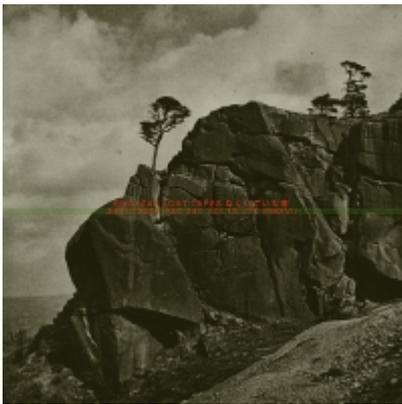


Music | Bittles' Magazine: The music column from the end of the world

Twenty years is a long time in dance music. Just ask all those 'next big things' who took a tumble, got lost in a cloud of coke, or found themselves forgotten and discarded by the world at large. To stay relevant in an ever shifting and competitive environment is no mean feat. Yet, over the last two decades, **David Brown's Swayzak** project has made this achievement seem as easy as enraging a Daily Mail reader. By **JOHN BITTLES**



With their first release hitting the shops back in 1997, **Swayzak**, (who were then formed of **David Brown** together with **James Taylor**), have since gone on to create some of the deepest and most devastating house music to have rocked a club. Taking in hints of techno, house, pop, dub and more, the band's oeuvre epitomises all that is great about electronic music today. Albums such as *Snowboarding In Argentina*, *Himawari*, and *Loops From The Bergerie* are full of killer grooves, twinkling melodies, low end bass thumps and the odd vocal flourish. Songs like *Speedboat*, *Stronger Love* and the superb tech-house stylings of *Hausfrau* meanwhile are beautifully produced and liable to set up home in your mind for days.

With the band now the solo project of founding member **David Brown**, **Swayzak** celebrate twenty years in business by reissuing some of their back catalogue onto digital for the first time. Being able to stream or download these records will help introduce the band's crisp beats to those who missed them first time around, but of more interest to the long-term fan is the release of *Lost Tapes*. Available in two parts (or on three separate slabs of vinyl), the compilation collects a wealth of hidden, beloved and forgotten gems. The sixteen minute long opener *Lokal* is one of those songs which make the heart skip numerous beats and serves as a great introduction for the joys to come. Other picks include the slow bass groove of *Doobie*, the **Mathew Jonson** remix of *Another Way* and lead single *Sunshine*. It's all good though, making *Lost Tapes* the perfect antidote for those who are sick of hyperactive glitches or three minute pop songs.

With more new material in the pipeline, and the rebirth of his *240 Volts* imprint **David Brown** took the time to answer some questions I sent his way. In the resulting interview we discuss *Lost Tapes*, working with **Richard Davis**, David's **S_W_Z_K** project, his label, how it all began, and lots more.

So, set up your own makeshift dance floor, head over to the **Swayzak [bandcamp](#)** page for some next level music, and let us begin...

For those who have never had the pleasure of hearing your music before, can you tell us a bit about who you are and what you do?

Purveyors of deeper house, deep techno and minimal glitch core; add a touch of pop here and there with

origins in the UK scene.

The retrospective compilation *Lost Tapes* came out on the 8th of December. Why do we all need this record in our lives?

20 years of **Swayzak** 1997 -2017, there are kids of 20 I thought might be interested :) It's still relevant which is nice. I like how the youngsters are getting into house music still!

If you had to pick one track to sell the album which would it be and why?

Low Rez Skyline - from our first album *Snowboarding In Argentina*. It's warm, deep, long and hard to get on vinyl!

Lost Tapes collects highlights, rarities, remixes and previously unheard nuggets from the **Swayzak** vault. How big a task was it to put the whole thing together?

Very big task indeed, but I had kept all the DAT tapes, CDRs and even cassettes we recorded onto. The HD recordings were harder to locate. It took a long time, more or less 3 years work to this point to get it all together, mastered and digitally uploaded for the new consumer.

New track *Sunshine* features **Richard Davis** on vocal duties and is a dark, brooding highlight. When you first started making it, did you always know that Richard's vocals would be a big part of the song?

We have collaborated on quite a few things since 2003. He has a great voice, and yes I always turn to him as he is a great friend and producer of quality music. I wrote the original parts and Richard added his voice and we mixed it in his Berlin studio. We were going to make an album together but the process is slow. He has contributed much to **Swayzak** over the years!

Will there be any more collaborations with Richard in the future?

I hope so, we talk often on the phone and plan to play a bit more too. We have played many live sets together and I would like to tour with him and **Francesco Brini**, another friend I have worked a lot with since 2003.

Another fave is the DAT Master version of *Lokal*, which I first heard on the excellent *Route De la Slack* album back in 2006. How did the interpretation included on *Lost Tapes* come about?

Again, it's sort of lost in time. I chose tracks that I found sonically pleasing and were a bit rarer on vinyl, this was one of them. It's only on the CD of *Route De La Slack* and sold out on 12" long ago, it's nice to bring the master back to life and put it on vinyl again!

How do you think the **Swayzak** sound has developed since your *Bueno/Fukumachi* single which came out in 1997?

Wow, in all sorts of ways. We were very naive back then: we didn't use compressors, didn't DJ, and had too much coffee in the studio. Now I probably use a compressor on every channel for a track. I like to get deep in the track now and with the technology available now it's easier to get into the mix without blowing 10K on vintage compressors. *Bueno + Fukmachi* were both recorded in my bedroom in Ladbroke Grove back in 1996, the *Roland SH09* synth was on the bed, the other gear on my chest of drawers. Its not changed that much, but I have a proper studio space in my house now. Though I would prefer a larger space lol!

When you look back over your previous releases can you think of a thread, idea, or a sound that unites them?

Mostly keeping it simple. Music for heads and feet. We took the deeper end of electronics

James Taylor left the band back in 2011. What made you decide to continue with the **Swayzak** name?

Well, I put my heart and soul into it since 1993 when we began working. I was kind of devastated, but to be fair James hadn't done a huge amount since 2003. He had already left once before in 2003 and returned in 2007 when I asked him to. He wanted to explore on his own, and that's fine by me. I need to be in the studio, and now I am quite happy working on my own. It took me a while to find my way again though, with releases like **S_W_Z_K** on *Tresor*, a stripped down techno record.

Lost Tapes is released on your own 240 Volts imprint. What have been the key releases on the label so far?

Richard Davis, Konrad Black and Prosumer. The label has been dormant for a while, we are just kick starting it again.

And, are there any upcoming releases on 240 Volts which we should know about?

Currently, there are works in progress from myself, most likely to be released in 2018.

What does the future hold for Swayzak?

Not sure about another 20 years, but I want to get another album out next year and have 7 tracks recorded for this so far.

Do you have any final words for our readers?

Check out our works, they drift from deep house to near techno pop. I also did a **S_W_Z_K** project on *Tresor Records* - a more stripped down techno album which I enjoyed making.

| [JOHN BITTLES](#)

The digital version of *Lost Tapes Vol. 1* and *2* can be purchased [here](#) and [here](#). Do yourself a favour and track them down today.