

Music | Bittles' Magazine: The music column from the end of the world

There is a deep electronic flavour to many of the albums reviewed this week. As a fan of all things dark, autumn is a fantastic time of year for me as producers start to release music which evokes a world of Gothic gloom. By **JOHN BITTLES**

Many of my favourite records sound like this, with works by Biosphere, Boards Of Canada, Nine Inch Nails and Raimo accompanying me through many a long, cold night. This month sees new albums by Ø, Vainio & Vigroux, Philip Jeck, ADMX 71, Kangding Ray and Luca Sigurtà take techno, house and ambient into wonderfully darkened places while sending shivers of excitement racing up the spine. But don't worry if you aren't a fan of the dark side, because it isn't all doom and gloom this month. We also find time to review the wilfully eclectic new mix album by Prins Thomas, the dancefloor funk of Soul Clap, the indie splendour of the Creation Artefacts comp, the spacious tech house of Deep Space Orchestra, the deep house of Mano Le Tough, and much more.

So dim the lights, grab a loved one by the hand, pull the blanket a little closer, and let us begin...



Like the soundtrack to some strange and alien horror movie, Peau Froide Léger Soleil by the dream team pair-up of Vainio & Vigroux will make for absorbing yet unsettling listening over chilly nights. The aural equivalent of a creepy old house in the middle of nowhere with creaky floorboards and doors that open by themselves, this is already sitting pretty as one of my albums of the year. While the majority of the music on here exists in a menacing, yet seductive fog of electronics, beats will suddenly erupt out of nowhere to keep the listener right on edge. This makes for a riveting, thrilling aural ride! Unusual and disquieting, one listen to this is the perfect example of how compelling experimental techno can be. Never content to get lost in a loop, or succumb to the monotony of the 4/4 beat the album merges the deep, booming synth pulses of Mika Vainio with the hushed atmospherics of Frank Vigroux to stunning effect. Dense, absorbing and occasionally mind-blowing, Peau Froide Léger Soleil is an adrenalin fuelled ride into the joys of the night. 10/10.



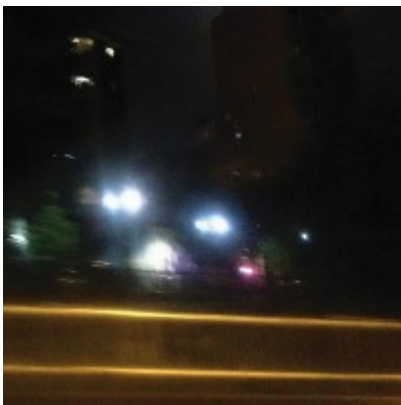
Another album to buy on sight this month comes in the form of the stunning sound design and spacious, hypnotic techno to be found on *Alone In Time* by Ø. The follow-up to the equally impressive *Frames Of Reference* LP from 2013, Ashley Burchett's sophomore album fittingly arrives just in time for Halloween. A bit more dance floor focused and jittery than its predecessor, it is *Alone In Time's* sonic depths which make it so good. The album opens with the glitch-strewn *Spacialize*, which paves the way for the psychedelic technoisms to come. In a richly detailed and varied record *Orbitron* is a deep, throbbing beast, *Increment* a gorgeous slice of mid-paced funk, *The Maze* a club destroying tool and *Astryx* a dangerously seductive ambient groove. Like most great albums though this is best listened to as a whole. Those in the know have been raving about the work of Ø for over a decade now; with *Alone In Time* the innocent now have the opportunity to find out why. 9/10.



If you prefer a bit of jangly guitars in your music then *Creation Artefact - The Dawn Of Creation Records 1983-85* may be more up your street. Long before the artificiality of britpop and the vulgarity of Oasis, Alan McGee's Creation Records was rightly seen as a bastion for quality guitar bands that wouldn't make you cringe. Made-up of a lovingly created bumper five CD package, the album collects all the highlights from the early days of the record label so revered by a generation of pasty-skinned men. The first two CDs collect the singles, with tracks by The Pastels, The Jesus & Mary Chain and The Moodists being good enough to make even the most vigorous of indie haters believe. The third CD collects a selection of rarities and album tracks, four, demos, and five, the BBC sessions from John Peel and Janice Long (this one is particularly good). Those who wish to rediscover memories, or who seek an introduction to alternative guitar music when it was still good could do a lot worse than welcoming this handsome boxset into their lives. 9/10.



