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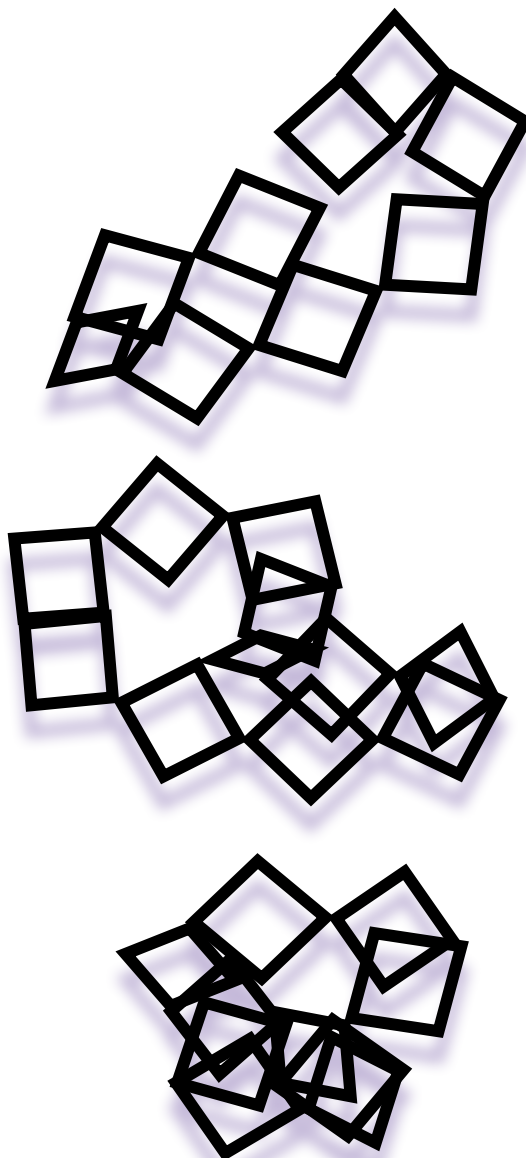
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C O N T E N T

features

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Letter from the publisher:

There's so much to say, but above all I'm glad you are here to absorb another fantastic double issue. We at DEQ HQ strongly believe, as the Peech Boys sang it best, "Life is something special." Music is healing and it has helped us emerge stronger from the losses we incurred over the last few years.

DEQ 17_18's offerings include: 2 vinyl records (DEQ 17_18 parts 1 and 2), this new print issue and a parallel Event Guide in conjunction with event listing gurus thedetroitilove.com. There are many interviews and tracks from:

- Part 1 DEQ 17: Jon Dixon, John Briggs, Peter Croce, Viands
- Part 1 DEQ 18: Claude Young, Techmarine Bottom Feeders (Paris the Black Fu, Luxus Varta), DJ Moppy, DJ Holographic with Alex Wilcox
- Part 2 DEQ 17- Nandi, A7 MC with Eddie Logix, Shawscape
- Part 2 DEQ 18 - Eddie Fowlkes, Luke & Jeff Hess, and Infolines

In other exciting news, DEQ is now a non-profit known as Detroit Electronic Quarterly Arts Organization. Our aim is to not only educate about electronic music, art and culture, but to develop outreach and beautification projects that enrich young lives in our city.



Our community garden project (on Sylvester and Gratiot, across from Faygo), with strong guidance from Regina Stanley, gained a partner in the Heidelberg Arts Leadership Academy (HALA.) Seven garden beds will be tended to by neighbors and civic groups over the summer and, starting in July, the kids will use it to display their art as part of summer camp. This is a thrilling collaboration that will beautify and offer encouragement for kids to follow their art dreams.

We've also been working with McDougall Hunt block club on area/alley cleanups. In April, 15 volunteers came out to help clean the entire alley on Sylvester from Gratiot to Mount Elliott. We filled up both sides of the street with branches and garbage from at least twenty years of neglect.

If you'd like to help our projects in any way, please email vp@detroitetq.com

We're on to the next DEQ 19_20 planned for late November of 2022. More good things to come! Follow us on ig: [deq_magazine](https://www.instagram.com/deq_magazine) + FB [/detroitetq](https://www.facebook.com/detroitetq) + www.detroitetq.com for past issues, information and articles!

Thank you for support and as always, thank you for paying attention.

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DJ HOLOGRAPHIC

Out of Detroit's culturally rich soil grows a sound that redefines dance floors, creates new genres and inspires generations of new artists. The bell curve of creativity from our city, when it peaks, defines a sound that reverberates around the world.

There is a new breed of performers that have been emerging over the last several years that have refocused electronic music and Ariel Corley aka DJ Holographic is at the forefront. Incorporating the soulful roots of years past with modern electronic beats, Holographic presents a melodic wonderland of sound that massages your soul and creates a musical space of love and rhythm.

"The universe connects us to threads of creativity" she said. "If we grab onto them they will answer our creative questions and guide us."

Ariel has gathered up every thread, weaving them into an impressive career bringing love and happiness to dance floors around the world.

Her childhood summers were spent at her Grandmother's house in Detroit. Music was always playing, especially Motown. She and her cousins spent countless hours learning The Temptations choreography.

Prince was too rock-n-roll for her Grandmother's generation, but her cousins introduced her to the sounds of the purple one and to this day his production style influences her.

As they got older they would share new records that they discovered, often obscure. Ariel was diving into Korean r&b, J Dilla, and Boys Noize and her cousins brought the sounds of Latin rock into the mix. They also continued to dance, with Grandma teaching her and her cousins how to team up and dance together.

She recalled frequent trips to the roller rink with her friends on Sundays to skate while Grant Jackson DJed. He accepted requests "anything Prince he would be like 'I'm here.' anything else he'd be like 'maybe'." This early introduction to the importance of sharing music has followed Ariel to this day. She has a deep understanding of the importance of community in the music scene.

Just after her high school graduation, Ariel's best friend Aaron took her group friends to Movement in 2008. After three days at the festival, Ariel told herself "I want to do this thing they are doing up there. I want to make people feel how the [DJs] made me feel...loving each other and having a good time. I want to express myself in that way."

As she started going to Grant Jackson's dubstep parties, a fondness for drum & bass and jungle formed. This was the point where she began growing stronger roots and discovering her place in the fabric of nightlife culture.

The experiences began to sink in and out of the blue Ariel's first boyfriend out of high school, Joey, took her to a friend's house where there were turntables and a mixer. She was left in the room for a bit and she began working the equipment. She already knew about DJing in passing, but hadn't yet had the chance to match beats, melodies and get her feet wet.

In moving to Ann Arbor, Michigan, she felt it would not only be an opportunity to become an artist in a city that had the label Ghostly International and the Necto Nightclub, but it would also be a great place to study graphic design.

It did not take long to get her foot in the door as she worked coat check nights at Necto Nightclub. It gave her a unique opportunity to listen to DJs (such as DJ Harvey, Jace, and DVJ Mark Gordon Johnson) and study how they mixed and connected with the people attending.

Over time she began to understand the control a DJ had over the crowd...knowing when to do the drops, building crowds to a frenzy, pulling back, allowing people to go to the bar for a drink, then drawing them back to the dance floor. She realized that good DJs could "control the rhythm of the room."

Christine Kitora (booking agent at Necto) was also a big influence on where Ariel focused her career. Christine had a clear vision of where the electronic music scene was going and the ability to curate lineups that would connect generations. Ariel discovered other influential female DJs such as Black Madonna as a re-

sult of their relationship.

Soon Ariel worked her way up to promoting events at Necto where she bought her own turntables, mixer, and an S4 controller. She became friends with Blair Emerson and he started to teach her how to DJ properly. One time while they were practicing, Blair noticed that Ariel's new/used turntables looked familiar. He lifted up the platter and there was his mark. (DJs would often scratch a mark under the platter so that they could prove they were theirs.) Her turntables were originally his! This connection was a turning point and the beginning of a lifelong friendship.

Ariel began promoting for and throwing parties with many of the friends that she met working at Necto. They were diverse, multi-genre events that incorporated everything from drum & bass, disco, and house to '90s and '80s music. This time was also the dawn of Facebook and event promotions were entering a new age. She learned the tools to connect to people and the power of design and branding. She began defining what story she wanted her brand to convey: learning how to musically fulfill the desires of the club audience and the power of dance floor relationships.

Ariel moved to Detroit as an adult and started throwing events there with a promoter that she did events with in Ann Arbor. They worked with a dubstep promoter group called D-Ranged. They teamed up to add more house music to the mix at these events. They bought a sound system and started to present their own parties at Tangent Gallery. That sound system is still in use there till this day. Ariel wanted to create a space for her tribe to come and play music. She wanted to give her friends a platform.

I met Ariel when she was throwing a weekly party at Drive Table Tennis Club in downtown Detroit called Joyride. She had fulfilled her desire to give her friends the opportunity to have a place to play out. In time, she invited my future husband Tyler to play. The foundation of our friendship and my appreciation for Ariel's talent are positive forces in my life that built up over those many weeks at Drive.

That moment when an artist finds their groove is

something very few of us have the opportunity to experience first hand. I knew that Holographic was crossing over to a new level when she was the main resident for a month at our weekly after-hours party BAK DØR. We branded the month BAK DØR 54, dedicating the sound and decor to the iconic Studio 54 in New York. Holographic brought a deep disco sound that was unique yet familiar, packing the dance floor with ecstatic fans deep into the morning hours week after week. It would also be the year that Ariel would play at Movement Festival for the first time.

In 2018 my good friend Marke Bieshke and I arranged for Ariel to play her first gig outside of Michigan at San Francisco's oldest gay bar The Stud. Since then she has expanded to clubs and festivals all over the world including Buttons at ://about blank in Berlin, Elsewhere in New York, and Off Sonar in Barcelona. She has connected with promoters that share the same value system as her, with communities that she is a member of like the queer community and the African American community, and they keep bringing her back. She has also spent a lot of time over the past year in her studio at Submerge producing tracks of her own. She is looking forward to sharing her interpretation of what her crowds over the years have shown her.

For new DJs, Ariel's advice is to "out do you," she said. "The only person you should be competing with is yourself. Other artists are friends, mentors, and sources of inspiration. If you know who you are you will never second guess yourself while you are performing. Be confident in what defines you, your shadows and light. If you are a nerd, be a nerd...if you are a dick then be a dick. You are the shaman up there...you control these people's emotions. The audience can see right through you. Respect that. Be professional and focus on your job. Have fun but don't get too lost in the partying."

I have been blessed to have a front-row seat watching DJ Holographic's career take off. She has been relentless in her quest to deliver her irrepressible sound and electric energy to the world and it shows.

Follow DJ Holographic: linktr.ee/djholographic



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DJ MOPPY'S

Journey to Detroit

For decades Detroit has beckoned to the musically inclined and DJ/producer/musician/artist Christopher Thomopoulos aka Moppy was one of the individuals that heard its call. Like most music creatives, his journey is constantly evolving across genres. Moppy creates music he calls organic. He also maintains that erasing is the best production technique. He says, "You don't have to be a genius musician to create genius music. You can create with your own uniqueness."

DG: Moppy, your music knowlegde is encyclopidic. What did you listen to growing up? Were you into house music early?

M: Believe it or not, I grew up in a very suburban community so I heard some flavors of house music on MTV with the likes of 80s pop, but I didn't really dive-in until later in life. My father was a PHD professor at IIT in Chicago and my mother a PHD Psychologist. Education was important and arts were not in the forefront of my growing up.

I was influenced by what my older sister Diana was listening to mainly. She and her friends got into hippy stuff in high school and put me onto bands like Bob Marley, Phish, Grateful Dead and Sublime. In 4th grade I was obsessed with Snoop's Doggystyle. I got into Beastie Boys around 5th Grade. In middle school, my newly found skateboard life introduced underground hip hop to my ear. With the likes of Gang Starr, Pharcyde, Dr. Octagon etc. Murry The Magnificent (MTM) and the Analog Addicts introduced me to 'The Breaks' years later. As far as house, MTM introduced me to Yazid the DJ and I became a resident of "Respect the DJ" around 2008 at Lava Lounge in Chicago. Yazid schooled me in house music and its culture...taking me to events all over the city. She introduced me to Jevon Jackson who would later become a mentor to me in house music. I was also introduced to Diz, Sonny Daze, Ron Trent, Michael Serafini and boom! The house music fire was lit inside me.

