

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

With UK clubs closing faster than **Donald Trump** can find people to offend, finding a safe place to dance on a Saturday night can seem futile at times. Recently London institution *Fabric* joined the likes of *Plastic People* and *The Arches* in closing their doors for good! By **JOHN BITTLES**

While *Fabric* was far from perfect, its closure seems symptomatic of something rotten polluting UK club culture, (namely property developers and greedy local councillors eyeing an opportunity to make a quick buck). Yet, while it gets ever more difficult to find a haven where you can hear great music, the amount of fantastic house and techno tracks being released is at an all time high. This week alone we review fabulous new singles and EPs by **Bruce Trail, Oake, Salz, Blutwork, Killawatt, PBR Streetgang, Steve Bug, The Invisible**, and more.

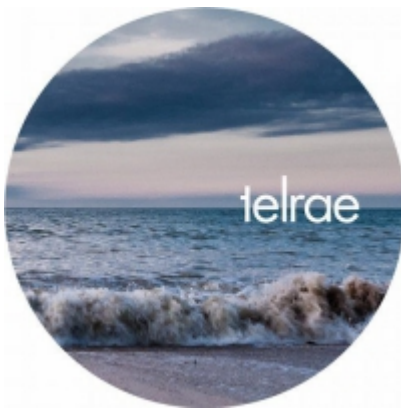
So, before some property developer tries to convert your decks into a multi-storey carpark, we had best begin...



Following stellar releases by **Lance Neptune** and **Project Pablo**, **Lone's** *Magic Wire* label keeps standards sky high with the electronic swoon of **Bruce Trail's** *Ravine Dream EP*. Mixing classic house sounds with soulful melancholia, the record's four tracks are the type of dance music I could happily listen to repeatedly for months. Opener, *Over Falls* has stunning synths and gentle percussion sitting atop a subdued New York style groove which slowly but surely gets you in the mood. Next track *Bridgework* adds echoing vocals over bumping beats to craft a track which is to dancing as vinegar is to fish & chips. *Silver II* opens side two with some lush deep house, and recalls legends such as **Moodymann** or **Larry Heard**. Capable of reducing a grown man to tears, this is one of the best house songs I have heard in years. Final track, *Fly By Night*, sounds like a lost 80s electro jacker which is so good it could cause scenes of rapturous limb flinging in an old folks' home. Reminiscent of the retro house flavours beloved by labels such as *100% Silk*, *Ravine Dream* is an EP you simply must hear. **10/10**.



Eric Goldstein and **Konstanze Bathseba Zippora** create music so dark that the first time you hear it you almost want to run to your mum. Under the moniker **Oake** their releases on **Regis'** celebrated *Downwards* label took the techno template and instil it with a heavy sense of dread. This September the duo join the *Stroboscopic Artefacts* roster with *Monad XXIV*. Across four tracks and almost thirty minutes of music they merge techno rhythms, bowel shaking bass and sinister atmospherics to sculpt an unbelievably immersive and thrilling aural world. Tracks such as *L'Esclandre*, *Jardin D'évasion* and *Hélicorde* are so vividly realised that it is all you can do to not get gleefully lost within these densely orchestrated surroundings. Beware though, as when listening to this EP phones will go unanswered, pets will be unfed. Saving the best to last, the final track *Paysage Dépaycé* is an emotionally devastating electronic swansong which ends the EP on a goosebumps inducing high. **10/10**.



Mention the name **Salz** to any dub techno connoisseur and instantly, you will have won yourself a friend. Over the years their output has encompassed lush ambiance, the warmest of dub grooves, smoke flavoured house, and much more. After a two year gap they re-enter the fray with their new single *Reworks Pt. 7*. Out now on Cologne imprint *Telrae*, the single sees the pair remix tracks by **Mario Hammer & The Lonely Robot** and **Ivanov**. The A-Side features the gentle bass pulse and electronic atmospherics of the **Salz Rebuild** of **Mario Hammer's Nefelibata**. At almost eight minutes long, this is a tune which confidently burrows its way straight into your brain. Fans of **Deepchord**, **Fluxion** or **Basic Channel** will find themselves in dub techno heaven as the steady 4/4 thump gradually sets itself up as the cornerstone of the piece. On the flip, the **Salz Reshape** of **Ivanov's Silk** is a little more sedate, but every bit as good. Addictive and hypnotic, this is music which could rescue even the crappiest of days. **9/10**.



