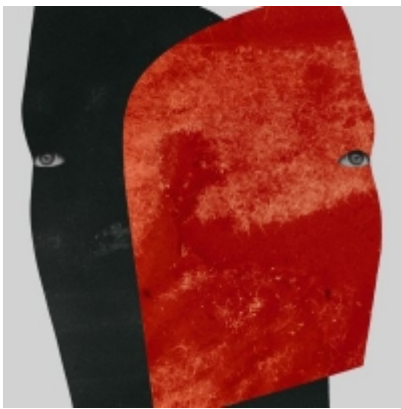


Music | Bittles' Magazine: The music column from the end of the world

Those tired of bland, uniform music are in for a treat with this week's selection of album reviews. Masters of angular beats, leftfield rhythms and discordant grooves, the only thing which all the following artists have in common is their healthy distaste for the norm. By **JOHN BITTLES**

We have the techno/ambient mutations of **Rival Consoles**, the post IDM crunch of **μ-ZIQ**, the melancholy folktronica of **Grouper**, the dub techno pulse of **Fluxion**, and loads more.

So, prep those ears, grab yourself a sneaky Kitkat, and let us begin...



London producer **Rival Consoles** makes a very welcome return to the *Erased Tapes* camp this month with the emotional juggernaut of his new LP. Combining moments of quiet ambiance with rich IDM and driving techno, *Persona* is a powerful, highly affective listen which will make the heart of any electronic fan leap with joy. Opener, *Unfolding*, sets us up nicely, building slowly but surely, before erupting into a crescendo of wondrous noise. Further in, the title track is a *Kompakt*-style melodic bomb which immediately works its way under the skin, while *Memory Arc*'s beatless meditation allows the listener to grab a quick breath before *Phantom Grip* entices with its deep, heady throb. Other picks include the gentle undulations of *Be Kind*, the **Four Tet**-style rush of *Sun's Abandon* and *Hidden*'s mid-paced techno growl. With superb production values throughout, **Ryan Lee West's** follow-up to the excellent *Howl* is a record which should have a warning sticker informing listeners of the danger of their jaw hitting the floor. **9/10**.

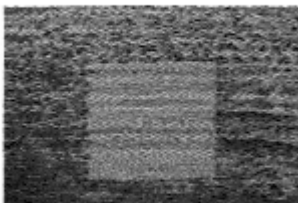


Planet Mu head **Mike Paradinas** has been using his **μ-Ziq** alias to beguile and confuse a legion of audio nerds since the fucked-up rhythms and tortured melodies of *Tango N' Vectif* back in 1993. *Challenge Me Foolish* is a new full-length of 'lost tracks' from the 1998-99 era when Mike was touring

with **Björk** and releasing celebrated records like *Royal Astronomy* on *Virgin* sub-label *Hut*. Full of melodic flourishes, fractured beats, and pastoral soundscapes, *Challenge Me Foolish* is a must listen for anyone who likes their electronica with an edge. The lush, but busy down-tempo jam *Inclement* gets things off to a gorgeously atmospheric start, preparing us for the heady trip hop of *Undone* and the strange folk tones of the title track. Further tips include the welcome injection of discordance of *Bassbins*, the deliciously strange low-end mutations of *Durian*, and *Sad Inlay*, which mixes pop vocals and a twisted version of drum n' bass with aplomb. Star of the show though is the echo-heavy IDM of *Playbox*, a track with the power to mess with anybody's head. **9/10**.



While the idea of a score for a non-existing film might have you running for cover for fear of catching a fatal dose of pretentiousness, don't let that put you off *Ripple Effect*, the fabulous new LP by dub techno legend **Fluxion**. Out now on *Vibrant Music*, the album finds **Konstantinos Soublis** in stunning form. With an artist's sense of texture and space, the *Echocord/Chain Reaction* producer conjures a world of images and emotions from a minimal sound palette. *Train Incident* sets the scene nicely, opening proceedings with some soft beats and a deep bass pulse to leave the listener hungry for more. Everything here is quality, but be sure to pay particular attention to the percussive trippiness of *The Meeting*, the dusty jazz of *Another Side* and the dramatic tension builder which is *Tipping Point*. Resembling one long atmospheric mood piece, *Ripple Effect* is a record of bass-infused ambiance and slow-paced techno grooves which any fan of **Basic Channel** or *Echospace* will adore. **8.5/10**.



Next up, **Liz Harris** returns to her esteemed **Grouper** alias with the haunting folk/electronica of her new mini-album *Grid Of Points*. While it is short at under 30 minutes long, the album is a fully realised body of work which conjures an air of melancholy which seems to cling to your very soul. Out now on *Kranky*, the record's seven tracks were recorded in a mere week and a half and feature little more than gentle piano, the sound of silence and **Liz Harris**, hushed vocals. The effect on the listener is quietly

mesmerising, invoking images of heartbreak, sorrow, and a parent lovingly singing to a sleeping child. Apparently inspired by “the idea that something is missing or cold”, *Grid Of Points* is never brash or abrasive, never demands that you pay attention. Instead it is happy wooing you slowly, allowing its moments of spectral beauty to win you over. Made to be enjoyed as a whole, lovers of all things **David Lynch**, **Nils Frahm**, or the mournful majesty of **Low** will find much here to enjoy. **8/10**.

