

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

No one could ever accuse house icon **Dinky** of being a one trick pony! Over a long and varied career her musical output and DJ sets have incorporated deep techno, hazy ambiance, hedonistic acid, classic house, alternative pop, and much more. Her latest single *Casa* (released earlier this year) was a spell-bindingly deep slice of Chicago-inspired house that is already sitting pretty as one of the songs of the year. In contrast, the album *Dimension D* saw **Dinky** embrace her inner singer-songwriter, while the warmth she managed to inject into the often monotonous tones of minimal on the *May Be Later* LP means it's still a firm favourite of mine. By

JOHN BITTLES



This month the Chilean-born, Berlin-based DJ/producer/singer makes a very welcome return with album number six. Out now on **Damian Lazarus'** *Crosstown Rebels* imprint, *Valor* sees **Dinky** move away from the electronic pop of predecessor *Dimension D* to focus more on euphoric sounding grooves and vocal rich house. The album's title, *Valor*, is especially fitting since the record was mostly recorded during a somewhat fraught period in **Alejandra Iglesias**, life. As **Dinky** herself explains "After my first son was born in 2014 I was labelled a high risk, and with the new pregnancy again in 2015 with my younger boy I was ordered to stay in bed for more than three months, otherwise the risk of losing him was too high".

Valor is never morose or self-pitying though. Instead it is a gorgeously life-affirming listen, full of tender house goodness and positivity from beginning to end. Lead single *Casa* opens the record in spectacular fashion, its acid-flecked groove able to get even the most reticent dancer well and truly in the mood. Featuring **Dinky's** own vocals over lush deep house beats, it is the type of song so great it makes you want to preach about it in the street. Next track, *Cut*, has a rich orchestral air and an emotional intensity which never fails to tickle the soul. Other highlights include the dreamy house thumps of *Milk*, which bring to mind those classic *Pagan* and *Paper Recordings* 12inches from the mid 90s, the emotive acid of *Shooting Bodies (Acid)*, and the sedate trance of *Valentino* which is close to divine.

With *Valor* wearing out my speakers through repeated plays the chance to send some questions **Dinky's** way was impossible to resist. In the resulting interview we discuss her new album, lead single *Casa*, **Paul Simon**, Berlin summers, *Panorama Bar*, and lots more.

It has been just over three years since our last interview. What have you been up to in this time?

Yes major changes happened in 3 years. I had 2 kids and took some time off DJing, I travelled much less than before as I wanted to spend the first years home with my babies and closer to them. I needed the energy for this intense time so I thought it was a good choice to reduce work and travelling. I did some music but kept touring light, now I finally started touring more again and it feels great.

Your new album, Valor, comes out on the 30th September. For those who haven't heard it yet, what can they expect?



It's quite a personal album, it has a positive energy (I think) because it was a special time in my life where I needed to think positive and stay optimistic, so I channelled that on the music I wrote. Most of it is dance and upbeat and I am singing on it, there's a lot of acid and disco influences but some strange experimental sounds, too.

What part of the record are you most proud of, and why?

This time I do like the record as a whole and think it goes together, I love the way it sounds, it was mixed at our studio by **Matthew Styles**. It was great to give the record to him and hear the final mix result. My favourite song is *Slowly*, I think it transmits a lot of emotion, but maybe (that is) cause I have an attachment to it.

When you first started work on Valor, did you have a specific idea of how it would sound?

Not really, things just got flowing once I started writing the music. As it was done in a short period of time, I think the songs go quite well together as the ideas were fresh one week after the other and not months or years apart.

The acid tinged lead single and opening track Casa is a gorgeous slice of classic sounding house. Was this always going to be the album's first track?

Not really, we had another choice first but after playing the album out a bit more Damian suggested *Casa* and we all went for it.

Every time I listen to the optimistic bleeps and melodies of Cut I always have to smile. Can you tell us a bit about how this track came about?



I think I was listening a to a lot of **Paul Simon** at that time and I might have gotten influenced by his music, it has this pentatonic African style sequence which I wrote with the *Okatrack* and the *Prophet 6*. I wrote the vocal loops with the *Boss RC 505* and I play electric guitar, arpeggio style in the whole song. The lyrics are about being so much on the phone and suddenly becoming a total stranger to reality, like ghosts.

There is an almost Balearic air across much of the LP, with track such as *Milk*, *Valentino* and *Wakame* sounding sun kissed and relaxed. With most of the album recorded in your bedroom how did you get into the required mental state to create these songs?

It was a very hot summer in Berlin, like 36 outside every day, I was super pregnant and had to be in bed or sitting due to a medical condition for a while.

I would go to my garden once in a while but I was in my room most of the time. I opened my balcony door and wrote the songs in a very tropical and warm environment trying to be as positive as possible despite being physically unable to do much.

Shooting Bodies (Acid) sits nicely at the heart of *Valor*. Combining evocative vocals with a swirling acid line the song is a firm fave of mine. What are the key ingredients to creating a track which works well on dance floors?

For me good drums, a good bassline, a catchy melody or a neat vocal, a great arrangement and a good final mix down. This of course its not always the case, sometimes the best dance tracks have none of those things. There are no rules.

Valor is Spanish for courage. Does the title have any special significance for you?

I had to be brave and have courage to go through the months I wrote the album as things got quite complicated and risky in our lives.

The album is going to be released on **Damian Lazarus**, Crosstown Rebels imprint. How did you hook up with the label?

I have known Damian for like 10 years and always admired his work and his passion as a label owner and artist. We talked about an album years ago, so finally we made it happen. I think it was the right time.

You have also made a name for yourself with some scintillating DJ sets at Berlin's Panorama Bar, amongst others. What is it that makes Panorama Bar such a special place to play?

I feel at home there as its been more than 10 years. I feel quite free to play whatever I like. Sets are long so one has time to build up things nicely, people in the crowd are usually respectful and there is a sense of humbleness everywhere. It's all about the music still.

What is the secret to winning over a dance floor?

To feel and love the music you are playing, connect with the crowd, sense them, read them and dance with them.

What five tracks are currently working for you in the clubs?

- Tiger and Woods - *Bestisimo (Editeinment)*.
- Reshape - *Tel Aviv (Running Back)*.
- Dinky - *Slowly **Matthew Styles** Remix (Crosstown Rebels)*.
- Lapsley - *Operator **DJ Koze** Remix (XL Recordings)*.
- Rob Mello and Robert Owens - *Energy (Disco 45)*.

When did you first get into house music? And what is it about electronic music that keeps you excited today?

When I was about 19 I heard a **Dr Motte** house tape from Berlin, there where a few **Murk** records there and I loved them.

I think electronic music is so diverse and the fact that its made with electronic instruments makes it very interesting, it can evolve without limits

Do you have any final words for our readers?

Thank you!

The album is available from all good record and download stores from the 30th September, or you can simply [go here](#).

| [JOHN BITTLES](#)