DG: Is any of your music influenced by the Greek music your family grew up with?

M: I turned away, It was too traditional. I was trying to be a little more American like my schoolmates and like what was on TV. After my dad passed, I started listening to what he liked as a way to re-connect with him.

DG: Which three artists have you found to be the most inspirational in your production endeavors?

M: I would have to say Bob Marley because he's such an early influence and Dilla because anyone making hip hop has to be influenced by Dilla. The third? That's tricky. I guess someone like Moodymann or Theo Parrish

DG: When did you start producing music?

M: Somewhere around 2004. I got my first set of turntables

when I was fifteen. In the beginning I knew nothing about creating music. As I grew I began taking an interest in music and picked up drums in elementary school, I rocked out with the Jazz Band in Junior High and re-found skateboarding around the same time .

I heard a lot of new and different music in the skate videos that would pop up, like of Gang Starr, Pharcyde, Dr. Octagon, Unknown Funk Jams, Reggae tunes... whatever it was it was something I was intrigued by and wanted to learn more about. I start recognizing the wiki-wiki skretch sounds coming from some of those artists and got really into that underground sound.

It (production) wasn't heavy until my musical mentor and roommate at the time MTM connected me with Radius Etc around 2008. I was also working with Kenny Keys on beats around the same time. We all started connecting and collaborating about a year or so later (2009ish.) Lailah Reich would join us as well as others in the Chicago Community.

DG: And you got the itch to scratch...

M: That still brings me chills to think about the first time. It was epic. I needed turntables and a mixer ASAP! I saved up some loot from my after school job and bought the DJ in a box setup from Guitar Center. I remember trying to scratch and the needle kept skipping. I was so frustrated but just kept on working with what I had and improving my setup. I bought one Technics turntable at a time when I saved up enough. Eventually I had a sick setup and was able to progress my DJ skills.

I eventually got into a Triton keyboard with sampling capabilities. I think when I started working on my first beats I was really trying to feed my ego and wanted everyone to think I was dope!

DG: And now you can do it all! Live sets, DJ sets and production! What gear are you using? You've come a long way since the "DJ In a Box!"

M: That's for sure. As far as live goes, I've always changed it up. I've been using the AKAI MPC 1000, because I can do the dubbing out. I might bring some bass. I sometimes bring turntables and loop scratches or melodies. For production, I use Ableton pretty heavily as the main brain. I'm using live drums and instruments to start my tracks rather than

a drum machine or sampling. In Chicago, it was all sampling...spending a lot of time finding the drum loop sample, then finding a keyboard sample, finding a horn sample, scratching something in. Now I'm figuring out how to fit in my own playing.

My studio is constantly evolving. It morphed from the days using the Triton to having a full blown studio able to record 7+ piece band to living out a camper van and creating with just a few pieces of gear and a laptop. I've experienced a lot of changes in how I create and I expect that to be an ongoing morphing thing.

DG: Collaborations have been key to your musical journey...

M: Absolutely. Radius and I created Beyond Luck and we released two 45s (Take You on a Trip/Lights Out & Lagos Your Thoughts(Remix)/Ft Primeridian) in 2013. I was also a member of Cutz on Cuts, which was a group of three turntablists along with RTST & Shazam Bangles. We had the opportunity to open shows for a number of bigger acts and also had a weekly, four-hour podcast that included guests.



Their guests would DJ and we would cut, scratch and add samples on top of the music.

DG: And that led you to Detroit?

M: Yes. (Detroit DJ) Jyarsch Corbin heard our Cutz on Cuts podcast and started bringing me to Detroit to play at Comfort Food (weekly night.) He later brought me to town to play at TV Lounge. I had amazing experiences in Chicago, but I was growing tired of the hustle bustle of the city and the expensive rent, so I moved to Detroit.

DG: Tell us about your Karya project.

M: Lailah Reich sings and I do the production on this project. We have been working together for some years now and our energy just flows naturally, I'll send her some ideas and she comes back with a complete song (typically.) We have a 7 track album that we are prepping to shop to labels.. There is a remix from Anthony Nicholson, Dez Andr s, and hopefully Radius etc.. Super excited to let the world hear this one.. It will be called Karma..

DG: You also have projects with Frank Reynolds and Re-Generations?

M: Yes! Frank has a plumbing shop on Brush Street in Detroit. I bought a house on the same block. I was going there to get supplies for repairs and ask him for plumbing help. One day I saw a guitar in the back of his shop. He said that he played and it had been a while since he got together with a band. I mentioned the studio and that I played drums, and Raj was nice on keys. I think he came by the same day or soon after and we had a casual jam session. That turned into a somewhat regular thing for Frank, Raj and I. We eventually got the idea to record and try to put together a cover with Frank. That turned into the 7" Star Creature put out of "Ain't No Stopping us Now" and "Searching." I literally had no idea people would be into it but Tim Zawada was telling me it sold out and was sending me posts from bigger name DJs rocking it across the world.

The Crew (Frank, Raj and I) have been working on some news tunes we recorded with Frank's Band and we hope to finish those up in 2022. The vibe we create together feels like something you get once in a blue moon so we will be holding on to that as long as Jah blesses us.

DG: What kind of message do you want your music to send out to listeners?

M: I hope my music can uplift, heal, motivate, challenge, and inspire creation to the listeners.

DG: In what ways do you foresee your roll with music in the future?

I foresee more natural and organic sounds and vibrations as my time goes. I am dedicated to living in harmony with nature and bringing peace to this world and for me that means making creations that reflect and incorporate nature, healing, relaxation, and emotional release... sounds to soothe the soul.

I also envision more exotic, island, tropical, and African vibrations. They seem to resonate the most with me at the moment. But who knows what the future holds? I plan to ride the wave until my time is done and things change so quick it is hard to predict.

DG: Are these vibrations calling you to change your direction as of late?

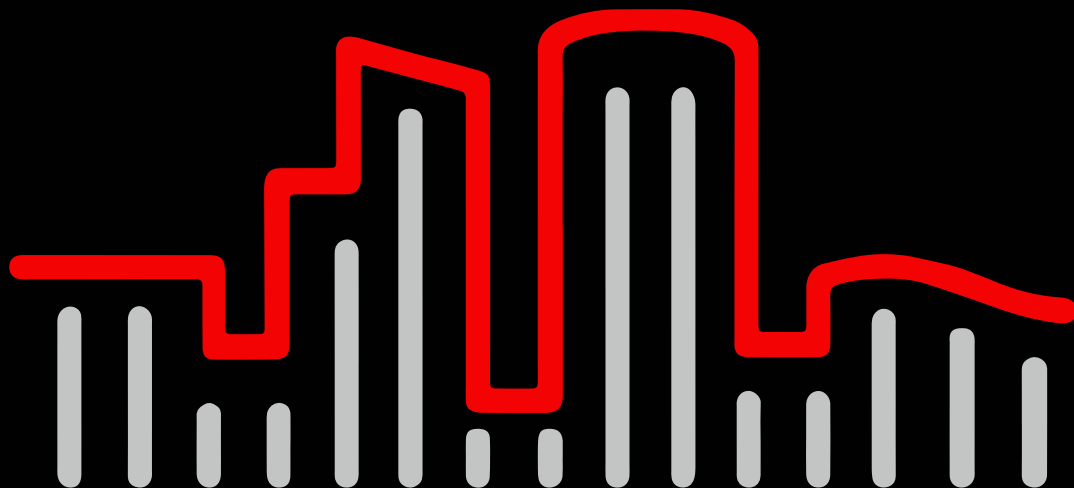
M: For now. I recently (2022) said goodbye to my music making ego side and I am now opening up to my spiritual/healing side of making music. I have decided I don't want to be relying on the music industry in order to "fit in" or "compete." My music creation is strictly because I enjoy it or I am motivated to share or is healing to my soul. If it doesn't fit into those categories I don't want to be involved. Strictly for the Luv :)

DG: What kind of message do you want your music to send out to listeners though your music and art?

M: I hope it uplifts, heals, motivates, challenges, and inspires creation to the listeners.

DG: How do people keep up with your projects?

M: For now music things on Instagram is @djmompy my art is @mopscreations .. Keep an eye out for Enjoy The Journey T shirts and I'm Christopher N. Thomopoulos on Facebook .. Would love to connect with more like minded people :))



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APOLLO BROWN IS A DETROIT BASED PRODUCER WHO HAS BEEN A PART OF THE DETROIT HIP HOP SCENE SINCE 2007. HE HAS 22 ALBUMS TO HIS CREDIT AND HAS WORKED WITH ARTISTS LIKE GHOSTFACE KILLAH (OF WU TANG CLAN), DETROIT'S OWN GUILTY SIMPSON AND MOST RECENTLY, JOELL ORTIZ. IN THE LAST QUARTER OF 2019 APOLLO BROWN RELEASED, ARGUABLY, ONE OF THE BEST ALBUMS OF THE YEAR CALLED, SINCERELY DETROIT. THIS IS OUR CONVERSATION ABOUT IT...



APOLLO BROWN

BL: Congrats on all your success! You are a hit both here and overseas.

AB: “They’re fans! (overseas) They know all the words! Their call and response is ridiculous! You tell them to put their hands up and they put their hands up! They’re not sitting there like this (arms crossed.) It’s different man. It’s different! I don’t think a lot of us really expect it, because the markets are different here man. It’s like there’s really no in between when it comes to doing a show here, or doing a Drake show, where they’re getting crazy money. You’re either at the top or the bottom. There’s no in between.

BL: It’s crazy. I was just reading something on NPR, one of the overseas websites, about how there are no small club shows. That whole 200 to 500 person venues are no longer around...even the more intimate ones, where you can fit around 50-100 people are almost gone.

AB: Yeah, they’re dying out. That sucks, because that’s our lifeline.

BL: That’s our proving grounds. That’s where people cut their teeth and how they develop.

AB: A lot of us prefer those types of venues. I have rocked for 12-15,000 people and I’ve rocked for 40 people! I prefer a smaller intimate show. They’re just better. The audiences are more attentive. The audience is strictly there for you!

BL: Damn, that’s a pretty good start and I haven’t even asked any questions yet!

AB: Oh shit you’re not recording? *Both of us laughing*

BL: How did Sincerely, Detroit come about? And, by the way, congratulations again! The album has been getting Album of the Year honors!

AB: I appreciate it man. That was a feat! That was an undertaking bro. It was an album that I’ve wanted to do four years ago. I’m glad I didn’t do it four years ago. There would’ve been some artists that wouldn’t have been included that are included this time around. I realized, going overseas, and following hip hop (not just a person in hip hop), but from the outside looking in, the WORLD, checks for Detroit! They knock on Detroit’s door, to see who’s inside. They wanna know what Detroit’s doing! Whether it’s producers, MCs,

DJs, even singers. They envy the talent that comes out of the city.

I’ve always wanted to put together a compilation album that showcases talent that comes out of the city! I was just gonna do the usual suspects, the Royces, the Guiltys, the the Elzhis, stuff like that. It started out being like sixteen people and I was gonna keep it at that! But if I was to really do a “proper Detroit album”, I gotta include MCs from different eras, different crews, up and coming MCs, legends of the game here. I gotta include everybody!

Obviously, not everyone was included. I’ve got 56 artists. A CD is 80 minutes long and the album is 79 minutes and 30 seconds long! I literally couldn’t fit any more music on even if I wanted to. It took me around 6-7 months to do and it was definitely a waiting game. It was, like I said earlier, an undertaking. It’s a hard thing to do man, to put that many artists on one album!

There are a lot of artists that I put together on songs that you’ll never hear together and you’ll probably never hear together on the same song! That’s why I only put out one album in 2019. I spent the whole year, on that album! I just kinda zoned in on it, trying to make it the best it can be and perfect it!

BL: Were there any songs that didn’t make the album? Or were the beats that you made strictly for this album?

AB: No, no extras, those were the songs. Actually, the song amount was lower than that. There were times where I had 12 songs, then 15, 17 and then I just put everything on there. I didn’t want to leave anything off so I kept it at 20 songs with an intro. Time restraints really capped it at 20, but you never know, there could be a part two.

