

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

With the Christmas season upon us it seems apt to reflect on some of the great records which have recently entered our lives. While the fact that **Clean Bandit** have been Number 1 in the UK singles chart for what seems like years may have led you to give up entirely on the humble single, it's important to remember that it can still be a creative outlet of note. By **JOHN BITTLES**

For instance, this week alone we herald the return of **Coldcut**, raise the roof to the chunky grooves of **Gnork**, **Recondite** and **Avalon Emerson**, swoon over the electronic experimentation of **Nathan Fake** and **Antoni Maiovi**, and delight in the future soul of **Jessy Lanza**.

So, before it gets too late to drop a hint to **Santa** we had best begin...



After huge EPs from **Bruce Trail** and **Lance Neptune**, **Lone's Magicwire** label ends 2016 on a glorious high with the leftfield house of *No Gravity* by **Gnork**. Made up of four tracks which successfully merge the best of electronica, Detroit techno and deep house, the record contains more ideas in its 20 minute plus running time than most people's entire careers. The title track pairs crisp beats with lush synth swirls to create a song which speaks as much to your heart as your feet, while *Big Dipper* is a majestic fusion of 90s breakbeats, **Orbital** style riffs and melodies galore. Capable of making any raver of a certain age get a little misty eyed, both these tracks are verging on the sublime. Yet, the fun doesn't end here! Flip over for *Influxxxx*, a **Derrick May** sounding mid-paced jam you will never want to end, and the gorgeously optimistic slice of house music which is *U*. With all four tracks pushing melody to the fore, *No Gravity* is an EP which you owe it to yourself to hear. **9/10**.

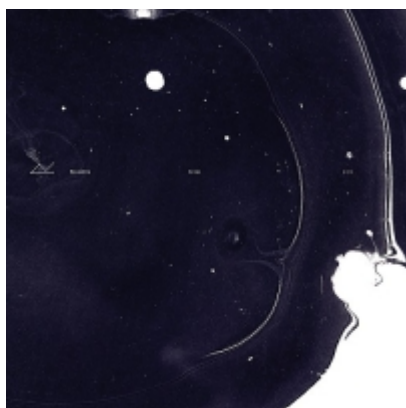


Best known for his releases on **James Holden's Border Community** imprint,

electronic explorer **Nathan Fake** makes his debut on London institution *Ninja Tune* this month with the heady trip of his new EP. A-side *Degreelessness* sees the producer team up with dark techno evangelist **Prurient** of **Vatican Shadow** fame for an eight minute long bleepathon that recalls the glitch heavy techno of *Warp* act **B12**. Pairing **Prurient's** treated spoken word vocals with ever evolving clanks and squeals, the song sounds as awe-inspiringly beautiful as it does deranged. Recalling a lost IDM classic, *Degreelessness* sucks you right in to its richly textured world and is as enticing as a loved one gently lulling you to sleep. The more traditional house tones of *Now We Know* sit nicely on the B-side, its chiming synth pattern and shuffling beats making it a lighter, yet no less essential companion to its predecessor. Full of lovable quirks and experimental flourishes, this is electronica par excellence. **9/10**.



Acid house legends **Coldcut** step back into our lives and headphones this month with the gloriously eclectic murmurings of the *Only Heaven* EP. Out now as the inaugural release on the recently revived *Ahead Of Our Time* imprint, the record is a collaboration heavy affair. **Dave Taylor**, otherwise known as **Switch**, produces, while it also features the vocals of both **Roots Manuva** and **Roses Gabor**. Fans of **Coldcut's** previous output won't be disappointed in the five tracks on offer here. The twinkling melodies and low-end bass of the title track, with **Rodney Hylton Smith's** gloriously hazy rap is as good as anything the duo have previously sent our way. Also worth checking are *Creative's* crisp house beats, and the furious drum flourishes of *Donald's Wig*. Like most things in life though, the best is left until last, with the sombre hip hop of *Quality Control* making for an outstanding finish. With the stoned urgings of **Roots Manuva** featuring on three of the EP's songs, this is a record which will appeal to rap disciples, soul lovers and house heads alike. **9/10**.



Over the last few years, the artist known as **Recondite** has produced a steady stream of music capable of turning apathetic hipsters into eager fanboys. His previous releases on labels such as *Innervisions*, *Acid Test* and *Hotflush* successfully merged melody and melancholy with the ghosts of acid

house to create something with the power to touch your very soul. His new EP, *Corvus* is out now and confirms why so many hold his music in such high regard. Opener *Capable* fuses subdued beats and searching melodies on a lush, downbeat affair, while *Kauz* is a superb piece of atmospheric house. The title track is a haunting slice of electronica, while *Huibu* goes deep and dubby to evoke long, empty landscapes with no one else around. **Ricardo Donoso Clemency's** remix of *Capable* brings things to a close, and makes for a fitting end to a very strong EP. **8/10**.