This month Long Beach resident **Bludwork** debuts on **Amanda Brown's** *100% Silk* label with the sun-kissed melancholia of *Nightmare*. Across six laidback, yet groove filled tracks the producer successfully injects emotion, melody and soul into electronic soundscapes so good you never want them to end. At times recalling the dubbed out disco of the **Idjut Boys** or **Mark E**, *Nightmare* is a record which works perfectly when listened to as a whole. Opener *Axiom Voicings* has a gorgeously lethargic air, its analogue squiggles bringing to mind a time when the slogan 'house is a feeling' was more than a cool sample to use. Next up, *Acolyte* is a loose, languid deep house delight, conjuring images of sitting on a beach wondering why it is you are all alone. Further in, *Loose Grip* sounds so stoned it seems to come out of the speakers at a crawl, *Go Demon* brings to mind the wide-eyed innocence of early **Ikonika**, while *Melt Them* ends things on a lush, yet slightly discordant air. Far too good to only be heard by hipsters, do yourself a favour and track this one down. **9/10**.



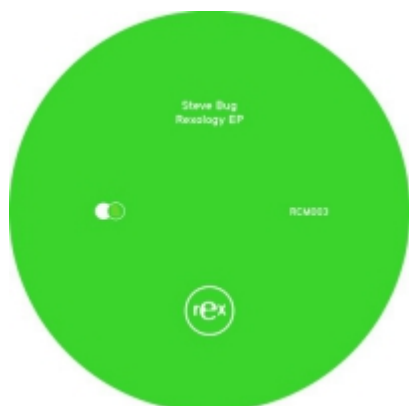
Next up we have some 'proper' techno business with the *Fazed EP* by **Killawatt**. Best known for a string of releases on *Osiris Music*, the producer reportedly composed his new record "at a poignant intersection of **Killawatt's** existence". If this is true then, perhaps, we should be encouraging all our favourite musicians to undergo their own long dark teatime of the soul. It really is that good! The menacing low slung bass of the title track opens proceedings in stunning style. As likely to induce feelings of paranoia as unhindered abandon on the dance floor, this is uncategorizable dance music which simply has to be heard. Of the other tracks, *Livewire* is a relatively subdued piece of jittery ambiance, while *Okinawa* is a glorious head melter which demands you turn up the bass. Remixes by **Sergie Rezza** and **Ossia** complete the package, but it is the three originals which ensure this enters the realms of the must buy. **9/10**.



After killer releases from the likes of **Juju + Jordash**, **Rick Wade**, **Gigi Masin** and more, *Unclear Records* reach peak form this September with the second in their *A Tribute To Klang Club* series. Available from the end of the month the record features **Move D**, **Fred P**, **Christopher Rau** and **Easy To Remember** who all contribute a track apiece. With the previous instalment containing the groove filled techno of UK veteran **Baby Ford**, together with a lush house track by **Roman Flügel**, expectations for the follow-up are understandably high. Luckily *Vol. 2* doesn't let us down! House legend **Move D** gets us off to an impressive start with the slow burn techno of *Rise!* Next up, **Fred P** turns in an old school piece of jackin' house in *Lush Life*, which slowly, but surely rises to the boil before ending on a string filled crescendo. While **Christopher Rau** slightly disappoints with his **Daft Punk** pastiche *Unclear Joint*, the smooth bassline and classic Chicago house grind of *I Don't Know* by **Easy To Remember** bring things to a club pleasing close. **8/10**.



As **PBR Streetgang**, **Bonar Bradberry** and **Tom Thorp** have been responsible for many unforgettable moment on a dance floor. Their 12.32 track, recently released on *Futureboogie*, contained twelve minutes of dance music so good it left clubbers everywhere in danger of losing their cool. This September the duo join the *Crosstown Rebels* family with the chunky funk of their *Shade EP*. Put simply, the title track has a bassline to die for! Pairing spoken word samples with a sleek and sexy groove, this is perfect for those 3AM moments when those left dancing have reached an almost euphoric state. Recalling the output of *Pagan*, or *Paper Records* in its dubbed out delight, this will make any middle-aged veteran reminisce about the good old days of house. *Reading* meanwhile is more geared towards the peak time floors, yet slightly loses its way to become a bit of a bore. Much better is the **I:Cube** remix of *Shade*, which pairs melancholic strings, rave horn blasts, garage basslines and all manner of strange yet wonderful bedfellows to create something which is unlike any house track you have ever heard. **8/10**.



After releases from residents **D'jul** and **Phil Weeks**, *Rex Club's* burgeoning record label enters the big time with a killer new EP from *Poker Flat* boss **Steve Bug**. The aptly named *Rexology EP* hit record store shelves on the 20th September and contains two original compositions and a remix from **Rod**. Lead track *What's Happened?* utilizes echoing dub stabs over a rising house tempo, acid tweaks and a classic Chicago spoken word vocal to create a nice little head mangler. The moment, three minutes in, when the sub bass bursts into life is close to sublime! The **Rod** remix ups the pace but, crucially, loses the funk in an energetic workout which attempts to compensate for a lack of subtlety with its ability to bang. The day is saved though by *Berlinian Rexing*, a long, luxurious mid-paced house jam which ably recalls the glory days when the likes of **Ten Walls** and *Innervisions* could do no wrong. More for the club than the home stereo, DJs and house disciples will still find much here to enjoy. **8/10**.