BL: When you do your “concept albums” with artists like Ras Kass, Joell Ortiz, or the Dice Game with Guilty Simpson, do you seek out these artists? How does that work out?

AB: It depends. We’ll say, “Yeah man, we need to do something together!” Whenever we both get time, or carve out a window to make some music, then we’ll do it! Or there are times, like with OC, when I went seeking him out. He knew who I was. He was one of my favorite MCs of all time, so I gave it a shot to see if I can do an album with him. He

obliged and we did that album (Trophies.) Me and Guilty have been talking, we might get in the studio again. That's always a possibility, we'll see...

BL: Ok, let's talk about your most influential/favorite producers, aside from your J Dillas, your DJ Premieres and Pete Rocks. Let's remove them from the equation. Out of the producers who are left, who were the most influential to you?

AB: DJ Muggs (Soul Assassins/Cypress Hill.) He's a top 3 producer for me. Alchemist, NO ID, The Beatminerz, and Black Milk are amazing! Those are people that have shaped and molded the sound that I look to in my career and look to when I wanna listen to good hip hop!

BL: Without spilling the beans completely, what do you have going on next?

AB: Man, I can't give you too much, you know what I'm saying? I'm working on a few albums right now. I'm actually gonna switch genres for a second and work on an r&b/soul album right now. I hope my music family comes with me on this album, because its not hip hop, but it's still Apollo Brown. I'm always working!

Its been a year and few months since the OG Article has been published, since then, Apollo Brown and r&b/soul star Raheem DeV Vaughn have released their joint album, Love-sick

BL: How did the album between you two come about?

AB: I'm a BIG fan of Raheem. He has one of my favorite r&b albums of all time, The Love Experience. Hands down one of the best r&b albums of all time. I've always been fan, and he's a "hip hop head" too! He's always on the scene, doing features with respected hip hop cats. So I reached out to him one day, and I was like "Yo, I wanna do an album, I've always wanted to do an r&b/soul album (if you wanna call it that.), What better artist to do that with, than Raheem? He's DOPE!....and it was a good Marriage, he's good at doing what he does over "boom bap" type beats.

BL: (cuts him off) Let me just say this real quick. That Tribe (Called Quest) flip "Luck of Lucien" that you did for the single "When a Man"... when you released that song, I thought to myself, that's dope! It's gonna set the tone for the album.

For a person like me (I love r&b/soul), so, it was easy for me to understand and get in to. Like you just mentioned, it was the perfect marriage. It worked really well together!

AB: Thank you Man, we did it that way, because, my fan base, is 24/7 Hip Heads! I was actually kinda nervous putting this type of album out, because I really didn't know how my fans would react, respond to it, with it, essentially being an r&b album. I had to give the album a sound, that was my fan base was familiar with, you know what I'm saying? The album is still doing amazing!! I can't complain about it at all!!

BL: So, since the last time we spoke, there has been a lot in the world, that has happened. Everyone got locked down when COVID hit. Has that impacted you, slowed your work down any?

AB: Nah man. As a producer, I think, I've trained my whole life for this. I was built for this!!! You're tellin' me that you want me to stay at home, go down in my basement and stay from everyone else? As a beatmaker/producer/artist, that's what I do anyway. I'm always by myself making music. So it really didn't impact me. It was a blessing in disguise though. I haven't toured now in over 2 years, and that's crazy to me! It's the first time that I haven't toured in over a decade! At first, it was a little weird, but the blessing came when I got to stay home with my family with no interruptions. I'm bonding with them the way that I want to. The kids were at home for the majority of that. My ass was working from home. Even though it was a bad time, it was good bonding. So, I really didn't feel any negative impact. I'm getting antsy about not touring, but things are starting to open back up over seas. We're thinking of doing domestic runs along the coast(s), so we'll see!

BL: Word, whatchu got going on now?!?

AB: I don't like giving up too much, but, I do have 2 albums in the works to be released this year. I always try to drop 2 albums within an 18 month span. I can't really tell you exactly what's going on, but, its some HEAT!! I'm old school like that. I always like to do a proper roll out, a proper 8 week campaign, I've never been the type of artist that finishes a project, and then says, I'm gonna drop it on Friday. That's just the old school in me! I'm thinking of dropping something in April, and dropping something else, in September/October.

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EDDIE
FOWLKES

Eddie Fowlkes is a living legend. Undeniably one of the founders of Detroit Techno culture, his roots go back to the Prep days on the west side of Detroit. Having an older sister in the 70s meant that Eddie was exposed to the high school progressive scene and after attending a Sharevari party his fascination with dance music was cemented. Recognized as the “Belleville Fourth,” his 1986 debut ‘Goodbye Kiss’ released on Juan Atkins’ Metroplex label was essential in furthering the expansion of the Detroit Techno sound. Being a part of this movement since its inception has given Eddie a front seat to the ups and downs of electronic music. He is known for speaking his mind and has the pedigree to back it up. In this interview we delve into how the last few years have affected his views.

Tajh: As of now we're opened back up from COVID lockdowns. How are you feeling about everything? Are you excited? Do you have any concerns about how rapidly we're opening back up?

Eddie: Man with the new variant and the way China's shut back down... that speaks volumes to me. This is going to be the norm for the next three years. And if you don't get on now, you're not gonna get a gig in Europe, unless they really want you. If you don't have a hell of a booking agent for America right now, you're going to be shit out of luck. Everybody wants to come over here in the winter months. America's going to be wide open to Europeans. Not only Europeans, but to the rest of the world because Americans just don't want to be shut-down again. It's an economic fuck up.

Tajh: People should be prepared for something like this to keep happening over the next few years, but I think it's difficult for artists to wrap their heads around. If you don't have some savings you're shit out of luck. If stuff has to be shut down again, the government's not going to help us out.

Eddie: No, that shit ain't coming again. That's why I've been hustling. All my gigs, like 99%, are over in Europe. I didn't really care about America because my market was over there. I never thought all this shit was going to occur. Now I have to find some management in America because my European people don't know nothing about America. [This year] I had gigs starting the second week of January. I was supposed to play in the Eastern Bloc.

So the war kicked off and fucked all my shit up. Then I started thinking about China. Shit is going to be buck wild again. I guess you and I are going to have to hit the lotto.

Tajh: We're like 30, 40 years into dance music being a thing and there's still no market for artists to survive in America. You still have to go overseas to maintain your living. With COVID and the war, it shows that might not always be so possible. Do you think that we need to finally start building up America so that we can be self-sufficient?

Eddie: There's no more small clubs that people can make good money out of, in my opinion. You're down to about two clubs in Detroit, when before you had tons of clubs in Detroit. You know Americans like big things, like Texas. Money, greed and power bro. That's always been the staple of America.

To be honest I don't see it changing. If you say something bad you're a hater. You just got to come up with a plan. Come up with a plan and it can knock some walls down. You know what I mean?

I've been turned down by some of the best booking agents in America in the past week and a half. But that's okay. I see how this game is going. Excuse me. I already know how the game goes. I've gotta re-prove myself to muthafuckas in America.

Tajh: Even in most American cities there's not even enough clubs for real DJs to have residencies or anything like that. The whole experience is different compared to when you came up. They treat club nights like concerts, you know what I'm saying?

Eddie: <laugh> You got that right man.

Tajh: I feel that now a large part of it is social media driven. If you don't have a large social media presence, you're kind of shit out of luck.

Eddie: I wouldn't even say that, because I've seen cats with no social media presence, at all, that can't even crack a thousand followers. And they get all the media attention with the top manager and booking agent. I won't drop names on these individuals. It goes to show

my point: it's who you know. Black, white, straight, gay don't matter.

Tajh: America is supposed to be a meritocracy, but it's not. I think that applies to all the industries, especially ours. I feel like there have been ebbs and flows over the decades of hype. It gets over saturated and eventually the bubble pops. Then people start looking back to like the real shit. You don't think that that's going to happen again?

Eddie: No, I don't think so. Everybody plays this synthetic techno shit, where it has no peaks and valleys. It's just flat. Nobody is thinking about creativity. All the change is coming from viral bullshit. I don't see the DJ changing things like before. Everybody is focused on everything but the studio. There's too much me, myself and I.

Tajh: Is there a favorite spot that you used to play? Let's say, in Detroit and/or America.

Eddie: You ever heard of Ice Breakers?

Tajh: No.

Eddie: Ice Breakers were parties at the beginning of college season. All the Black fraternities would have their parties and get together in a big gymnasium. If you weren't one of the top 5 DJs, you weren't playing. You played the hits but also you could put in some progressive stuff. And they got down to it.

Tajh: Now with Black fraternities it's mostly pop culture music. At what point did house and techno get pushed to the wayside by Black youth culture?

Eddie: My record came out in '86 and then Public Enemy came out. I remember my 12" was next to their album on the wall at the same time. That's when radio stations started to just play hip hop. They put the house and techno on late night. Jeff Mills was on, but playing music at double it's speed.

Tajh: What was your perspective on the whole Jits versus Prep thing? Where did you fall in that?

Eddie: Oh I was a Prep all day. To me preps are the East

side of Detroit and the Jits are the West side. When the BKs (Black Killers) and the Errol Flynn's started doing they dance, they was jittin. Everybody was dressed up back then. They had on dress shoes and jingle boots. It started with the East side gangs and spread over to the West side. A lot of Black kid's parents were like, "Hey leave that shit alone." They became Preps. Kids who went off to college were the preppy kids.

Tajh: Was there really no co-mingling of Preps and Jits except for the DJs and the producers? What side do you think had more influence on techno music?

Eddie: I think there were a few Jits going to Prep parties, but the West side cats had a whole different style of music. The East side cats were stuck on older, stuck in the past. With the West side, even my Uncle was playing more progressive music. Jazz, The Time, Grover Washington, Earth Wind & Fire, then Funkadelic came in and took over the whole town. When Run DMC came in it was on both sides. People mixed rap with the Eurythmics (new wave), things like that.

I met Juan at Eastern Michigan. He grew up on the West side but lived on the East side. Derrick May was a downtown kid, which was preppy. I didn't know Kevin Saunderson at the time. I was big in the party scene on the west side before I met them. Sherwood Forest, University District, and Palmer Park were neighborhoods where kids parents had some money. Those three areas were where the whole backyard Preppy/6 Mile shit started for our age group. Backyard parties were real important from '78-'80.

Tajh: Was there any crossover or anyone from your uncle's disco scene, for instance, that had any influence upon what y'all were doing?

Eddie: Oh yea (DJs) Ken Collier, Duane the Mixx Bradley. They were my uncle's age. They had a little twist to they shit. They were in the gay scene so their collection went a little bit deeper. My uncle was into a lot of funk and jazz. He's the one who got me into a lot of music, always showing me new music.

Tajh: Did you know John Collins (Underground Resistance) back then?

Eddie: I met John at Cheeks (night club.)

Tajh: He was a resident there right?

Eddie: I can't remember. The only people I remember there were Al Ester and John, but I used to go there man. I was mainly listening to new records and looking for hot girls. I didn't really pay attention to who was playing.

Tajh: How much awareness did you have of what was going on in the Chicago scene at the time?

Eddie: When I went up to Western Michigan my sisters were up there too. I started hearing people play this radio station WBMX. Late night you could catch the frequencies and hear the mix shows that you couldn't hear during the daytime because there was too much interference. People would bring tapes back from Chicago. The first opportunity to go there, I got to hear Frankie Knuckles.

Everything happens for a reason. How could I know that I would stay friends with Frankie until the day he died? How could I know what I was hearing and playing as a kid would change the world? I tell my kids everything you do now will change your future. You've got to see all the angles. You have to plan ahead. I seen muthafuckas lose their minds in this business.

Tajh: That's a real thing. People paying you, feeding you drugs, feeding you alcohol and all that gets caught up real quick.

Eddie: Yeah I didn't see the drug side but I saw the ego side of it. Cats lie to get into a position and get a little success. Their ego goes crazy and they lose it. It's like they never realized the game is bigger than them. You know what I mean? You have to put in work. They want that instant gratification. They fucking lose it. I've seen some fucked up shit.

Tajh: Last thing, let's say a best case scenario happens. You became the head of entertainment and nightlife in Detroit. You have a full budget. What are some of the first things you would do to change the industry?

