

Beat'N'Sample Craze Treads The Beaten Path

ONCE BITTEN, TWICE SHY: Have you and your friends become somewhat tired of saying "Remember when . . ." when talking of contemporary club music? Dance Trax probably wouldn't be alone in saying that the beat'n'-sample record craze has gotten slightly out of hand. A bunch o' labels, independents mostly, have stepped onto a bandwagon that's dragging as we speak. Little did we know that **Todd Terry** would become a *style* of music to contend with, as it is today. When Terry hit with such staples as "Can You Party," "Bango," and "A Day In The Life," he hit big, but when he didn't (listen to many of the other cuts on the **Royal House** or **Todd Terry Project** albums,) the result can be unbearable.

So many folks have tried to capitalize on this "nonmusic" music that we receive at least half a dozen new (!!) such titles a week. As **Brian Chin** asserts in his recent February installment of "New York Beat" (a monthly column that appears in the U.K. trade Jocks), most of these tracks have become pathetically indistinguishable. You would think that if people are going to go through the trouble of "borrowing" bits from other records, they wouldn't limit themselves to the Loleatta Holloway, First Choice, Lyn Col-

lins, and James Brown bits that we've come to know, love, and hate all too well.

Utilizing a few of these fab musical *ideas* within actual songs (remember those? The kind with lyrics and a chorus or two?) would prove much more satisfying as well as more memorable.

DJs play an important role in this as well. Last week, a dance music promoter from a major label commented on how he found it difficult to work a record that didn't have a fierce dub version, adding that many of the jocks prefer to *only* play dubs and instrumentals. Club programmers control what their audiences hear. If their clientele becomes trained to dance to "Can You Party" hybrids for hours, it will make it that much harder to play new songs.

There's no easy answer except that we've heard a lot of wasted ideas that would have been all the more jammin' had they been given a vocalist, some lyrics, and less-weathered samples. Take a lesson from **Full Force**, who supplied **Samantha Fox** with the top three club and top 10 pop hit "I Wanna Have Some Fun." It uses the same idea as all the rest but is executed with quite a bit more innovation, verve, and smarts.

BIG BEATS & LI'L PIECES: Letting The Lyte Shine—MC Lyte re-

cently fulfilled the wish of a leukemia-stricken youngster in cooperation with the **Special Wish Foundation**. **Tiana Thomas** got to spend a day with Lyte and **Audio Two's Gizmo**, who performed two songs for the girl and showed her pictures of Lyte's last tour. Lyte is presently in the studio readying a new album for First Priority/At-



by Bill Coleman

lantic . . . RCA act **Imagination** will be releasing an album containing new material and remixes of old classics like "Just An Illusion" and "Burning Up." Of the new tracks, the first single scheduled is "Love's Taking Over," produced by **T-Coy** and currently being mixed by **Dave Morales** . . . He Who Laughs Last—New York-based duo the **Pop Tarts** (who've been plugging at this for some years now) may just get their just desserts as the two (**Randy Barbato & Fenton Bailey**) are being wooed by two major U.K. labels. We've heard the demos and they're quite good . . . **Hank Shocklee & Chuck D** are remixing

the **Neville Brothers'** "Sister Rosa" for A&M.

Stetsasonic's Daddy O is producing new cuts for **Third World** and is remixing "Big Enough" from **Keith Richards'** latest album . . . **Kevin Saunderson & Juan Atkins**, aka **Reese & Santonio**, have returned with new versions of the fab "Rock To The Beat," apparently to be released on two different labels. Saunderson has also worked on mixes of **New Order's** "Round & Round" . . . **Frankie Knuckles'** collaboration with **Satoshi Tomiie** will be coming out stateside on Island. Also on Island, expect a **Robert Owens** project, again under the production guide of Knuckles. Never too busy, Knuckles is also completing mixes on last year's underground import hit "Voodoo Ray," by **A Guy Called Gerald**, for Warlock and is scheduled to mix Island duo **Womack & Womack's** brilliant "M.P.B. (Missing Persons Bureau)" for single release *again*. We're very happy to hear that the label is remarketing and promoting W&W's overlooked gem of a project, "Conscience." If you just happened to have been living under a rock in '88, don't make the same mistake twice: Discover the album.

Boogie Down Productions is completing work on a new project due in late spring . . . **Kym Mazelle's** new U.K. single, "Got To Get You Back," was written by **CC Rogers** and mixed by **Blaze**. The Blaze trio has been very busy in the U.K., mixing "People Hold On" by **Coldcut** from a forthcoming album titled "Deck Shark"; "Celebrate The World" for **Womack & Womack**; and a track by a

new outfit called **Be Big**, featuring two former members of **I-Level** . . . **Justin Strauss** is remixing "Promises" by **Basia** for Epic . . . The latest **Teddy Riley** chapter includes work on a new **Kool Moe Dee** album, collaborations with singers **Glenn Jones** and **Billy Always**, and a remix of **Chrysalis** artist **Tony Stone's** "Can't Say Bye" . . . "Do You Really Want To Dance" by **Hot Performance** on **Nastymix Records** is being mixed by **Gail King** . . . **Bruce Forest & Frank Heller** are completing mixes on "New Groove" for Atlantic act **Rock Melons**.