Irishman Mano Le Tough's debut album *Changing Days* was one of 2013's best. It's silky house merged dance floor appeal with both melody and emotional depth. After a two year wait the follow-up LP, *Trails*, should be hitting record shop shelves and download stores right about now. And what a record it is! Deep, unhurried and immaculately produced this is the type of house music anyone would want to hear. *Running In A Constant Circle* opens the album like a gentle breeze, before *Generations* introduces some eerie sounding synths into the mix. The result is truly spectacular with Mano injecting a real sense of melancholy into the latter track. Further in, *Half Closed Eyes* is a sultry little house number, *I See Myself In You* is a gorgeous trance-tinged blast, *The Space Between* a cosy downbeat gem, while *Sometimes Lost* is the type of dance music that makes you feel ecstatic to be alive. Coming out on Munich-based *Permanent Vacation*, this is polite house music which still manages to retain an edge. 8/10.



Featuring crowd noise, excited whooping and more, *Live In Seattle* is a lush two disc set of deep electronica by the functionally named Moufang/Czamanski. The duo is made up of house legend Move D and Jordan Czamanski, one half of celebrated psychedelic techno terrorists Juju & Jordash. With the world of dance music not exactly known for the quality of its live albums you would be forgiven for running for the hills at the mere idea of listening to a two hour live techno set. Don't lose your head just yet though, since from the very first cymbal clap which opens disc one to the dreamy sounding synths that close disc two *Live In Seattle* will completely immerse you within its deep, electronic world. Available now on the always reliable *Further Records* imprint, the album highlights how the excellent *Live At Freerotation* live set from the duo's other band *Magic Mountain High* was no fluke. 8/10.



There are times when you can get a bit bored of the rigidities of house! It can all sound a bit too bland and impersonal. Just when you are about to give up on the medium though, an album like *Memory* by Deep Space Orchestra comes along to kick-start the love affair all over again. There is a real sense of musicality and warmth to *Memory* which helps make it sound like an album out of time. It's laid back when it needs to be, crunching when necessary, and like all great LPs it is never afraid to take its time. *Feel No Pain* opens proceedings in fine style, with a gorgeous slice of Italo which sets up the rest of the LP surprisingly well. Of the remaining tracks *Dream States* contains a bassline to die for, *All Systems Down* is a steady club-based groove, *Mission Hills* a beautifully sedate mid-point, while *Selassie* rolls out the acid to winning effect. Recalling the likes of Carl Craig, Idjut Boys and Moodymann at their very best, house-heads, beat junkies and retro futurists will find much to enjoy here. 8/10.



Cory Arcane by Kangding Ray is the type of album most producers dream of recording but lack the skills to even try. An immaculate sense of depth and textured electronics are just two of the many reasons why Kangding Ray's fifth long-player is a must buy. Like last year's *Solens Arc*, *Cory Arcane* is a deeply individual take on techno; injecting both personality and a touching sense of melancholy into even the toughest of tracks. Take the fractured crunch of *Dark Barker* for example, recalling Warp stalwarts Autechre, the track adds layer after layer throughout its duration until it sounds like nothing else around. Of the other tracks *These Are My Rivers* skirts around the k-hole but never actually falls in, *Burning Bridges* should not be listened to alone, while closer *On Sleepless Roads* is all the better for never making good on its threat to explode. In short, *Cory Arcane* is full of experimental techno which manages to simultaneously be cold and humane, and will be any electronica fan's new best friend. 9/10.