Eddie: If you want to change the nightlife in Detroit, you

have to control the radio waves. You've got to have a radio station because you can hit the masses. People say they don't listen to the radio. That's bullshit. When you turn on the car, you're going to hear some shit. The radio station would be a podcast too. That's the first thing I would do because that would manifest so many changes around here.

I would make sure I had the right people playing the music too. You would have to have at least ten to twelve years behind the turntables. Your music collection should go far, it should be able to take people on journeys. If your collection is too small, only place you taking people is to the bathroom when they are drunk.

If you don't know your market, you don't know yourself. The best DJs older than me were gay. So you got acclimated to their style you learn how to play both sides of the fence. I was the first Detroit person to play at Panorama Bar. The place had only been open a few years. People were trying to figure out what I was playing and it was all vinyl, old school Detroit shit. That's why I say the older the DJ the badder the music. The young kids will disagree with you, but that's why their shit sounds flatline. They have no peaks and valleys. If you get to a certain age and you're DJ'ing, people will love you because you can take them on a journey.

Tajh: How can we keep up with your projects?

Eddie: All of my music is on all major platforms like Beatport, Traxsource, Apple music, Spotify, etc. Vinyl is available on my Bandcamp under Eddie Fowlkes.

Tajh: The "AK1" track on the DEQ compilation (part 2), how did it come about?

Eddie: I caught a nice groove and decided to name it AK1. Ace is my wife and I am the king. My daughters are the 1s so I just abbreviated everything. No reference to guns. I come in peace.

Tajh: What is the name of your favorite smoothie?

Eddie: I call it "Keep It Moving." It has kale, spinach, pineapple, ginger, blueberries, strawberries, basil (for thought process.) You'll be surprised how much basil helps your memory functions.



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SUNDIATA O.M.

THE LIFE STORY OF AN UNSUNG DETROIT LEGEND



PERCUSSIONIST

CULTURAL LEADER

COMMUNITY BUILDER

"I'm from Detroit. I'm from the bowels of the vortex. You can put the skyline of Detroit and put it in two blocks of New York City. You can put the skyline of Detroit and put it in half a block of Chicago. These places have population. These places have location. Detroit might not have all those things, but one thing it indubitably has, is energy."

Sundiata and I met back in 2016 at the Detroit Electronic Music Festival, right as I moved to Detroit from my hometown of Montreal. He has been a dear friend of mine ever since. He is a powerful and unwavering community builder for artists and musicians in Detroit and beyond. He is a well of knowledge when it comes to Black American cultural and musical history at large. In his words, "If you don't know where you came from, it is difficult to know where you are going."

In his decades-long career, Sundiata has tapped into pretty much every aspect of the performing arts: percussion in all its forms, vocals, acting, dance, composing and producing music, choreography, stage directing, light and sound design, event curation, record label ownership, artist management, photography, and videography. All the while being a family man, a husband (Fausta Britton), and a father to nine beautiful children: Latonya, Naeemah, Nickie, Sulaman, Dorian, Rashid, Lon, Malik, and Hassan, who tragically passed in 2012. May he Rest in Paradise.

Sundiata's life story offers an enlightening lens into Detroit's dense music and theatre history since the 60s and its impact on the rest of the world. He has been directly involved in the making of major musical movements such as, classical, jazz, African, Latin, r&b, rock, funk, pop, hip hop, house, and Detroit Techno. He has paved the way for other artists to thrive for generations to come. And yet, one cannot easily look up his impactful life story online or read a book, let alone, an article about it. This magazine feature serves as a first step to remedying this situation. But before diving into his story, here are some of the projects that Sundiata is currently working on:

- The reality TV show, "The Show Goes On", produced by Rashid Mausi about the ins and outs of show business, in which Sundiata stars as one of the main characters.
- An Instructional book: "Add Water and Stir: How to Produce a Concert of 5000 Seats or Less." It should be getting published soon.
- The Beneficiaries' (Jeff Mills, Eddie Fowlkes, and Jessica

Care Moore) album, "The Crystal City is Alive" released in 2020, features Sundiata's percussion performance is highlighted on track #2: "People."

- His band, Kingdom, featuring Lanar "Kern" Brantley on the bass (worked with Beyonce, Lady Gaga, J.J. Linn), Rainman Gaston on the drums (performs with singer Charlie Wilson), Derrick Benford on the keys (brother to Vassal Benford, Music Mogul), Sundiata O.M. on percussions, and L'Renee on vocals. The band produces international music with a groove.

- A completed remix of "Prosperity" by his son Malik Mausi, whom he also collaborates with on their record label Mavaka Music.

- Upcoming remixes of Kingdom's track "Prosperity" by Alton Miller, Stacey Hotwaxx Hale, and Glenn Underground.

- "Prosperity" - The inspiration for "Prosperity" stems from a London-based band, called Dego & Kaidi, which produces, in the band's words, "Black Music." Kingdom strives to create the Detroit version of Black Music through "Prosperity."

- Collaborations on upcoming track releases with Delano Smith and Ron Trent.

It is needless to say that the past couple of years have been quite an adventure. From the COVID-19 global pandemic, to nationwide protests waged against injustice, to numerous natural disasters and manifestations of the mounting climate crisis, to a major presidential election, the struggle to protect basic human rights worldwide is an ongoing one. As a COVID-19 survivor, Sundiata has pursued his relentless journey as a cultural leader and artist. He has continued to spread Love and Hope to the people of the world.

"Facts are facts. The truth is the truth. And in the past two years, we have been experiencing a real war between truth and falsehood. Between justice and injustice. But for me, I see it as a blessing to be in this point in history to witness all the changes taking place in the universe."

Let us now go back in time to get a better picture of how influential Sundiata's artistic work has been and of how he has gotten to this present creative point.

Sundiata Oba Mausi was born in Detroit, Michigan and has lived on and off in the city his whole life. He has nine siblings (four brothers and five sisters). He comes from an educated and artistically accomplished Black family. His mother, a native Detroiter, was a classically trained keyboardist, who played with world-renowned jazz artists Tommy Fla-

nagan and Berry Harris. Sundiata's father was an electrical contractor and the second Black man in the entire state of Michigan to acquire the title. He moved to Detroit from Arkansas at the age of 14 as part of the Great Migration.

Sundiata was exposed early on to the world of the performing arts, as a member the "Mausi Acting Company", his family's self-titled theatre company, which was so successful, that PBS flew out of Boston to do a feature on them. Archival materials of the company's work can be found at the Detroit Public Library in the Hackley Collection.

Moreover, as explained by Sundiata, "Everyone was musically inclined in my family. Every single one of us played an instrument. My mother had a goal: 'Learn an instrument and get a degree'. She knew that music was the key to a broader understanding of life." Sundiata's first instrument was the trumpet. Through playing it, he began his training in musical theory. During that same time, he was also part of Mumford high school's r&b band, Bobby Franklin's Insanity. He was the first person to play bongos on stage in a Detroit high school. In short, he was raised and trained by patron of the arts, a Black family that, in his words "has made a major contribution to the artistic development of Detroit."

However, at age 14, now in the mid-60s, Sundiata left home, due to some disagreements with his mother. "Back then, you could be 14 and walk the streets of Detroit," he said, "I found work where I could, but my path was music." While working day jobs as a newfound father, and while running two after-hour joints to get by, Sundiata continued pursuing his passion for the drums. After losing a close friend to police violence, he decided to get himself through high school by pulling 17-hour days of studying and working nights.

"I don't remember where, I saw an orange and red Conga. I don't remember how, but it became my instrument of choice," he recalled, "The Conga drum is native to Cuba and I personally discovered the Conga when it was being popularized by Motown groups and national groups in the 60s. They added the Conga because it had that beat." In that vein, Sundiata further built his experience as a hand drummer by performing at famous local clubs like Club Mozambique, Baker's Keyboard Lounge, and Henry's Cocktail Lounge with world-class acts like Donny Hathaway, John Blair, as well as, Sequence and Finesse, and The O' Jays. "I ended up playing with the bands that needed a percussionist," Sundiata explained, "Detroit was live back then. There

were so many places to play. To go and be seen. There was a music renaissance happening in the city."

In the midst of his accruing experience as a drummer and due to his strong reputation in the musical community, he was invited to record with the prestigious Choker Campbell Orchestra. Choker Campbell was an American saxophonist and bandleader who was hired to be Motown Records' Musical Director. "They had me in the booth to record a song. The song started playing and it scared the sh*t out of me," Sundiata remembered with a smile, "I started to play erratically. Choker came in the booth and told me, 'Look, Sundi. Just play the pocket and you'll be fine.' I am a spiritual person, you know. I would open myself to the spirits of the ancestors and they would manifest in my drumming."

Simultaneously, Sundiata became part of the renowned Clifford Fears Dance Theatre as a percussionist. Clifford was Katherine Dunham's dance partner. He travelled the world with her company for many years, before starting his own company in Sweden. Katherine Dunham was a dancer, choreographer, author, educator, anthropologist, and social activist, who had one of the most successful dance careers in African American and European theatre in the twentieth century. As further explained by Sundiata, legendary musician Dizzie Gillespie was the first to bring a noted Conga player, Chano Pozo, from Cuba to the US. Both Dunham and Gillespie played major roles in introducing the instrument to the U.S. and to popular culture.

Sundiata will never forget his time doing rehearsals with Clifford in a space provided by Berry "Pops" Gordy Sr. (Berry Gordy's father), across the street from Motown Records on "the Boulevard." It was being run by Motown's house choreographer, Charles "Choller" Atkins for acts like Smokey Robinson and The Miracles, The Temptations, The Four Tops, The Contours, and The Supremes, to rehearse their routines. Pops Gordy invited Clifford to move back to Detroit from Stockholm where he was running his dance theatre, so that Detroit could be blessed with the presence of his world-class creative initiative.

An even more major turning point in Sundiata's emerging career as a percussionist, were his interactions with Eddie "Bongo" Brown (legendary percussionist and member of the Motown Funk Brothers.) Sundiata never fails to vividly describe a revelatory conversation he had with Mr. Brown, whom he describes as his "Main Teacher": "It was snowing

outside. I was walking down the street with my red Conga, wearing some overalls and gym shoes with no soles. I saw Eddie and stopped to ask him for advice on how to take my drumming one step further. I will never forget what he told me. 'Play with records, Sundiata. Play with records. Play with records, Sundiata. Play with records.' This piece of advice would alter his approach to percussion forever. "I was one of the first percussionists ever to perform live with DJs in the 70s," Sundiata continued, "It was part of my natural evolution as a drummer and it helped me understand the science of DJing. I was able to bridge the synthetics of the records with the live performance of the drums and to take this connection to the dance floor." Sundiata therefore believes in simplicity over being center stage as a percussionist. "It's not about playing over a track. It's not about solos. It's about playing on beat. It's about being in sync with the track." In Sundiata's words, it boils down to the following: "The DJ is the conductor of the orchestra and the percussionists must follow the conductor's cues closely in order to be in harmony with the other musicians".

In the backdrop of Sundiata's personal life as an artist, was a deeply impactful socio-historic period of time, which affected he and everyone around him. Sundiata was at the heart of the Detroit riots, which broke out in 1967. "On our way home from a party, my friends and I witnessed the riots pop off on the corner of Clairmount and 12th street that early morning of July 23rd 1967," he explained, "That was a wild and dangerous four days. A lot of people were injured and killed. And I will always remember an elderly White woman standing by the Catholic Seminary on the corner of Linwood Street and Chicago Boulevard, yelling 'You're desecrating Christ.' in response to my friends and I painting a statue of Jesus dark BROWN! The riots constituted an emotional aneurism of people fed up with the oppression," Sundiata concluded.

Shortly thereafter, Sundiata became one of the first Black Panthers in Detroit. In 1968, he and five others drove to Ann Arbor in his car. They had a meeting with Kathleen Cleaver, David Hillard, The Minister of Defense of the Black Panther Party, and a few other Panthers from California. They were made Panthers that very same day. Sundiata has always been a very politicized artist. He has always used his art as a vehicle to mobilize people and to share wisdom with them. To him, Art and Society are two parts of one whole. They simply cannot be separated.

