

DARKROOM DUBS

Reassembling countless components into one long dark groove tunnel, this month's covermount sees Dubfire presents the sound of his label Sci+Tec — 'Past, Present & Future'

Forget Bowie and Ciccone, none of us were anticipating the reinvention that Ali 'Dubfire' Shirazinia was plotting when he left Deep Dish. Leaving behind the chart house smashes, Dubfire instead delved deep underground and uncloaked himself as a lover of a devilishly dark, relentlessly unwinding techno. Initial reaction might have been sceptical but by the time tracks like 'Roadkill' and 'Rib Cage' dropped any scepticism was blown away by the hypnotic force of the chrome-plated Dubfire sound. Instantly, everyone from Hawtin and V&th was put under his dark spell. The label they surfaced on — Ali's own Sci+Tec — was initially conceived as an outlet for Dubfire's new sonic mutations but has long expanded to showcase darkroom grooves from a growing army of production talent. From Italian Joseph Capriati to UK sensation Reset Robot and Japanese artists like A.Mochi and Shin Nishimura, Sci+Tec is fast becoming a breeding ground for tomorrow's techno innovators from across the globe.

As Ali gears up for a special appearance at our DJmag WMC pool party at The Shelborne Hotel, on Wednesday 25th March, we catch up with him to talk about the concept of the mix, as well as what Miami and '09 have in store...

There are over 30 producers showcasing the Sci+Tec sound on this mix. Are you hoping to build a clear family roster similar to labels like M-Nus?

"It wasn't a conscious thing but it's kind of turning out that way as much as I am releasing their music and we get along well on a personal level. I really respect what Richie has accomplished with M-Nus, they are a collective in the truest sense."

The mix incorporates elements of over 22 different tracks using Traktor. Was it a pre-planned process or did you spin it all off on-the-fly?

"It sort of happened on-the-fly, I wanted to cram so much in there. I wanted to present a certain sound and that sound tends to be about using tracks as building blocks. With Traktor, I'm often taking loops from three different tracks and using them to make one."

This mix is a real blend of sounds but is Sci+Tec heading in any particular direction in 2009?

"There's honestly no masterplan, I'm just looking for whatever connects with me on an emotional level — it could be something on the darker edge of techno or something super housey."

"What I wanted to do on this compilation was present a collage of all the label's releases — including past releases, the current stuff and also excerpts of upcoming tracks."

In Patrick Lindsey you've got a real early-90s techno legend on the mix. Any other legendary names you'd like to have on Sci+Tec?

"I'm more excited about showcasing newer talent. When you get to a certain point in your career it becomes a lot more gratifying to bring up the younger guys, as there are so many people vying for the same spotlight."

One young producer on the mix is Joseph Capriati, whose track featured on Sci+Tec's 'Angels Of Naples' EP. What was the inspiration behind that?

"I wanted to give a tip of the hat to what was going on in Italy and the Naples techno scene in particular. For years I have been playing great music from the region and I wanted to take those that went right back to the roots of techno — like Rino Cerrone — and present them alongside the newer guys under one banner. The project was in conjunction with the Angels Of Love promoters."

Who are you staking your money on as this year's breakthrough?

"A UK guy called David Robertson — Reset Robot. He has been engineering great stuff for Fergie and Alan Fitzpatrick but the stuff he is doing on his own is phenomenal."

What is it about his sound that grabbed your attention?

"It just has the funk. He has a real good grasp of that old school swinging funk groove that Masters At Work and guys like Todd Terry pioneered in the early days but is totally pushing it into the future at the same time."

With so many looking back to house grooves, do you think there came a point when techno was lacking that organic funk feel?

"Maybe many years ago but I think techno in general always has that funk intact. You'll always be able to find really great techno tracks that waved that funk banner. I personally have never lost my faith in techno because it pushed a lot of different sounds that more commercial music wasn't able to take a chance on — it always opens things up sonically."

There definitely seems to be a sense that many people are looking back at the moment...?

"People of my age group are at a point where they're able to appreciate the vast history of dance music and we're borrowing from the past. A lot of these younger producers are also looking back on what they missed — it's great."



TRACK BY TRACK

Dubfire guides us through his mix...

