

# BUMPS OF THE MONTH

## THE FUTURE SOUND OF LONDON

**Dead Cities** (Virgin)  
This is the fourth album from FSOL. As you'd expect, once again they hit the spot, dead on. Their last album, *ISDM*, was of course recorded live, and at times you could tell. It was a much harsher, free-form piece of music, but nonetheless immensely enjoyable. *Dead Cities*, though, is on another level. Remember when you first heard *Lifetforms*? And how for weeks on end you listened to it while you fell asleep, and it still took months before you began to feel like you knew your way around? *Dead Cities* is just as vast, and even more complex. While *Lifetforms* was intended to be listened to as one piece of music, *Dead Cities* is more a collection of pieces that run together, not necessarily in a linear fashion. From the industrial strength beats of 'We Have Explosive', to the tranquil piano that opens 'Max', to the dubby drum 'n' bass of 'Antique Toy', you never know quite what is going to happen next. This is an album to be savoured slowly. Rich in emotion and depth, it's a sonic adventure through the fabric of space and time — aural sex, almost. Submerge yourself.

## VARIOUS ARTISTS

**High in a Basement** (Heavenly)  
Right about now there's a big buzz in the UK centred around the new sound of underground British house music. It's deep, warm and smooth, like a hot bath with candles and incense. This is a compilation of the nu-school sound, and I gotta admit it, I love it. Fourteen tracks of effortlessly funky laidback house. Deep beats, live strings and a warm bass make for a cosy place deep in your headspace. Yep, it's the glossy production that sets these selections apart from so much of the throwaway dance fodder around these days. Check 'Downtime', issue one from Paper Music, an epic adventure into punchy beats and lullaby melodies. Killer, Faze Action contribute two standouts with 'Original Disco Motion', a tastefully disco-influenced funkathon complete with subtle guitar riffs, and 'In the Trees', a stone cold classic incorporating live cellos — pure class.

## VARIOUS ARTISTS

**Total Science** (MCA)  
This is the second *Total Science* compilation and it's a bit of a goody. The first edition had some real gems on it, and this one also covers a variety of styles right across the breakbeat universe. We have the delicate funky jazz licks of Big Bud's 'Temptation', and the rolling jazz breaks of Technical Itch's 'Can't You See', while Adam F contributes the mellow classic 'Circles' — an anthem if ever there was one. On a trancier uplifting kinda vibe, check the beautiful 'Atmosphere' by Ellis Dee, and the very cruisy 'King Size' by Orca Nece. On a harder edge is Roni Size with the aptly titled — 'Brute Force', a slice of ruff, tuff, bassline business. This is not a groundbreaking compilation by any means, just a primo selection of quality drum 'n' bass that leans towards the mellower side of things. Very nice indeed.

## DJ TRACE

**'Mutant Revisited'/'Liberty 1'** (Emotif)  
Hot damn! Emotif continue to silently go about the business of releasing solid tracks of audio breakbeat dynamite. 'Mutant Revisited' is actually the second Trace remix of T-Power's massive 'Horny Mutant Jazz'. Trace's first remix (a year ago) set a groundbreaking precedent for the techsteppin' sound championed by the likes of Grooverider and Ed Rush. 'Mutant Revisited' continues in the same vein, taking things to the next level and providing the third instant anthem from what is essentially the same track. It starts with that haunting horn sound, a tight breakbeat kicks in before we go into another breakdown, and then all hell breaks loose as a monster bassline interrupts proceedings and doesn't let up for the rest of the record. Absolutely enormous. 'Liberty 1' on the flip, previously appeared on the immortal *Techsteppin'* compilation, and it too is typical DJ Trace anthem material. Both are essential to any urban breakz DJ looking for that secret weapon (even if every man and his dog will be playing it).

ANDY PICKERING

# MO' BETTER BEATS

## SEAL

**Fly like An Eagle** (Warners)  
From the forthcoming Christmas movie *Space Jam*, starring Bugs Bunny and Michael Jordan, this is an obvious radio sell-out. But Seal has so much class it doesn't really matter, he sounds great and totally updates this 70s classic from Steve Miller. Self-produced by Seal, it's very crisp.

## R KELLY

**I Believe I Can Fly** (Warners)  
Also from the same movie, and guess what — another obvious radio sellout. R Kelly is finally hitting form, which is one way of saying I'm finally starting to like his stuff. Sort of, I'll never be a huge fan. This is kinda nice, with a choir and 'The Motown Romance Choir' providing lush strings.

## EN VOGUE

**Don't Let Go** (EastWest)  
From the Queen Latifah movie *Sel It Off*, this is kind of a new sound for En Vogue. It kicks off with a bit of dirty guitar and rock drums, but descends quickly to MOR. It is — ahem — another obvious radio sell-out. I guess everyone wants a hit for Christmas, particularly the movie producers. Based on En Vogue's earlier great work this disappoints.