Sundiata's already experienced-filled life underwent a new shift in 1970. "I was rehearsing with Clifford when my brother, who was a principle dancer for the dance theatre, suggested we audition for Hair. There were so many fine women. That's why I went." Hair was a cutting edge equity musical written by Gerome Ragni and James Rado. It premiered Off-Broadway in 1967. It was a product of the hippie counterculture and the sexual revolution of the late 1960s. It became a cultural landmark for the anti-Vietnam War peace movement. "I was wearing a cape, a bandana, a black beret, with a bunch of buttons all over my outfit," Sundiata remembered, "The writers of Hair asked me, 'Why don't you audition? You look the part.' I said, 'I'll audition if you feed everyone in here. And they did!'" Sundiata got a part in the musical that same day.

It was during this his time performing in Hair that Sundiata met Meat Loaf, renowned American singer, songwriter, producer, movie star, who was also hired to perform in this touring rendition of the musical. They remained dear friends across the decades, so much that Meat Loaf texted Sundiata at 9:00 p.m. just hours before passing away on January 20, 2022. He will be sorely missed. May he Rock in Heaven. After coming back to Detroit from the road in 1971, Sundiata pursued his travels first to Chicago - where he performed with Frank Zappa at the "Playboy Club," then to L.A., and finally to NYC, before returning to Detroit in 1976, where he continued to build his profile as an artistic leader and innovator. In 1977, he performed percussions live with DJ John Berry, a Boston House and Disco DJ, who was known for performing with four turntables. This initial partnership with Berry, which was one of a kind at that time, was at the source of a long series of musical collaborations with world-class DJs and music producers, such as Derrick May, Juan Atkins, Eddie Fowlkes, Kevin Saunderson, Jeff Mills, Mike Banks, Alton Miller, Delano Smith, Norm Talley, Mike Clark "Agent X", Chez Damier, Ron Trent, etc.

Parallel to that, Sundiata was the creator of Sundiata O.M.'s Drum Squad, an all-female hand drumming and percussionist group in Detroit. "This was revolutionary because there were no female drum groups in Detroit at the time," Sundiata explained. "We would do shows, collaborate with DJs and bands, and perform a cappella. We even performed at some of Emily Gail's "Fun Runs" in Downtown Detroit back in the late 70s. We really played all over the place."

Around the same time, Sundiata joined hands with Kim

Weston (renowned Motown recording artist) in 1977 to conceive the “Festival of the Performing Arts”, which featured hundreds of artists such as, James Carter (saxophonist), The Boone Brothers (r&b vocalists), Kern Brantley (world-renowned bassist), Valdez Brantley (keyboardist and musical director), The John Brothers (r&b singers and sons of Little Willie John), Tracey McGee and the Jitterbugs (“Pioneers of the Jit”), and Lisa McCall (Choreographer for Aretha Franklin.) As one of the leaders of this summer youth program for many years, Sundiata wore many hats, most notably that of musical and artistic director. “The festival played a major part in the creative development of many young Detroit artists”, he explained, “It provided them with key opportunities to perform live and to perfect their craft.”

September 7th 1980 marked yet another turning point in Sundiata’s career. As part of the musical group Nebulae, composed of Kern Brantley, Vassal Benford and himself, they signed a record deal with Don Davis, owner of United Sounds Recording Studio. Nebulae, a cutting-edge pop jazz band, was a Detroit favorite at the time and performed in many clubs throughout the city. It unfortunately had to disband soon after the deal was signed. In Sundiata’s words, “Despite this disappointment, the experience planted the seeds in me of wanting something different.”

That is why he came up with the idea of creating O M Studios out of his basement in 1981. It provided a space for local artists to record their music. He signed 65 acts over the years, such as, Queendom, Dance Class, and Q and Q. “Some of these artists went on to do great things,” Sundiata explained. A few years later, in the mid 80s, he and Dave “Hump the Grinder” Humphreys cofounded Hair Wars, an African American hair design show that gathers world-class hair entertainers to showcase their wild creations.

Following that train of thought, let us not forget to mention Sundiata’s direct involvement with techno and hip hop cultures, which were beginning to flourish in Detroit as of the early 80s. “I’ve been blessed with beautiful children, but for the purpose of this article, I wish to speak of my oldest son Hassan Malik Mausi, born in the 70s and raised for the first part of his life in Brooklyn, NYC. He made me aware of the artists involved in techno/house and hip hop in Detroit. Hassan was one of the most beautiful souls on the Earth. He was an incredibly gifted dancer, artist, and music producer, with a keen eye for fashion.” Tragically, Hassan fell victim to gun violence and passed away on February 15, 2012,





having already left behind a major legacy for the Detroit community and beyond.

Hassan was lead dancer and choreographer for Inner City, first house group to make the genre accessible to the mainstream. "Through Hassan, I became tight with Kevin, Derrick, Stacey (Pullen), and Juan. I met Fowlkes later down the line. They were friends to my son and Earth Children to me. I was like everybody's Dad." Sundiata even toured the U.S. with Inner City, alongside his son and local dance legend, Kafani "Theo" Ibrahim Cesse.

Moreover, as did his father in the world of percussion and the performing arts, Hassan made a huge contribution to hip hop in Detroit. Inspired by New York's legendary Soul Kitchen, he, Maurice Malone, and Jerome Mongo co-developed the idea of the Rhythm Kitchen, an epicenter for the rap music club scene of the early 90s in Detroit. It had a major influence on Maurice Malone's creation of the Hip Hop Shop on Seven Mile, where such acts as Eminem, Slum Village, Proof, D-12 were battling and performing. Sundiata never fails to remind the people around him of the importance of his son's legacy and work, so as to make sure that no one forgets and so his history lives on.

Sundiata's deep bond with his son and by extension his network of trend-setting friends, segues us into Sundiata's life as a performing artist in the electronic dance world. In 1993, he moved to Atlanta and began performing shows with Little John Roberts's band, The Chronicle, one of the city's leading funk jazz bands, for five years. In 1994, through his friendship with Kai Alc , Sundiata got together with Ron Trent and Chez Damier to cut tracks on their up and coming Chicago-based House record label Prescription Records. Between 1995 and 2006 and throughout the release of their tracks – "Come Together" (1994), "Make It Happen Make It Right" (1996), "Paradise" (2000)- Sundiata toured the US, Europe, and Japan to promote them. Additionally, in May of 2000, Sundiata and Umar Bin Hassan from the Original Last Poets, were invited by Derrick May to close the very first Detroit Electronic Music Festival. It is estimated that one million people came to the festival that weekend. The following year, his musical group, OM Experience, an eleven-piece house music band formed in the 90s, performed at DEMF for the first time.

One cannot however, overlook the fact that all throughout his career as a performing artist, Sundiata was also extremely active as a production arts specialist. He had acquired his foundational experience from his background in theatre. He

did everything from sound engineering, back line, lighting, set design, stage management, production coordination, and stage construction. He did production work on tour for artists and legends, such as Gladys Knight, Barry White, The Isley Brothers, Kool & the Gang, Morris Day and the Time, The Pointer Sisters, The Gap Band, Isaac Hayes, and many more. Not to mention, he was production stage manager for Aaliyah until she fell victim to a tragic plane accident in 2001. "I maintained a high standard for 'Roadies of Color'," Sundiata concluded on that topic, "And I worked with the best." Beyond touring nationally and internationally for years, Sundiata also worked as Production Coordinator locally at the Aretha Franklin Amphitheatre (formerly known as Chene Park) for the past 18 years, doing production for almost 90% of the shows that played the venue.

"At the end of the day, my life is all based on drumming and my love of music," he said assertively. "Remember, you are talking to a person who just loved to play. I was everywhere doing all kinds of stuff." Sundiata never stuck to one thing. He has always been in search of new knowledge and skills, especially in the realm of hand drumming, which allowed him the opportunity to play with major musical acts such as, The Floaters, Parliament Funkadelic, The Dramatics, The Supremes, Roy Ayers, Keith Washington, Wendy Molton, and Aretha Franklin. He also trail-blazed and paved the way for hand drummers to receive more recognition as career musicians. For instance, he was the first percussionist ever to be paid by major Detroit universities, such as Wayne State University and Merry Grove College, for his drum accompaniments.

"I see myself in the present," Sundiata stated, "I cherish those who have helped me get to this point." His selfless approach to making music, as well as his deep desire to create opportunities for other artists to succeed, serve to explain why his career has not really been foregrounded in the historical canon of the city. In his words, "Hand drummers were a different kind of group. Many great composers and arrangers have no idea how to orchestrate percussion. During slavery, slave owners knew drums were a mode of communication for the enslaved. If you played the drums, you would be killed. . . Bill Summers, world-renowned percussionist from Detroit, who has worked with legendary acts like Herbie Hancock and the Head Hunters, as well as Quincy Jones, is a great friend of mine. We have a saying together, 'Hand drummers are the Ni**as of the music world. Last ones hired. First ones fired, and always mis-

understood. But let's not forget," he continued, "that the hand drum is the first instrument after the voice. The drum itself evolved from Africa to the Caribbean and the Western hemisphere. There has been a new sound and I have been part of the evolution of that sound. We hand drummers baptized it 'The Detroit Rhythm' or the 'Drumba.' It makes people pop. It makes people wanna dance."

Needless is it to say that a short article such as this one can only really glaze the surface of Sundiata's life story and influence on Detroit's global cultural canon. The work must be continued. "Detroit is a place of hard hustles," he explained, "just like the factories and the living conditions. You have to go hard in order to achieve anything in life here. If you can survive in Detroit, you can survive anywhere in the world . . . Detroit is on the cutting edge of creativity due to its position on the planet (that is, its geographical latitude and longitude). It is an important portal for human spirituality and human relations. Its influence as an artistic and cultural center is known by people all over the world."

Stay tuned for the release of Sundiata's upcoming projects on his Facebook page (Sundiata O M Mausi) and YouTube channel (Sundiata O M).

Kingdom's "Prosperity" is available on all major music outlets: YouTube, iTunes, Tidal, Amazon Music, Spotify.

Intro to past projects, performances, and collaborations

Various genres & artistic collaborations featuring Sundiata on percussion:

- Hastings Street Jazz Experience – Yes Lord (1976)
- Lamont Johnson - Music of the Sun (1978)
- Doug Carn – Al Rahman! Cry of the Floridian Tropic Son (1977)
- Inner City - Pennies from Heaven (1992)
- Fall Down (Spirit of Love) – Tramaine (1985)

Prescription Records track releases with Sundiata vocals and percussion:

- Come Together (1994)
- Make It Happen Make It Right (1996)
- Paradise (2000)

* Look up Sundiata O M Experience on YouTube to view live performances from O M Experience at Detroit Electronic Music Festival and at other major events from the early 2000s onwards.



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Twenty Years of Techno - established in Detroit 2002

Hess + Hess:

**Tales from deep inside
the Detroit techno laboratory**

For over 25 years and running, Luke and Jeff Hess have been part of Detroit's electronic music family. Growing up on the city's eastside, the brothers - Jeff is older by one-and-a-half years - have collected the right records, played them out as DJs, attended historically significant parties in factory (Packard Plant) and club (Motor) spaces, released music on local and international labels and traveled the world under the banner of Detroit techno and house music.

Luke has impressive affiliations: his productions have appeared on Omar S's FXHE imprint (also based on Detroit's eastside), Echocord in Denmark and the brothers' own DeepLabs label, among others.

Jeff's credits aren't as long but he's always been there in support - spiritually, if not physically - of Luke's touring schedule, which has taken him to Europe, Asia and down under to Australia and New Zealand.

The operative word for what makes Luke and Jeff Hess tick is 'deep.' The music is sourced from powers that come from deep within, a near-sacred space where love, beauty and spirituality all comele, the results expressed and shared on the dancefloor.



WW: You grew up 1.5 years apart in age on the eastside of Detroit. Share a memory of what it was like, connect it to some inspiration for the music you both ended up doing.

Luke: Growing up on the eastside of Detroit there was a sense of neighborhood grit - we were always anticipating something exciting happening - things were always on the verge of dangerous - and we definitely pushed the limits of healthy mischief.

