to track down the *Lets Fall EP* out now by **Headless Ghost**. The **Deetron** remix is da bomb!

A special mention must also go to: *Activity* by **Mark E** - A lush three track EP of deep disco, and proto house goodness from one of the best producers in the game, *Balanzat* by **Talamanca System** - The Balearic tune of the summer now available to download so you can experience its tranquillity in your own home, *Root Pattern* by **Junes** - The title track is a lush piece of emotional techno that is very easy to love, *Liberty/Avocado* by **Breach & Cinnaman** - Two tracks of club-slaying brilliance with the never-ending groove of *Liberty* being the pick for me, *Aazra EP* by **Talktome** - Check out *Stari Grad* for a superior piece of melodic house, *Roomba Rose EP* by **Villanova** - Up and coming producer releases great EP with the lush deepness of *5 O' Clock In The Morning* the stand-out cut, and *Feel So Free* by **Crystal Bandito** - Four fierce and funky tracks make up this EP by a mysterious newcomer. The title-track could even make a dead person groove.

When Whiskers Went Rogue!

| [JOHN BITTLES](#)