## UCC

**The Key, The Secret** (Festival)  
Previously released, this is the remix version, as remixed by current flavours Armand van Helden and Dancin' Divaz. Of the two, van Helden's is the best mix, but both retain the powerful vocals of Diane Charlemagne. If you're high on a happy vibe you'll love this.

## ROZALLA

**Everybody's Free** (Festival)  
When you run out of ideas, just remix an old hit — right? Still, there's life in the old dog yet. This is a dance (pop) anthem, so it can stand a bit of freshening up for 96. What am I saying? Please! Actually, the 13-minute 'Casino Resurrection Mix' is quite interesting, at times sparse, at other times thumping. Tony De Vit's 'Club Mix' goes for a harder sound, but when you retain the vocals, well... This is strictly for the new breed of DJ — the one who now plays only off CDs.

## M-DOC FEATURING CHANTAY SAVAGE

**It's A Summer Thang** (Festival)  
Phew, six mixes in all, so he's taking himself kind of seriously. Never mind the quality, feel the width. Actually this is something I won't mind hearing on high rotate on my radio this summer. This is smooth, with a great R&B beat, very crisp indeed. Club DJs can go with the up tempo 'Summer Funk Mix', while slow jam fans should enjoy the laidback 'Underground Gangsta Mix'. Chantay Savage does deserve billing, her voice positively roars over this track.

## SWOOP

**Do That to Me One More Time** (Festival)  
Looking at the cover I thought it was another of those naff techno covers of an old 70s hit (originally done by the Captain and Tennille, they were huge — kids, ya don't wanna know). Mercifully it's not techno, and surprisingly it's not naff. Well, not too naff anyway. Actually, only the 'Remix' is okay, it features a hip-hop drum loop. For radio they do it without the hip-hop drum loop and stick with an almost a cappella, unplugged kind of sound.

NICK D'ANGELO

# DANCE REVIEWS

## FUNKY GREEN DOGS

**Get Fired Up** (MCA)  
The Funky Green Dogs are Oscar Gaetan and Ralph Falcon. Oscar and Ralph are better known as the Murk boys and... Eh? what's that? You haven't heard of Murk? OK, rewind... The boys live in Miami, home of the Miami bass sound, and not exactly known for its house music. However, living in Miami's plastic paradise hasn't stopped two Christian boys from making some deliciously phat and funky house. The Murk sound is based on dirty stomping beats, the odd acid line, generous helpings of uplifting vocals and most of all, big gritty basslines. Funky Green Dogs is just another name Murk like to work under, and as an album, *Get Fired Up* works about as well as you could expect a collection of thumping house cuts to. It's a quality collection though, very tuff and very American. Danny Tenaglia is executive producer, and you can bet he hammers this stuff. One word of advice, these cuts are designed for club systems, so turn it up...

## VARIOUS ARTISTS

**Live at the Social Volume 1: Mixed by the Chemical Brothers** (Heavenly Recordings)

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**Live At The Social Volume 1: Mixed by Jon Carter (Monkey Mafia)** (Heavenly Recordings)  
Two very entertaining mix CDs from the Heavenly Social crew. The Social started off as a Sunday night in the basement of a UK pub called The Albany. The Chemicals were residents for a while, and became famous not for their mixing ability, but for their inspiring mish-mash of party music. The Social is about losing it to hip-hop, ragga, house, funk, rock, and anything else that makes a crowd; jump in other words, no rules.

Enough history. Firstly, I think the Chemical Brothers disc is the superior. They start with a nicely cut up intro and proceed into the head wrecking beats of Meat Beat Manifesto. Moving quickly through some raw hip-hop via Red Snapper and Eric B and Rakim's 'Juice', the pace is upped with the classic Chemical's mix of 'Packet of Peace'. The gritty break beats and screaming guitars keep coming thick and fast, with bombs from Metro and DJ Who. They go all techno on us with the acid house monster that is Funk d'Void's 'Jack Me Off', and bring it all back down with the unfeasibly funky ragga of 'Wede Man' by Selectah.

Jon Carter's mix is also way funky and mixed quite well — it's just way too ragga heavy for my liking.

## VARIOUS ARTISTS

**Wipeout 2097 the Soundtrack** (Virgin)  
This is the second *Wipeout* compilation, which, in a cunning new form of interactive marketing, is actually the soundtrack to the computer game *Wipeout*, available on Sony Playstation. While playing the game (which is good!) you can choose which track you want to listen to, therefore justifying any interactive claims. And surprisingly (yeah, yeah, call me cynical...), there are plenty of good tracks here from some of the biggest names in crossover dance music, as well as some more underground talents. FSOL contribute the industrial strength 'We Have Explosive'. Fluke contribute the slamming, hypnotically building 'Usik', and the Chemical Brothers drop through with the power-packed electro-fest of 'Loops of Fury'. There are a couple of typically dark breakbeat cuts from Photek and Source Direct, but my favourite track is undoubtedly Daft Punk's absolutely mad 'Musique' — a crazy FX laden trip through stomping beats and cut and pasted disco samples — absolutely tearin'. Quite good sleeve notes too.