Jeff: I'll tell you a story of two moments we lived through to give you some context on our relationship and a typical day on the eastside of Detroit. When I was 12 and Luke was 10 we were at a neighborhood park. An older bully in the neighborhood we knew in passing who was 15 years old along with his posse of five accused me of talking crap about his mom.

They had the intention of beating me up, but Luke had a knife and has the gift of negotiation and I was fast. I ran away and Luke talked them down and we made it through. Fast forward about 10 years. We came into a similar situation at a rave party at 7 mile and Gratiot. About 5 a.m. we were walking out of the party and Luke asked for a cigarette from a guy in the street. We didn't notice the seven guys on the porch in the background.

Before we knew what was happening, Luke was hit by a pipe, and then beat down for about 5-10 minutes by the small army on the porch, and somehow he was able to get up and run away. Meanwhile I was able to escape with the girls we were with and prepare my car and was shouting for Luke to run toward me and get in the car - I didn't think two against eight were the best odds so I did my best to create a getaway plan.

By the grace of God, Luke made it into the car and we drove away, watching through the window as the guys were pulling guns from their trunk. Luke was pretty busted up for a few weeks, but somehow we made it out to tell the tale.

Luke: To bring context to these stories, our life growing up on the eastside was a bit wild, but under the circumstances Jeff and I formed very strong bonds and kinship at an early age - we knew we could count on each other for anything - and that continues until this day. Our Detroit adventures and nights out exploring music helped to infuse a depth, rawness, and sense of anticipation to our sound.

WW: What kinds of music did you listen to back then? Was there an evolutionary process getting into Detroit techno and house?

Jeff: My first musical influences were inspired by long road trips on family vacations. We had a select rotating playlist that my dad would play over and over. Though most were

eclectic, the albums that stood out to me were the ones with the weirdest sounds. Yello's Stella stood out to me as the album that pushed me into electronic music.

Luke: We also watched a lot of Transformers and Hanna-Barbera cartoons, E.T., Star Wars, Labyrinth, Never Ending Story, Dark Crystal, Dune, Enemy Mine, etc. that pushed the boundaries with field recordings, otherworldly sounds, fantasy, creativity, and somehow making the impossible possible.

Jeff: At some point we both started listening to electronic music and diving into Plastikman, Derrick May, Underground Resistance compilations, and Tresor compilations.

Luke: Right around that time we also started going to warehouse parties in the mid-90s together and I started taking trips to Record Time and collecting Rob Hood, Jeff Mills, Maurizio, Plus 8, Deepchord, and various other techno/house records... those were the 'glory' days.

WW: What in particular inspired you in the Detroit scene? Were there any memorable parties from your formative years?

Luke: Jeff and I were both lucky enough to come up in the mid-90's warehouse scene before things became more mainstream. We frequented venues like the Packard, Under the Bridge Space, the Theater, Better Days, the Warehouse, the Firehouse, Bagley Optical, Safeway, Mack & Bellevue, the Chop Shop, Tangent Gallery, etc. Pretty much every weekend during sophomore, junior and senior year of high school we would be searching for the best party in Detroit. Of course, Richie Hawtin parties left a lasting impression on how to transform a space and his marathon sets transported you to another dimension.

Jeff: Next, Motor Lounge (in Hamtramck) quickly became our understanding of what an established international club scene could look like. We were anti-mainstream mainly because of the trouble our peers were getting into; we just wanted to hear good music. Parties at that time were becoming increasingly shady towards the late 90s, and after the police crackdowns, we took to the clubs. I had a Motor Lounge card so I would pretty much go there to study every week and listen to music at the same time. We would also go to Amsterdam Lounge on the weekends in Windsor - when we were lucky we would catch Minx among other solid house DJs. There were still a lot of international acts coming into Detroit during that time at various venues, so we just kept our ear to the ground.

WW: You also have a cosmopolitan quality to your sound. There's bass, dub and rave music from all over the planet blended in there. Where did that come from for you guys?

Luke: Our childhood musical influences and underground musical influences taught us to take chances. Listening to 12 hours of Richie Hawtin and his Decks EFX & 909 concept, to Jeff Mills, Rob Hood, Derrick May, Heckle & Jeckle on the decks - there really is no limit to soundscapes and palates to draw from. I've also had the privilege and humbling experience of traveling the world to DJ - Berghain and Tresor in Berlin, Fabric in London, Batofa, Concrete and Rex in Paris, Vent in Tokyo, Pal and Golden Pudel in Hamburg, Sirup in Zagreb, Lux and Gare in Portugal, ENTER. at Ibiza. Also festivals like Peacock in Paris, Decibel in Seattle, Dimensions in Croatia, Sonar in Barcelona, ADE in Amsterdam and Movement in Detroit.

WW: Wow, that's some list...

Luke: Each of these clubs, festivals, and creative spaces have also had a huge impact on my sound and what is possible when gathering together to enjoy music. Jeff was able to come with me for rave support on several of my international adventures, which left a lasting impression on him as well.

Jeff: Growing up, we loved 80s music, hip hop, trip hop, jungle, drum & bass, ambient, dub, techno, acid and house, but I think we are drawn towards melody and soul. Also, our engineering background challenges us to a higher production standard (which by no means are we masters at yet, just wide-eyed students). We challenge each other to push the boundaries of our sound in the studio. I think we're both very drawn to the 'second wave' of Detroit techno, but our musical palates have grown over the years and we love all other influences of sound from nature to jazz music and everything in between.

WW: Luke, take us through your trajectory from around the time Reference (with Brian Kage/Baretta music) got going in 2007-08 to releases on FXHE to the Danish imprint Echocord, notable for its impressive dub techno output.

Luke: I started collecting records in 1997. I bought my first set of turntables in 1998. I was literally making mixtapes in my basement and obsessed with technical long blends, and tight mixing techniques for several years before I played my first gig. I believe Franki (DJ 3000) released my first DJ mix as a UR promo mix that he added in with record orders. I didn't get connected to Beretta until about 2005. Brian helped me learn production software at that time and we played a lot of parties together in Detroit and around the US. I quickly started researching and collecting analog synths and drum machines, searching for a more raw, deep, and experimental sound that reflected my taste and my record collection.

I made my first demo in 2007 and passed it on to Seth Troxler who at the time worked at Melodies & Memories and was

part of the Beretta crew. Unknowingly, he passed my demo to Omar S who called me the next day and asked if I wanted to release my demo on FXHE. After that record, I had a lot more opportunities to release music from international and domestic labels and things took off quickly. Kenneth Christiansen from Echocord in Denmark was a big supporter of my sound at that time and we became like family over the next several years playing parties together in Europe and staying in close contact. I was already comfortable behind the decks, so I was super excited to start DJing more frequently internationally.

WW: Talk about what it's like to produce original music and also perform as a DJ. Not every producer has the taste, timing or technical skills it takes to do both.

Luke: DJing comes a bit more naturally to me since I've been collecting music for much longer than I've been creating it. I've spent many more hours researching, collecting, practicing DJing, recording mixes, and playing shows than I have producing records. I absolutely respect and love the craft of DJing and performance - the energy, experiences and community that builds around this art is extremely rewarding and it's truly a dream come true to travel and play music for like-minded people.

However, production is equally as fascinating and it takes me to a much deeper place. I find that inspiration is a bit more elusive while producing music than DJing, since there is no physical and direct feedback. Any trained and seasoned producer or engineer can apply their own personal tricks and techniques developed over time to create music. However, creating standout and inspired music takes a lot of deep diving into the soul and tapping into a true source of inspiration. I still have a lot to learn, but also have a lot more to say with both my musical production and my musical performance. I really enjoy working on music with my brother since there is so much freedom in experimentation, but we also challenge each other to grow as artists and engineers and to squeeze the most out of our creative process.

Jeff: I haven't had the same amount of musical output as Luke but have loved supporting his performances and productions from the beginning. I have collected analog gear over time and focused on creating a compact, yet diverse live set up with a modular synth, hardware sequencer, hardware sampler, and choice analog drum machines, tabletop synths, and effects units. I also keep a small more experimental studio setup around for our collaboration projects.

Luke and I are constantly in the studio together working on music and we look forward to releasing a long play body of work in the near future.

WW: What DJ sets have you witnessed that rocked your world?

Jeff: I would say many of the Motor sets informed me most, Robert Hood, Rolando, Jeff Mills, and T-1000 to name a few. I would just lose myself. Richie Hawtin at Control 1 at City Club was another standout event.

Luke: There are so many memorable sets that shape my vision for what a great DJ set can be.... Richie Hawtin Decks FX & 909 12 hour set at the Works. Donato Dozzy's DJ set at Panorama Bar Berlin. XDB at Inner Varnika in Australia. Mike Huckaby and Derrick May at Movement Festival in Detroit. Joel Mull at Kontrol in San Francisco. Rob Hood at various warehouse parties in Detroit. Marcel Dettmann at Berghain in Berlin. Jeff Mills' set as The Wizard. Supporting and watching Jeff (Hess) play live with an all analog set up at the DeepLabs party earlier this year... far too many to list, I guess.

WW: How about your own live performances. Any that stand out?

Luke: I never thought I would play in the places I've played or travel where I've traveled. I'm truly thankful and humbled for each experience. A great deal of thought and preparation is poured into every gig I'm invited to when organizing music. Some memorable shows that stand out are Movement Festival in Detroit - always and forever. Playing Berghain five times and Panoramabar five times was incredible - each performance at that club is so special and so different. A personal goal was to play an all vinyl set at Berghain for my 4-hour slot and that felt extremely good!

Tresor is also an amazing club to play, and I've had equally as many great memories there. Playing the Moat stage in an old castle at Dimensions Festival in Croatia; playing Awakenings Festival and taking the stage after Rob Hood in the Netherlands to 10,000 people was strangely awesome and exciting; playing parties in the south of Italy with my dear friends there in the middle of an olive tree grove; Culture Box with my Copenhagen family is always a good time; playing a small festival in New Zealand was incredible because I've always wanted to go to New Zealand in general; Bassiani in (the Republic of) Georgia was intense and incredible; DJing on a boat in the middle of Paris - Batofar and Concrete - so dope. And, lastly, every show I've ever played in Japan because the people there are so appreciative and kind and up for an adventure in sound. Again, I could go on because there are so many standout experiences to list and so many I'm leaving out.

Jeff: As Luke mentioned, I recently played live at our DeepLabs 'Vent' party at TV Lounge, which was a very standout

moment and milestone for what I've been working towards. Every opportunity playing live with modular gear and an all analog set up is such an adventure and a learning experience, but the challenge is very rewarding. We're planning our next DeepLabs party for later this year so stay tuned!

WW: I've spent the day listening to your mixes and original tunes on SoundCloud. Luke, at the beginning of the Observatory Series podcast you prepare the listener for the "deep techno" to come. What does the word 'deep' mean to each of you?

Jeff: Deep is definitely a recurring theme in our music. It's where we work out some of the most difficult issues we face - through the creative process. Music is more than an escape from angst and chaos - it allows us to connect, encourage, heal and to love more. Creating deep music is a lasting process; it's life giving.

Luke: Deep calls unto deep at the noise of Your waterfalls; All Your waves and billows have gone over me. The Lord will command His loving kindness in the daytime, And in the night His song shall be with me - a prayer to the God of my life.' - Psalms 42:7-8 NKJV
The term 'deep' describes the unsearchable places and voids of our soul that only God can fill, heal, and make whole.

WW: What's next? In terms of music? In terms of life?

Luke: Two very special EPs are in the queue for this year (if all goes well with production and manufacturing) on a couple of my favorite labels that I've worked with in the past - I'm not sure I can reveal them just yet but stay tuned! My brother and I have a track contribution for the DEQ label titled "The Dance Room" - a track owed to Mike Huckaby. I have a remix coming on the Primary Colours label from Australia for my good friend Resoe, which is in pre-sale stages now. I have a new collaboration coming with Thor from Thule records in Iceland, and another release with my brother coming out on DeepLabs soon also. I have a career as an electrical engineer, and a full joyful family life at home, so musical output can sometimes be sporadic.

Jeff: We've been working with the idea of playing live together also, something we've already started. I plan on using the live stems in future releases for our joint projects and my own DeepLabs releases. I have a full life with an awesome wife and six kids, raising them is my priority. Along with my career as a nurse anesthetist, I'm happily busy most of the time, but always eager to work on DeepLabs experiments!