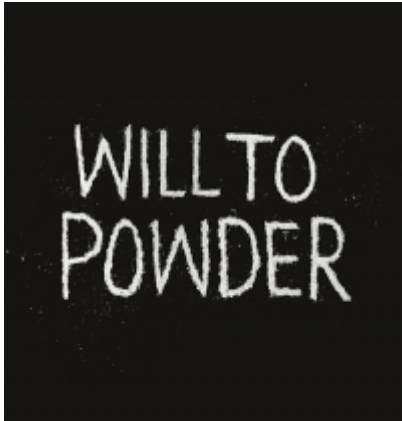


With **Jessy Lanza's** *Oh No* album sitting pretty on many *Best Of* lists, it seems the perfect time to revisit its sultry electronic haze with a well deserved remix EP. Comprised of three tracks, *On No No No*, is a record full of smoke-filled electronic soul. Disco house legend **Morgan Geist** kicks things off with a nostalgia tinged version of *I Talk BB*. Languid, and with just a hint of melancholy, the **Metro Area** producer keeps the vocals centre stage, but adds *Gameboy* melodies and a loose bassline to compose a track which walks the line between R&B and techno with ease. Next up, **DJ Taye & DJ Spinn** add footwork shuffles and subdued beats to *Could B U's* soulful air, while **DVA [Hi:Emotions]** delivers the pick of the bunch by turning *Going Somewhere* into a **Kardashian** sampling torch song. Reminiscent of the rich nocturnal soundscapes of fellow *Hyperdub* artist **Burial**, it features only the bare essentials of the original song, yet is something you could happily listen to on repeat for days. **8/10**.



American producer **Avalon Emerson** has been on stunning form of late with releases on *Whities* and *Schtum* responsible for many giddy moments on the dance floor. This run is continued with her debut EP for techno institution *Spectral Sound*. *Narcissus In Retrograde* consists of a quartet of club based tracks seemingly tailor-made for getting reticent dancers in the mood. Yet, while the A-side highlights all that is great about **Avalon Emerson**, the B-side promises much, but disappoints. Opener *Natural Impasse* gets things off to a great start, it's banging beats and melodic flourishes ensuring it will be a high point of any deep techno set. Next up, the superbly named *Dystopian Daddy's* playful synths and funk-strewn air are the

best thing on here, and recall the innocent experimentation of early acid house. Unfortunately, from here things quickly plunge downhill with the darkened tones of *Why Does It Hurt* and *Groundwater* monotonous and dull. A game of two halves then! Yet, the angular house of *Dystopian Daddy* make this more than worthy of your time. **8/10**.



A special mention must also go to: *Will To Power* by **Antoni Maiovski** - *The Schrödinger's Box* imprint return with six tracks of soundtrack inspired Italo disco and goose-bump inducing house. Stunning from beginning to end, you'd be a fool to miss out on this, **9/10**, *Ritual EP* by **Rauschhaus & David Baader** - The booming synth line and technoid atmospherics of opening song *Prophet* should be all the convincing you'll need of just how great a record this is, **9/10**, *Gettraum003* by **Traumer** - Head straight for the fifteen minute slow-burn techno groove of *Lucea* for a track which recalls **Radio Slave** in his prime, **8/10**, *Ace Of Space EP* by **Few Nolder** - While the trance-tinged melodies and firm beats of the title track and *Teaser* will delight the floors, it is the deep techno groove of *Balance* that will have you scrambling back for more, **8/10**, *Recurring Melancholy* by **Jay Haze** - Two tracks of emotion rich house music which is sure to appease any **Ian Pooley** fan, **8/10**, *Pittsburgh Left* by **Henning Baer** - Deep techno soundscapes and hypnotic ambiance abound in a tension filled EP which does wonderfully strange things to the mind, **8/10**, *E Numbers* by **Bobby O'Donnell** - Chunky house music of the **Murk** variety which is sure to have your gran dancing round the Xmas tree, **7/10**, and *Battle Of The DeeJay's* by **D'julz vs Jordan Fields** - *The Rekids* label end 2016 on a high with a killer split release which pairs the Parisian house delights of **D'julz** with the raw Chicago kicks of **Jordan Fields**, **8/10**.

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