## VARIOUS ARTISTS

**Rap Flavaz** (Sony)  
Another rap compilation, full of varied flavours to tempt those with an appetite for hip-hop. It's a bit of a hit-and-miss affair, but with 16 tracks, you at least get a good selection to choose from. The weaker cuts include 'Pimp of the Year' by Dru Down and the overrated Funkdoobies's 'Rock On'. On the positive, check Eightball's 'Break 'em Off', MC Ren as he explains how to 'Keep it Real', and two tracks from The Fugees, 'Fu-Gee-La' and their mix of Cypress Hill's 'Boom Biddy Bye'. As a compilation this leans towards the smoother G-funkin' R&B end of hip-hop. If that sounds like you, check it out.

## UNITONE HIFI

**Boomshot** (Incoming)  
Third long-player from our favourite local bottom heavy dub outlaws. A certain feeling of good old fashioned organic warmth pervades most of the tracks here, with a definite intention to stay true to the roots of original dub-wise styles. This is the 90s though, so there is plenty of electronic trickery and lashings of studio tomfoolery, and of course, we wouldn't have it any other way. The title track and album highlight, 'Boomshot', is a rude-boy killer, an upbeat dancefloor destroyer, with punchy bass and slinky grace. All up this is yet another accomplished album of contemporary home-grown dub. Where too next then?

## VARIOUS ARTISTS

**Macro Dub Infection Volume 2** (Virgin)  
The first infection was a contagious affair indeed, including some extreme soundbites from the lost reigns of dub. *Volume 2* also delivers, as again we are launched into the darker realms. Rest assured, this is not an excursion into fluffy ambience, but something much more disturbing. Yep, there's a definite industrial bent to this,

which can sometimes be irritating, but in the context of this compilation seems entirely appropriate. Bill Laswell strums a mean and funky bass on 'Sacred System Dub', underpinning a dark atmospheric world of sound, echo and delay. Hailing from New York, Him presents 'Liquid Boy' — a beat heavy fest incorporating hip-hop samples and scratching, to create a cosmic funkathon even Bootsy would approve of. The incomparable and 'definitely out there on his own trip' Plug, pops in with 'Keen as Mustard' — an abstract breakbeat number, featuring a funky-as-hell bassline and some rather mad sped up vocal samples. Strange as Jammin' Unit drop an electro ridden bomb with 'Handbag Dub', and those are just some highlights. If you like your beats deep, dark and fucked-up, this is one disease you need to catch.

## GENASIDE II

**New Life for the Hunted** (Polygram)  
Just as American urban oppression gave rise to hip-hop, a comparable effect in the UK has seen first the rise of house and techno, then breakbeat, and now, it could be argued, it is time for Genaside II — the deliberate dissection and slaughter of beats and rhymes. Genaside II are a collective of producers who like to work with a selection of guest producers and vocalists. Two of the latter are Rose Williams and Sharon Williams, who both provide heartfelt soul to complement the varied beatscapes of the producers. And in a first for a UK group, three cuts were recorded in the hallowed Wu Tang Studios, Shalton, New York. (Wu Tang! Wu Tang!) These tracks are noticeably more upbeat than your usual Wu-banger, but they definitely contain the same level of barely contained fury. Intense. The title track is a brooding, moving, string-soaked instrumental set to a hip-hop beat. There's even a distorted, jungle-ised cover of 'Under the Bridge'. A varied album that spreads itself across a wide and ambitious scope and, mostly, pulls it off in fine style.

## VARIOUS ARTISTS

**Danny Tenaglia presents Gag Me With a Tune** (MCA)  
This is a collection of 18 tracks from New York dance label Maxi. Presumably Maxi chose the tracks and then gave Mr Tenaglia an unfeasibly large wad of folding to play them out one after the other at 'NYC's hottest club' (we aren't told which one). The results, of course, are quite good. With the fall from grace of a certain Junior Vasquez, Tenaglia is arguably New York's hottest house DJ, and he rips this one up in fine fashion. You have to understand though, this is deep house American style, which means slow(ish) beats, screaming vocals, and rattling percussion. Anyway, after a slow start Danny, finds his groove, the mixes just keep coming thick and fast, and he never misses a beat. If you like the Funky Green Dogs or the Tribal label, file them next to this.

## VARIOUS ARTISTS

**Shoot the Pump** (Deconstruction)  
This is a mixed hip-hop compilation subtitled 'Block party hip-hop from the New York underground', and it's mixed by my main men Sizzahands and Riz

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