Freelance journalist Walter Wasacz is a frequent contributor to Detroit Electronic Quarterly

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TECHMARINE
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FEEDERS

I think you'll agree that getting into the music business is a true labor of love. It's living on the edge, hours and hours of trial and error, listening, learning, promoting, hoping, praying, practicing on repeat. I think you'll also agree that for most of us, the breakthrough can only take you so far and constant re-imagining is essential. We always need to be looking to the future to not only grow creatively, but to attract new people to the fan base.

The Techmarine Bottom Feeders are the duo of Paris the Black Fu (of the Detroit Grand PuBahs) and Luxus Varta (Emeric Di Paolo.) Both gentlemen have solo careers in music, however they joined forces in 2019 for their first EP on EPM Music called The Vision and followed up in 2020 with The Proud Traitor.

DEQ: Hey guys! Congrats on all the success with Techmarine Bottom Feeders! How did you both meet?

P: Hey Yo! Thanks for that, we're really excited about the project. We met just after I moved to Geneva. I was wandering around seeing what was available in the new neighborhood. Luxus Varta was working at a CD/DVD shop at the time, I walked in and we just hit it off from the very beginning. We started talking music and movies and what have you and our friendship took off from there. I'm not sure when we started actually working together, but I think we had a good foundation musically speaking and a mutual respect for one another that allowed for artistic expression.

LV: Hey, thanks for the invitation, nice to be part of the record! I remember it was around 2006, just before the third album of Detroit Grand PuBahs Nuttin' Butt Funk. Paris was looking for a drummer to play on some tracks.

DEQ: Do you both have specific roles in the duo?

P: Kinda, sorta, but not really. Either one of us starts a sketch of a track and sends it to the other. If that person feels they can add something and does, then that person sends it back to the first person. If the first person likes what the second person did then the person gives the OK and receives the files from the second person. Then the first person continues to work if necessary. I usually get all of the files in either case because I'm the one who usually mixes the tracks... so I guess this is where the "kinda sorta" comes in since I mix? Does that make sense?

LV: Yes that makes sense to me :) Paris has got the right ears to mix TBF, his electro background is essential for the sound of the project.

DEQ: What is the story behind TBF?

P: I had the idea while living in Detroit before the PuBahs formed. I've always had the thought of the world being ruined by scientists tampering with things they really don't know about...changing the DNA and gene structure. Then all the people in power and the rich decide to leave the planet earth, taking a sizable chunk with them. They pay off the farmers by buying their farms and handing them over to the scientists to continue manipulating food DNA, only to have an adverse effect on humans that turned them into beings that represented their area of dwelling. So, if you lived near a body of water then you started to mutate into an aquatic creature. If you lived more inland you would become more bug or cockroach like. The story is there, I just have to learn to put it down on paper. I'm taking art classes now to revive an old interest and talent.

DEQ: The name reminds me of Drexciya. Are they influences to your sound?

P: Yes and no. I used to listen to and play a lot of techno and electro and the influences are from so many different sources that, for me, it's hard to say it's just from one source. I played and listened to The Advent, Drexciya, Dopplereffekt... man who else? It's hard to recall, but all I can say is thank you for making that observance, because Drexciya is one of my top 5 favorites.

DEQ: How important is Detroit to your music?

P: I'm not sure I understand the question. If you mean, how important is it for me to sound Detroit? I can honestly say, I don't think about it. I don't start a track with the idea of sounding Detroit. I don't think anything I've ever done has had that Detroit sound. Not that I haven't tried either.

DEQ: You enlisted some Detroiters, namely sensations Aux 88 and Ectomorph to mix "Boanerges and the Watery Deep." How did they come into the fold to remix this track?

P: They came to mind. We asked. They said yes. I've been a huge fan of Aux 88 and Ectomorph for a while now. So, when they agreed I was like, this is going to be a DOPE release!

DEQ: Did you have prior relationships with Cristian Vogel, the Advent & Zein, Dadub and The Exaltics?

P: Cristian Vogel. No. The Advent & Zein. Yes and No, in that order. Dadub. No. The Exaltics. No.

DEQ: Your track “Dystopian Utopia” is on the new DEQ LP (17_18.) Can you tell us more about it?

P: Well I have another project called the Children of Radiation and the idea is that the wasteland they live in is in fact their utopia. The area was ravaged by radiation from living too close to nuclear test sites... explosion!!! And there you have it. It's like an introduction to the next project.

DEQ: What is the track that you both have made so far that most embodies TBF?

P: That's a good question! I'm not sure because they all seem to have the sound and feel that represents the story, the scenes and the characters and the mood. I really like “The Scientists Were Only Being Scientific”, “Constructing A Powerful Enemy” and “A Groundless New World,” although the whole album has its moments.

LV: “We Cannot Help You” & “The Oceanic Depths Of Jupiter” for me.

DEQ: Do you use more hardware or software in your projects?

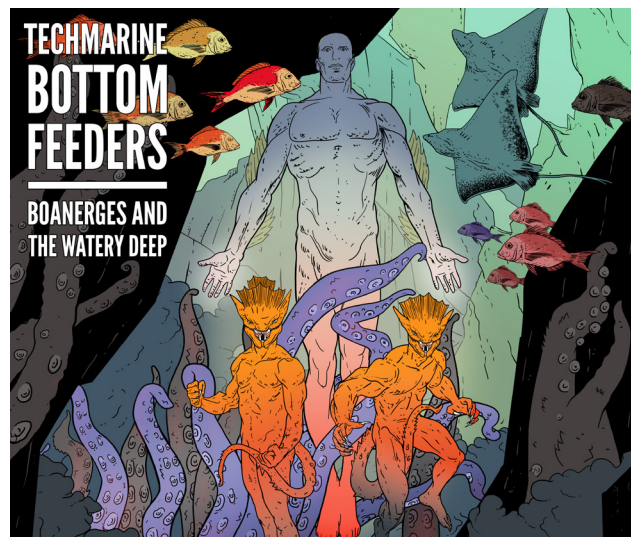
P: I use a little of both although I'm leaning more towards mostly hardware. I've got my eye on that Moog Matriarch and a few other things.

LV: Mainly hardware. I only use plugins as post-recording adjustments.

DEQ: Do you have a go to piece of gear/software that you can not be without?

P: Yes. My brain! The ideas and creative process begins and ends with the brain. I would also say for hardware my Moog Mother 32's and for software I would say U-he Repro 1 is absolutely the bomb to me.

LV: My Ensoniq Fizmo is one of my favorite synths. I always



have a surprising trip with it!

DEQ: Are you both going to tour together when this COVID madness is behind us? If yes, will it be DJ sets or live?

P: I would have to say a strong no with a weak maybe. If it happens, I'd say live.

DEQ: What's on the horizon for releases?

P: Well, we just released “S.O.S.A.D.”(same old song and dance) on Engineroom recordings and we are in the process of making the next album.

DEQ: Do you guys miss Detroit Coney Dogs?

P: Now you're making me mad! I never was a hotdog fan but those loose burgers were my thing, I could eat those things all day long. 3 with everything and a side of chili cheese fries, please!

LV: Sorry, I've never been to Detroit...but I can say that Black FU Burgers are very tasty!

DEQ: Lafayette or American Coney?

P: Lafayette. No American. No, both.



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DEQ: Congrats on all your success with Infolines. When did this idea first happen? Would you tell us more about the genesis of the project?

Ashely Worden: Ben Worden (FRANCOIS DILLINGER) and I were asked to be in charge of Infolines branding in the fall of 2018. At that time, there wasn't even a name for the label. It was just a dream child that Alex Drazin (ADMN) really wanted us to be a part of. I was working on an underground collection and one of the pieces that I had sketched was the Packard Plant with a faceless body that personally represented my own youth and rebellion. I think the piece spoke to Alex and his partners Mike Petrack and Aran Daniels (Remote Viewing Party) in a way that got them excited enough to trust us with the artistic direction for the label.

I remember the night Ben and I came up with the label's name. We were sitting at a bar off Gratiot and inked ideas into a sketchbook. As old Detroit party kids, we reminisced about all the special things that made that era so defining. We kept coming back to the info line and how that first 313 number brought us to that first venue that housed that first party and ultimately changed the trajectory of all of our lives. We felt that it was deeper than nostalgia and people would respond to it, and the rest of the crew agreed.

DEQ: How did this spin into a record label?

Alex Drazin: The idea spawned after many talks between Aran Daniels and myself. Both of us have been friends throughout the years and would frequently talk about starting a new project. I've been trying to get a record label off the ground and as it turned out, so was Aran. Each of us shared the vision of putting out our own brand of music presented as a cohesive piece of artwork. We wanted to put out quality music on wax with tight artwork that would tell a story, which is where Ben and Ashely come into the fold. Together we formally founded Infolines at the beginning of 2020 and have been maintaining our release schedule ever since.

DEQ: How did this spin into a pop-up exhibit?

AW & Crew: Alex and Ben have been my biggest fans; they've been talking about an exhibition before I ever really had the content for one. Since the evolution of the label's name, the concept for the art evolved and my muse has persistently shown up for me since. I finally had a body of

work that I could share and I made sure that the Infolines crew knew I was ready. Landing on the right venue was also pivotal to the exhibit taking shape. The Bankle has a lot of Detroit underground history, and when the Bankle's current stewards, the Avant Garden Collective, jumped on board and opened their doors for us, we knew we had a show. In fact, the exhibit prompted us to change the artwork for Infoline's fourth release to feature the Bankle on the cover instead of another venue we already had sent to the pressing plant.

DEQ: And you have four LP releases... the first being the Packard, the second is the Theatre, the third being Under the Bridge and the fourth being the Bankle. What was the music selection process like? Was it difficult to choose tracks that channel the energy of those individual spaces?

Alex Drazin: The music selection process for Infolines involves three of us sitting in my studio with a stack of music (from either ourselves or close friends) and having a listening session. We're listening for what we refer to as 'the thing.' If it has 'the thing' it passes the test and we put it in the folder for potential release. Our main goal is to put out music that speaks to us and what we think would work the dance floor in various situations. Each record needs to have something for every set and also could, in certain situations, have every track played in the course of a night. We also want to be more than a single-genre kind of label and are willing to take some chances to highlight the varied sounds of Detroit's current and future talent. To be honest, not much of the music we select is meant to channel a certain vibe about the venue we selected for the artwork, so long as it feels rooted in Detroit and maintains a somewhat timeless quality.

DEQ: The first two are various artist pieces and the third release you went solo (Under the Bridge.) Why did you choose that one in particular? Did you create those tracks specifically for that EP or were you in that lane anyway and they worked?

Alex Drazin: I wouldn't say INFO003 is necessarily a solo record. We try to retain the various artist format as we like the variety that it brings. We don't want to make things too much about any one person. For Under the Bridge, there is a collaboration with Mister Joshooa followed by a remix from Delano Smith, a solo jam from myself, wrapped up by an electro infused joint from Remote Viewing Party. The

album names, and artwork are generally chosen by Ashley and Ben and presented to Aran, Mike and myself for approval. It happened to be serendipitous for me as this venue holds a special place in my heart as it encapsulates some of my earliest memories going to raves in my youth. I don't remember who exactly was playing, but I distinctly remember being under the lights of the Ambassador Bridge vibing to the music and the people around me. This was, of course, followed by leaving right before the party was raided by the 20+ squad cars that were waiting outside (as I drove away with my friends.) So, to answer your question, I guess I would say we were already in that lane and it ended up working out for us.

DEQ: The art creates such a future nostalgic vibe. Tell us more about the other artists in the exhibitions and how they come together. How are all the visual collaborators brought into the fold? The bit mapping visuals are cool.

Ashely Worden: I certainly wanted to bring some defining artists in the room with me, one of the artists being Gabriel Hall (Light Bender.) This past year Gabe has taken my linework to a different level. He's turned my sketches into augmented reality and has projection mapped my pieces in a way that has brought them to life. He's a true craftsman and his passion for the scene aligns so similarly with mine. Gabe used audio reactive visuals to truly make the Packard Party Kids dance. You can catch Gabe's work all throughout Metro Detroit and at Movement as well, as he's heavily involved in the stage design and the visuals at the festival. Andrew Charles Edman (ACE) is another brilliant artist who contributed animation skills to bring the Packard Party Kids to life. Andrew collaborates often with Gabe and Detroit crews like Interdimensional Transmissions, Underground Resistance and Imbue Detroit. Ben Worden also produced work for this exhibition by designing a 3D laser-cut model of the Packard Plant.