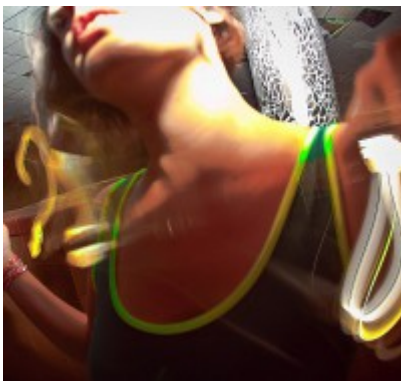
Nu Disco pioneer Prins Thomas shows off his eclecticism this month with the strangely named Paradise Goulash, a superb three mix CD extravaganza. Out now on the home of all things Balearic Eskimo, the bumper release features gems by Aqua Bassino, Claude Speed, Donato Dozzy, Robert Hood, Kurt Vile and more. CD1 opens with some atmospheric guitar before finding a steady, yet gentle groove. The second mix is a deep, techno orientated affair and is the pick of the bunch for me, while CD3 takes in numerous genres including house, exotica and jazz in a mix which constantly catches you by surprise. With the mixes continually shifting and morphing, the album's laid back demeanour means it will work just as well on a lazy Sunday morning as it will pre or post club. Not everything works though, with some songs simply begging to be skipped. Yet, with nearly four hours of music on offer Mr. Thomas can be forgiven for the odd clunker every now and again. 7/10.



The second volume of Soul Clap's Dancing On The Charles series from last year rightly found its way into many tastemakers' best of 2014 lists. It was deep, housey and funky as hell! This month heralds the release of the eagerly anticipated follow-up, the aptly named Volume 3. Taking in deep house, disco, jazz and funk, the compilers' spot on selection never fails to thrill. Opener My World by John Barera & John Novin is a gorgeously deep groover which is so summery you can almost feel the warmth on your skin. From here Good Vibration by GMGN & Dusty Digital is a lush house pumper, Riding High by Bosq a welcome slice of Balearica, and the classic house sounds of Waiting For A Party by Juice Belushi are just a few of the highlights on show. While not quite as essential as the previous edition, Dancing In The Charles Vol. 3 is still a fine selection of leftfield gems that will be dynamite on the dance floor. 8/10.



This week we'll finish with the long-awaited return of sound sculptor and electronic genius Philip Jeck. *Cardinal*, his first LP in five years is, apparently, inspired by the work of the author Marilynne Robinson and finds the producer using a mixture of charity shop records and instruments to create a fully realised world. Best heard with your mind open and your eyes closed, the album's woozy ambience and epic soundscapes whisk the listener to desolate landscapes, forbidding corridors and places filled with majesty and decay. Glacial drones, hushed percussion and the mere hint of a melody form the foundation of much of the record, with *Barrow In Furness (Open Thy Hand Wide)*, *Broke Up* and *Called Again* highlights for me. Fans of value for money will be in for a treat as well since the album also comes with a free download of a live set by Philip Jeck playing in Caen. Long, fragile and luxurious, this is about as close to classical music as techno gets. 7/10.



A special mention must also go to: *Warm Glow* by Luca Sigurtà - Strange and disorientating, this is a wonderful and fulfilling listening experience of techno pulses, trip hop grooves and ambient noise, 9/10, *The Dance* by Sebastian Mullaert & Ulf Eriksson - Kontra label-head Ulf Eriksson joins forces with Sebastian Mullaert of Minilogue fame for a fab techno mix which never loses sight of the groove, 9/10, *Multifunktionsebene, Tttrial and Error, Duplex* by Apparat - A welcome reissue of Apparat's first three LPs which will find favour with those who like their electronica emotional and deep, 9/10, *1D (Electronics 2012-2014)* by Lloyd Cole - Lloyd Cole of The Comotions fame follows-up his excellent compilation of vintage electronics and krautrock for Bureau B with an album of fractured ambience and skewed atmospherics, 7/10, *Fabric 84* by Mathew Jonson - The long-running mix series heralds its first edition to be recorded live in the club with a deep, mesmerising set made up entirely of the Wagon Repair head's own tunes, 8/10, *Coherent Abstractions* by ADMX 71 - Menacing, dark and dubby, this is an intelligent and hypnotic collection of metallic downbeat funk, 8/10, *In The Beginning* by Marcel Rocel - Trip hop, jazz, soul and pop combine in an album to bewitch your heart, 7/10, *Warchild* by Various - With lush deep house by the likes of Lord Of The Isles, Bicep and Move D you know that you are in for a treat. Did I mention that it's also for a good cause? 8/10 and *CCC:BB:BBB:JJ* by Tyler Friedman - Four long, lingering mid-paced techno tracks which will sound absolutely

Gothic Electronica, Indie Memorabilia and Shivery Ambience: October's new
albums reviewed

sublime when you listen to them stoned, 9/10,

| [JOHN BITTLES](#)