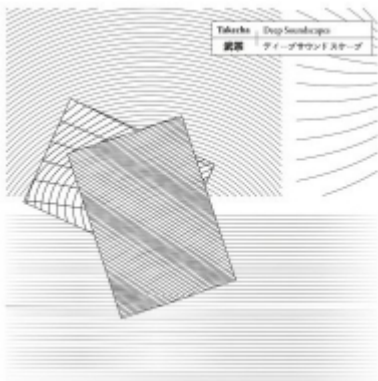


After an eight year hiatus, **Alexander P. J. Geiger** rejoins the *Kompakt* imprint with some fresh sounds and a brand new alias. Inspired by the forested countryside of Fahrland, near Potsdam, *Mixtape Vol. 1* is a gloriously eclectic affair which eschews genres and tempos with ease. Adopting the **Fahrland** moniker for the release, **Geiger** has returned sounding reinvigorated and refreshed. Light and playful, the opening pair of *Get Up* and *Suspension* revel in their melodic ambiance and pave the way nicely for the electro pop vocals of *I Am Robot*. Next, *Beggin Feat. MZ Sunday Luv* is the sound of cloud rap goofing around, while *Plastic People* (also featuring **MZ Sunday Luv**) is a slightly sleazy disco jam. Also worth checking are the vocal-led trip hop of *Yesterday*, the hazy funk jam *Sky So High* and the bitter-sweet melodies of *Windshield Gently Wipers*. It's all good though, and in a world of po-faced producers and ear-bleed techno, the fact that **Fahrland** doesn't take himself, or his music too seriously helps make *Mixtape Vol. 1* more than worthy of your time. **8/10**.



Out now on the *Hotflush Recordings* label, *Caibu*, **Paul Rose's** debut album under the **SCB** alias is a dystopian record full of sinister atmospherics and ominous beats. The artist, best known as **Scuba**, has long been at the forefront of the UK techno and dubstep scenes, helping bring the latter to Berlin and challenging minds and feet with a succession of cerebral, yet propulsive bangers. The tracks on *Caibu* find him concentrating for the most part on futuristic techno, with twelve tracks of tough, club-ready minimal tools. Utilizing the barest of ingredients the album is a dark, forbidding affair which will rock many a dance floor, but may struggle to entice repeated plays at home. Picks include the bleep-heavy tones of *Test*

Tubes, the sample-led bass squelch of *Manufactured Consent* and the dub-heavy rhythms of *Extinct*. With a strong narrative thread throughout, and a superb understanding of the use of space, there is more than enough here to keep any dance music fan amused. **8/10**.



A special mention must also go to: *Deep Soundscapes* by **Takecha** - Loose, languid and positively dripping with soul, Swedish label *Love Potion* give us an album of deep house brilliance from **Takeshi Fukushima**, **9/10**, *Gypsophila* by **Roman Poncet** - The French producer returns to the *Figure* imprint with an album of classic techno grooves. Check out the heady dub of the title track for a jam so good you'll never want it to end, **8.5/10**, *Forth Wanderers* by **Forth Wanderers** - A record full of heart-filled indie pop songs out now on *Sub Pop*, **8/10**, *Wake The Dead* by **The Third Eye Foundation** - Hazy melodies and shuffling beats combine, while the emotion-drenched ambiance of the title track is close to sublime, **8/10**, *Rejuvenate* by **Paul White** - The *R&S Records* artist ditches the beats to give us a record of psychedelic-tinged pop music with a sunny disposition, **7.5/10**, *Loud Patterns* by **Makeness** - House and techno rhythms back **Kyle Molleson's** treated vocals on an album which will go down well with any **Hot Chip** devotee, **7.5/10** and *Flowers From The Ashes: Contemporary Italian Electronic Music* by **V/A** - Fab tracks by **Silvia Kastel**, **Chevel**, **Lucy** and **Neel** help make this compilation on *Stroboscopic Artefacts* a must buy, **8.5/10**.



And let's not forget: *Wax Poetic For This Our Last Resolve* by **Deadbeat** - Bass-heavy atmospheric and heady electronica merge with a righteous sense of anger in a thrilling listen of modern dub soul, **9/10**, *Exile And The New* by **Adamo Golán - Francis Harris**, *Kingdoms* imprint come up with the goods yet again with a gorgeous eight track LP full of lush ambient soundscapes, **8.5/10**, *Go Away Little Boy: The Columbia Anthology* by **Marlena Shaw** - A double CD of classic soul nuggets recorded between 1977 and 1980 which is pretty much guaranteed to raise a smile, **8/10**, *Anniversary Remix Edition* by **Žagar** - Head straight for the deep house beauty of **Terry Lee Brown Jr.'s** take on *Prophet Is A Fool* for a classic slice of dance floor funk, **8/10**, *The Four Worlds* by **Mark Pritchard** - Out now on *Warp*, the dense

electronic throb of *Glasspops* is worth the price of admission alone, **8/10**, *Muscle Of Synths* by **Ron Flatter** - For his sophomore LP the German artist merges big-room trance and **Booka Shade**-style minimal to create a set which will sound huge in the right setting, **7/10**, and *Body Language Vol. 19* by **Aero Manyelo** - *Get Physical's* celebrated *Body Language* mix series reaches its 19th edition with a set of new and exclusives blended together with panache, **8/10**.

| [JOHN BITTLES](#)