A special mention must also go to: *Makaratta* by **Dovim** - With five original compositions and five remixes, *Traum's* latest EP is longer than most albums. Yet, when the melodic house of tracks such as *Argula*, *Alchera* and *Mirrimina* soar towards the heavens you're still left wanting more, **9/10**, *Vanished Breath EP* by **Shlomo** - The French producer returns to **Darko Esser's** *Wolfskuil Ltd* label with a nicely varied five track EP. From the soundtrack style menace of *The Ritual*, to the tough rhythms of *Obsession* this is techno music which looks far beyond the demands of the floor, **8/10**, *Vague Response* by **Akasha System** - Six tracks of emotion rich house music which bring to mind the melodic funk of the like of **Mr. Fingers** or **Theo Parrish**, **8/10**, *Onda* by **Black Spuma** - **Fabrizio Mammarella** and **Phillip Lauer** team up for a beautifully laidback EP out now on *International Feel*, **8/10**, *Motor City Sunrise* by **AD/D** - The deep house master-class of the title track caresses the aural receptors and soothes the soul, **8/10**, *River/Ghost* by **Gardens Of God** - Lithuanian artist **Gardens Of God** launches his *Sodai* imprint with a pair of melodic and trance tinged bangers, **7/10**, and *Box* by **The Bug** - Bassbin worrier **The Bug** re-emerges on UK label *Ninja Tune* with the twisted grime of *Box*. Pairing **Double E's** mutated rap vocals with a gloriously squelchy bass, this is tough, urban and is guaranteed to aggravate your mum, **7/10**,



Also worth checking: *Life's Dancers* by **The Invisible** - The string drenched **Floating Points** remix is a gorgeously emotional slice of classical inspired electronica that will make you want to seek out your loved ones to give them a hug, **8/10**, *From the Other Side* by **Uner** - Three tracks of sophisticated house music with a melodic edge, with the druggy techno of **Steve Bug's** *Dancemotive* remix sealing the deal, **8/10**, *Far Away From A Distance* by **Simian Mobile Disco (SMD)** - Since the indie dance crossover catastrophe of *Temporary Pressure*, electronic duo **SMD** have followed a strange, insular path towards techno gold. Their new single on their *Delicacies* imprint brings to mind a tougher version of the traditional *Innervisions* sound, **7/10**,

Labyrinth by **Tuff City Kids with Annie** - A precursor to their debut album, the duo of **Gerd Janson** and **Phillip Lauer** rope in the vocal talents of Norwegian pop princess **Annie** for a distinctly 80s style house jam, **8/10**, *The One* by **Nils Penner** - A quartet of 'proper' house music tracks out now on *Compost Black Label* which will cause hearts to leap and spirits to soar, **8/10**, *A Change Is Gonna Come* by **Lapien** - The title track is a dance floor ready epic, and well worth tracking down, **7/10** and *Bag Of Bones* by **Felix Laband** - Head straight for the **Luke Vibert** remix of **Righteous Red Berets** to discover a softly padded slice of melancholy which gently warms the soul, **8/10**.



And let's not forget: *Nr. 1* by **Ströme** - Two musicians from brass techno band **LaBrassBanda** break away to serve up a triple treat of deep, driving house. The rave tinged bleeps and lush piano line on *You* will have any dance music fan grinning like a loon, **9/10**, *Spectrums Vol. 2* by **Erosion Flow** - The melodic techno of Syvv is the type of track which could cause scenes of devastation in the right DJ's hands, **8/10**, *Part III* by **The End Of All Existence** - Techno don **Milton Bradley** adopts his **The End Of All Existence** moniker for an intense four tracker which builds steadily from the eerie ambiance of *Choir Of Devastation* to a satisfyingly deep orchestra of thumps, **8/10**, *Device Control* by **Wolfgang Tillmans** - Fans of the dark will find ample stimulation in the sinister beatscapes and creeping menace of **Salem's** remix of *Make*

It Up As You Go Along, **7/10**, Vol. 6 by **Steaward & Théo Muller** - Four tracks of rough, dubbed out techno, with the classic sounding house of the superbly named *Dubby Wan Kenobi* being the pick for me, **8/10**, *Standards Of Beauty* by **Bookworms** - Those who like their house music slightly left of centre will find much to enjoy here, **7/10**, and *Slide Away* by **Trevino** - Ignore the one dimensional techno of the bulk of the EP and head straight to the jackin' futurism of the title track where low-slung bass, a shuffling beat and some atmospheric synths work together to create a sumptuous house groove, **7/10**.

| [JOHN BITTLES](#)