Charles Boike is another artist that needed to be in the room. Boike made his mark as a graffiti artist and evolved from the Packard scene. His contribution to the show is significant, showcasing Legends Lost but not Forgotten, which brought the viewer into the Packard, surrounded by actual crew names and tags and pieces that you would see in the plant. Boike made tribute pieces to Tead One in the TST crew, Loaf in the FBSK crew, Teck 9 in TSR and Elements of a Gasm from the LD crew.

Brent Zittel represented a large part of the Avant Garden Collective with his photography and signature headshots.

Alex was significant in bringing the storytelling component of the show to light. Alex took apart old school '90s phones, including an actual pay phone that was engineered to play an infoline for the closing reception (recorded by the legendary voice of Adriel Thornton.) Alex McDonnell, who also represents Avant Garden Collective, helped to create the vibe that was necessary for the exhibition.

Lastly, the Detroit Personalities were as much a part of the exhibition as the visual artists - Adriel Thornton, Linda G, Tim Price, Sam Fotias, Tom Newman, Chris Jenkins, Jenn Xerri, Mike Servito, Amber Van Allen and Mike Clark - all of whom trusted me enough to sketch their faces and share their stories. You can listen to excerpts from all of their stories, backtracked by an Infolines DJ mix at soundcloud.com/infolinesmusic/sets/infolines-presents-packard. Overall, I was honored to have so many people working with me to contribute to a shared vision. It was not about me, or a single idea. It really belonged to the community. It was one of those projects that everyone who heard about it wanted to get involved in some way.



DEQ: Will the next show be the Theatre as it follows in the LP release line? Will you choose different locations for the shows or will they all be at the Bankle?

Ashely Worden: That certainly seems fitting, right? We'll see where the muse takes us next. I think we all want to stay as authentic as possible, meaning that if a venue has history or connection to Detroit underground music and culture then there's a story to be told in that space.

DEQ: Do you have a timeline for the next vinyl releases? When will the next show be?

Alex Drazin: We're feeling very grateful about the response to the The Bankle EP as the wax has already sold out here in the states and at the local shops. There are a few copies hanging around in Europe, but that's it! We're already planning ahead for the fifth release (venue feature TBD), but with the consistent delays at plants we are aiming to release it toward the end of this year or in the spring of 2023. As for shows, keep an eye on our Instagram and call the info line as we line up future events: 313-451-INFO. All of our releases are also available digitally, so you can catch up on the first four at infolinesmusic.bandcamp.com.

DEQ: Do you have a timeline for an exhibit? When will the next exhibit/show be?

Ashely Worden: We don't have a timeline, per say, but this concept and work is too important to us to only be a one-off. It's bigger too than just the Packard and only the stories that were shared. Generations of Detroit's scene, both fresh and foundational, came out to connect to this work. This only motivated us to do more. While we don't know what it will look like or when it will be, I'm certain there will be another chance to explore the concept in the future.

DEQ: Was the INFOLINES:PACKARD, a follow-up to MISSING FACES exhibit? Would you mind crafting a statement connecting the two?

Gabriel Hall (Light Bender): The Packard is almost like a prequel.
Ben Worden (FRANCOIS DILLINGER): Right, in the timeline of Detroit's underground, the importance of the Packard can't be underrated. The Packard was one of the places that created a scene to exist and go missing in the first place. What we learned with the MISSING FACES site-spe-

cific installation, is that Ashely's sketch work and Gabe's projection mapping could become a provocative combination of mediums when combined with music. It had the ability to connect people to an idea or a time or a place. After seeing what we could do with MISSING FACES, we knew we could capture that nostalgia and mystique of the underground with more than just projection mapping faces. With the Packard exhibition, we specifically chose to collaborate on the Packard Party Kids, giving them the spirit that interacts and is born of Detroit's sound.

Ashely Worden: Exactly! The Packard Party Kids were intentionally sketched faceless as well, allowing more inclusivity for everyone from the scene to connect. They float above the 3D model of the plant, symbolically showing the spirit of the Packard.

DEQ: What's the connection to The Bankle?

Alex Drazin: Aside from attending countless parties over the years, we connected with the current stewards of the space, Alex McDonnell, Peter Guy and David Tucker through a mutual friend. When we discovered that (their organization) The Avant Garden Collective's goals aligned with ours, it quickly blossomed into an event.

DEQ: After the pop-up exhibit is over, any other plans for this INFOLINES:PACKARD exhibit? Works?

Ashely Worden: I certainly don't think this is the last body of work you'll see from us. I think we're all just getting started on our path to preserve and pay homage to something so special. Detroit's underground has given us so much. Personally, I owe my creative voice to the scene. It's the place I felt most alive as a 17-year-old kid. I think the work can evolve and the embodiment of the exhibition can live on. We're always open to collaborate with other artists and hope to show our work to larger audiences—in Detroit, and perhaps beyond.

DEQ: Will any works, prints be available for sale?

Ashely Worden: A selection of original sketches were purchased at the exhibition but most of my limited edition prints can be purchased online through my shop via instagram @ashelyworden or via my website ashelyworden.com.

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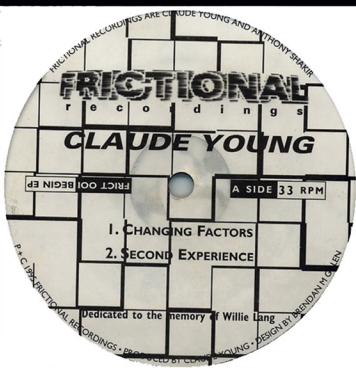
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FRICTIONAL
— R E C O R D I N G S —

Getting two Detroit legendary producers, DJs Anthony “Shake” Shakir and Claude Young, together in Shake’s dining room to talk about the seminal label they started in 1994 together called Frictional was a surreal experience to say the least. There was a schoolboy type giddiness and enthusiasm alive in the room and laughter ricocheting off the walls. The energy from synergy was truly a driving force, making the label large in the underground globally.

It was truly a hang - on - to - your - hat type experience with two titans of Detroit electronic music going off on wild tangents about the who’s who of the world’s electronic music producers. There was bassline humming, talk of where samples of songs came from, tour stories, shit talking and all kinds of stuff.

As our discussions progressed I could not help thinking that our fun session at the dinner table was a peek into how the music on this label began, except it was at Shake’s mom’s house on the West Side instead and there were a lot more people around.

The living room, in essence, was a lounge of sorts for nerd out sessions. Shake’s mom would make food and friends would kick it. The guys from the group Strand also known as T.H.D. (Brian Bonds, Brian Boyer and Kenneth “Kech” Harrington, Martin Bonds), DJ extraordinaire Terrence Parker, Lenio Purry (went on to produce tracks for Mary J Blige, Queen Latifah, Paulina Rubio), Kenneth “Kenny Flav” Dickerson (produced tracks for the r&b groups Link, Silk. also Queen Latifah, Babyface and more), Marc (MK) and Scott Kinchen to name a few would come by and all went on to do great things musically.

It wasn’t all lounging though. A lot of work was done in the back room studio. Gear, from instruments, drum machines and synthesizers to samplers and digital audio tape players (DAT), it was a great time in a young Detroit underground scene.

Young, who worked feverishly on music in Shake’s back room as well (including his tracks on Frictional #1) in those early days, became friends with Shake in the early 90s when he was looking for promo vinyl at the Metroplex studio (Juan Atkins’ label.) Young was looking for promotional records to play on his radio show and the

two hit it off instantly.

“We started it (the label) as a friendship thing,” Young said. Shake added his famous tagline “I like records more than I like people...” They both were making their own tracks and they needed an outlet, thus Frictional was born.

The Begin EP was released in 1995 with Young taking one side and Shake taking the other. This record was a definitive record for both producers. “March Into Darkness” was “quintessential Shake,” Young shouted out. “Your shit resonated.” Young’s tracks on the flip “Changing Factors” and “Second Experience” are timeless classics.

Shake described Young’s tracks as “grandiose, clean and sci-fi” and Young called Shake’s fondness for redlining his recordings as “Shake levels” and people love that kind of dirty saturation. Shake laughed and added “turn the drum machine on and do your shit.”

All seventeen releases in all from 1995 to 2007 are true quality and a novel can be written about the experiences that came with each release. They painted a picture of Detroit at that time, yet the records remain timeless. In 2009, Rush Hour re-released select tracks on a compilation called Frictionalism.

Most records are Shakir’s production, but many other producers were featured including Strand, Lenio Purry, FBK (Kevin Kennedy), Scarrelly Moe (09) and Splits & Slits.

Shake’s two favorite Frictional tracks are “Like A Dream” and “Simpatico” (both on Songs For My Mother, FRCT 10.) Simpatico is a party rocker while Like a Dream is, like the name says, spaced out, trippy and beautiful. Some additional fan favorites (aside from FRCT 01) are “Live For Friction” and “Breathe Deeper” (FRCT 02), “Electron Rider” (FRCT 04), “Frictionalized” (FRCT 013), “Detroit State of Mind” (FRCT 08), and Strand’s “Fourth & Go” (FRCT 012) but listen and choose for yourselves.

“I’m always appreciative of the support” Shake said. “I just learn to say thank you...you like it, I love it... Nobody needs a record. It’s not food. It took me my whole life to learn that.”



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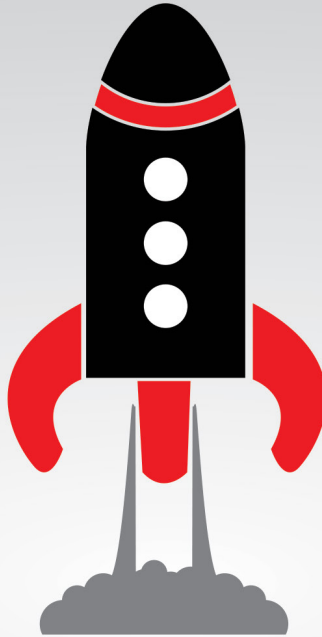
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DEQ 17: PART 1

JON DIXON - RESURGE

Written and produced by Jon Dixon 2020

JOHN BRIGGS -

BEYOND THE HORIZON (REDACTED MIX) :

Written and produced by John C. Briggs

PEABODY & SHERMAN - ROAD TO YESTERDAY (PETER CROCE ROCKSTEADY DISCO REMIX)

Written and produced by Peabody & Sherman. Remixed by Peter Croce.

VIANDS - NON-AUTOMOTON

Written and produced by Peterson and Shettler

DEQ 18: PART 1

CLAUDE YOUNG JR - DETROIT NOIR (YEAR 2120)

Written and produced by Claude Young Jr.

TECHMARINE BOTTOM FEEDERS - DYSTOPIAN UTOPIA

Written and produced by Mack Goudy Jr. & Emeric Di Paolo.
Published by Dr Bootygrabber Music, EPM Music

DJ HOLOGRAPHIC & ALEX WILCOX - BECAUSE OF DETROIT (RADIO EDIT)

Written and produced by Alex Wilcox and DJ Holographic

DJ MOPPY - SHIVA TEACHINGS

Written and produced by DJ Moppy.

Additional production: Morgan Wiley (keys) and Kel Angel
Saxxy Wildflower (sax)

MASTERED by KAGE MASTERING
ARTWORK by BLAIR FRENCH

DEQ 17: PART 2

A1. NANDI - DETROIT TELLS ITS TECHNO STORY

Written and spoken by Nandi

A2. A7MC - THE INEXPLICABLES

Produced by Eddie Logix

A3. SHAWSCAPE RENEGADE - OTHER WORLDS

Written and Produced by Jeremiah Shaw

DEQ 18: PART 2

B1. EDDIE FOWLKES: - AK1

Written and produced by Eddie Fowlkes

B2. LUKE HESS & JEFF HESS: -THE DANCE ROOM

Written and produced by Luke Hess and Jeff Hess

B3. ADMN - EVENING ACID (ORIGINAL MIX)

Written and produced by ADMN