- 01** Zoo Brazil 'Your Way'
Delete 'Flight Schedule'
"Your Way" was the perfect opener as it's just so stripped down."
- 02** Uto Karem 'Trentatre'
Gaetano Parisio 'Partenope'
"I'm a great fan of Italian producer Uto. Very dubby, bouncy and happy, this is different from his norm."
- 03** Paul Ritch 'Crazy Madness (Luca Bachetti Remix)'
Davide Squillace & Michele Tabucci
'One Lobster, Please (Mathias Kaden's Gambass Remix)'
"Luca brings the summery Ibiza vibe to Paul's harder style on this remix."
- 04** Plasmic Honey 'Jungle'
Mutant Clan 'Inside'
"Plasmic Honey is a guy from New York who was kind of prolific back in the day — it's kinda stripped down tribal. Mutant Clan is Timo Maas and 'Inside' is another tribal beast."
- 05** Joseph Capriati 'Roboters'
Reset Robot 'Pig Nose'
"Roboters" is a great bridge between tribal rhythms and the shuffling techno sound, whilst 'Pig Nose' is getting unbelievable reactions."
- 06** Rocha & Lewinger 'Santiago'
Federico Grazzini & Alex Neri 'Habla'
"Rocha & Lewinger are two Uruguayan guys doing great stuff. Alex Neri is an old school Italian DJ. DJ and his work with Grazzini is marking a new chapter in his sound — it's energetic but very housey and accessible."
- 07** Simi 'Uderna Naples (Remix)'
Shin Nishimura 'Frustration (A. Mochi Remix)'
"A. Mochi and Nishimura are two Japanese friends. Japan still loves to bang it out so this has quite a harder, old school edge but is still very forward looking."
- 08** Patrick Lindsey 'What Is This?'
"Rather than an obvious linear approach, this has a very unique arrangement."
- 09** Maurizio & Danyelino 'Adenine (Paul Ritch Remix)'
"This is one of my all-time favourite Paul Ritch productions. That synth is the most sinister thing you can imagine — it was so severe that my mastering dude refused to master it!"
- 10** Sian 'Skeleton (Pan Pot Remix)'
"Sian is a great Irish producer who creates minimal vibes but with strong atmosphere."
- 11** Paul Ritch 'Aquarel'
Smith & Selway 'Push Factor'
"Aquarel" is almost a DJ tool, very much a drum track, but with really intricate effects."
- 12** Steve Mac 'Gotta Have Fun (Prudo Remix/Original)'
"Steve Mac has a really instinctive grasp of old school NYC house rhythms but this is a bit edgier than what he is known for. It's a beautiful track."
- 13** Rino Cerrone 'Moment'
"Another Naples techno legend — a class act."
- 14** Dubfire 'I Feel Speed (Audion Remix)'
"Not a peak-time tune, this remix is really out there, but if played at the right time it's a total headfuck."

Another nod to your roots seems to be the tribal influence on the mix...

"It's a sort of a stripped down tribal. Tribal has always been a big part of what I'm about and it's also the summer groove that soundtracks places like DC10 in Ibiza."

When was the last time you found yourself inspired on a dancefloor?

"All the time! But the last time I really went for it was at Amnesia closing. I was in the club for 12 hours. I played for three hours then Sven Väth came on and we actually dragged Danny Tenaglia out on the dancefloor with us. It was a magic night."

Looking ahead to the upcoming WMC, Miami must have thrown up a few memories over the years?

"Oh man, there's too many! Danny Tenaglia's Space marathons, anytime I catch Josh Wink play, the pool parties... I remember tag-teaming [Loco] Dice last year, looking behind me and seeing Matt Radio Slave, [Marco] Carola and lots of others enjoying themselves. There's something really magic about it."

Is Miami still the forum for new music it once was?

"Round the year, Miami and the US in general aren't the best places for pushing new music right now but I think it's important for us to go to WMC and represent our sound. It can educate people into realising that there is an alternative to what they are hearing all year round."

You're guesting at our DJmag pool party at The Shelborne on Wednesday 25th March. But where else will you be playing during WMC?

"My party is also on the Wednesday, at Kore, with Paul Ritch and David Squillace. I'm also playing Pete Tong's Surfcomber party. I like playing the afternoon things as it allows me to play a bit more tribal."

SCI+TEC
Digital Audio