BIG NOISE: Stirring up the import racks is "Talking With Myself" (Club/Phonogram U.K.) by **Electricbe 1.0.1**. Sinuous and weaving groove accompanied by a yearning female vocal (similar to **Yazz**) is effectively hypnotic and should have no problem capturing club interest . . . Also out on import is **Dancin' Danny D's** remix of "Respect" (Cooltempo) by **Adeva**, which in this lengthened version includes a rap by U.K. female rapper **Monie Love**.

A hot new 12-inch out from Jive is "In House Volume 1." The six extended remixes, especially priced, are well worth the investment. Included is a previously unavailable **Kevin Saunderson** remix of "I Wanna Have Some Fun"; the "Phosphoric" mix of **Wee Papa Girls'** fab "We Know It," previously available on import; "Get Up On This" by the **She Rockers**; "Love Fever" by **Culture Clash Dance Party**; "It's A Trip" by **Children Of The Night**; and "House Will Never Die" by **Adonis & the Acid Slaves**.

Canadian Indie's Product Goes Beyond Industrial Sounds Nettwerk Dances To A Different Beat

BY JIM BESSMAN

NEW YORK Since **Nettwerk Productions'** 1984 launch, the Vancouver, British Columbia-based indie has gained a reputation for "industrial dance" acts because of its directly signed or overseas-licensed electronic bands like **S.P.K.**, **Severed Heads**, **Manufacture**, **Single Gun Theory**, and the popular **Skinny Puppy**.

The increasingly visible label has also scored with a variety of other artists, most notably the folkier acoustic band **The Grapes Of Wrath**, which, like fellow Canadian group **Skinny Puppy**, is signed to Capitol in the U.S.; the classically trained Canadian singer/songwriter **Sarah McLachlan**, whose domestic debut "Touch" is forthcoming on Arista; and the Canadian technopop outfit **Moev**, whose new "Yeah Whatever" project is licensed here to Atlantic.

"'Remission' [Skinny Puppy's mini-album], which was one of our first releases, grabbed everybody by the you-know-whats," says **Nettwerk's** dance/video/college promotion head, **George Maniatis**. "Because of it, everybody assumed we were just industrial dance. But we never set out in that direction—it's just that they hit first."

What really distinguishes **Nettwerk**, notes **Maniatis**, is a company philosophy represented

by its slogan, "An attitude—not a problem." Or, as company president **Terry McBride** puts it: "We put out what we like if we can afford it. It doesn't matter if it won't get commercial visibility, we only try to place projects with a major which has more of a facility to take it further."

McBride, who owns **Nettwerk** with VPs **Mark Jowett** (ex-member of **Moev**) and **Ric Arboit**, notes that outside license deals are sought in such cases rather than direct signings (**Skinny Puppy** is signed directly to Capitol worldwide except Canada).

"We're easier to satisfy, so [licensees] can retain artistic integrity, which might not be possible if they sign direct to a major," says **McBride**. "Songs don't have to be so obvious with us, and we don't require a bona-fide hit. We just want to see our artists make a healthy living with good critic-oriented records, and we have a lot of almost-theres. This gives us freedom to put out the more esoteric items which we like."

Such items are discovered at home or obtained from such foreign sources as **Play It Again Sam Records**, a Brussels, Belgium-based company that markets and distributes **Nettwerk** product under the **Nettwerk Europe** banner. **Play It Again Sam** also licenses its act **Front 242** to **Nettwerk** for release in Canada. Similarly, **Nettwerk** licenses **Tackhead's** North American rights from England's **On U Sound**, as well as that label's "Play It All Back" compilation of reggae dub tracks. **Severed Heads**, **Single Gun The-**

ory, and a new act, **Box Car**, have been likewise licensed from Australia's **Volition** label.

In Canada, **Nettwerk's** catalog is distributed by **Capitol-EMI**, with distribution deals in the U.S. being sought only on a "selective" basis. "We don't want to grow at a rate we can't handle," says **McBride**, adding that, in Canada, **Nettwerk's** release schedule is limited to one album every six weeks or so in order to stay on top of the roster.

Former DJ/retailer **Maniatis** does note a more aggressive stance in the last 18 months, as evidenced by his own hiring and that of **Scott Burlingham**, who acts as product manager, U.S. and European press person, and liaison with **Nettwerk Europe**.

The label is currently represented on **Billboard's** Club Play chart with **Manufacture's** single, "As The End Draws Near." Recent single releases by **Severed Heads** and **Moev** also showed significant action on the club chart. Says **Burlingham**: "As our records get more notice in the U.S., we've had to expand our marketing approach to compete with U.S. companies for chart position and retail space."

In addition to **Nettwerk Productions**, **Nettwerk Management** guides the career of label artists including **Moev** and **Skinny Puppy**. Video production arm **Nettwerk Pictures** evolved out of **Jowett's** **Sterling Haley Pictures** film company, which produced videos for **Glass Tiger** and others. The production company has most recently completed clips for **Moev** and **McLachlan**.

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