

SOUND MIGRATION

19TH TO 20TH,
MAY, 06 @ CLUB TANGO
本年度最重要的电子音乐盛事
联合国亚欧基金会
世界青年DJ交流会

I'mPULSE
@ 炫音Tango

18位来自澳大利亚、比利时、中国、捷克共和国、法国、德国、匈牙利、印度尼西亚、意大利、日本、斯洛伐克、荷兰以及英国的杰出DJ
DJ WOLFGANG FUCHS Austria, DJ ISJTAR, DJ MELLOW YELLOW Belgium, DJ WORDY China, DJ KATCHA Czech Republic, DJ TAL France, PICK GIRLS Germany, DJ SZTYEPP Hungary, DJ KRIST Indonesia, DJ LANGSTRUMPF Italy, DAITO MANABE Japan, DJ SILU K.O the Netherlands, r-H Singapore, DJ ROMO Slovakia, DJ LATRAMA Spain and DJ MOYMA (UK)

Special Guests/特邀演出嘉宾:
Sam Zaman Of State Of Bengal (UK) Ges-E (UK) Yangbing (China)
V.J: Walkscreen (Germany) With Masato (Japan)

DATE: 19TH & 20TH, MAY, 2006 日期: 2006年5月19与20日
VENUE: CLUB TANGO 地点: 炫音俱乐部
TICKET PRICE: 60 RMB / STUDENTS: 30 RMB 票价: 60元/学生票: 30元
(FOR EACH DAY'S PARTY)

Twenty DJs from 16 European and Asian countries gathered in Beijing for a weeklong DJ camp to meet, exchange tricks and personal experiences, explore, network and perform. CHIA MING CHIEN reports on this migration of sounds.

Party, dance and entertain every night for a whole week these 20 DJs did, but as I discovered at the I'mPULSE Beijing DJ Music Camp, there's a lot more to being a DJ than clubbing, spinning, scratching and mixing records or CDs. For serious DJs, life encompasses more than the mere craft of playing records or CDs for a crowd of dancers. Many DJs, like those who gathered in Beijing, are musicians and artists in every sense of the word: their instruments are vinyl, turntables, mixing machines and laptops. And their art form is mixing sounds and remixing tunes to produce music that moves people to dance; to sculpture an experience in a live audience, in the moment.

These DJs were highly conceptual, intellectual and talking to them off stage about their music was no different than, say, talking to a jazz composer or a philosopher. In fact, Aleksander Motturi, one of

the curators for the event, is a philosopher (and part-time DJ) who's intrigued by "the migration of music, its movement beyond origin, its ongoing distortion of authenticity and multiple home cuttings is, due to its very essence, integral to the art of DJ-ing. After all, DJ-ing crosses borders at a speed that few other art forms can compete with. Sounds from one track are transferred in real time and mixed with sounds from another in order to finally debouch into a hybrid culture of sound systems. DJs do not merely allow music to travel from one source machine to another; they facilitate its movement over global and virtual territories. For DJs, cultural borders do not exist."

EAGER TO INNOVATE

In a city where little English is spoken, where the cultural doors were shut tight to the rest of the world until recently, Beijing was, for these very reasons, an ideal venue for the third I'mPULSE Music Workshop. It proved the point that the shared spoken word isn't vital to sharing an experience. It showed how quickly music can cut through space and time to affect and unite people. As recently as 10 years ago, club music was almost unheard of in China. Pulsing through the Internet and pushed by a few stubborn and passionate local DJs, house, techno, drum and bass, breakbeat, trance and hip hop have become the staple music of clubs in China's major cities. China's DJ scene remains neonatally fresh with a thirst for new ideas and a clear proclivity



Aleksander Motturi facilitating a workshop session.

towards exploration and experimentation—the ideal atmosphere for a group of young professional DJs with as disparate cultural experiences as may be garnered from males and females living in UK, the Czech Republic, France, Indonesia, Austria, Belgium, China, Germany, Japan, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Singapore, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden. Their keenness to meet, share, discover and perform behind this great cultural wall was exciting. And it was this sense of common adventure in a strange land that kept this motley crew of fiercely independent, individualistic, iconoclastic people together.

It certainly needed something as potentially promising as this to get them out of bed for the workshop sessions during the day after nightly outings to various clubs that usually didn't end till four in the morning. To understand this eagerness, one has to realise the whole culture of DJing is about innovation and experimentation, finding new sounds, pushing the boundaries of technology and self-expression, expanding the vocabulary of music

with the singular aim of creating new experiences for their audiences. With 20 outstanding and accomplished DJs in the same room in an alien city, the level of anticipation was high.

TALKING SHOP, TRADING TIPS

During the day, the DJs took turns to present their music to one another; some explained the history and evolution of their chosen genre of music providing the others with a deeper appreciation of its subtleties and a context for understanding its progression. Says Singaporean DJ r-H (Rajesh Hardwani): "Yeah, I know that's drum and bass I'm listening to... yes, I'm familiar with it generically, but what occurred for me in the workshop was discovering so many more variants of drum and bass... to a point it was an information overload... but it's a good thing."

In other workshop sessions, DJs shared tricks of the trade. DJ Moyma (Paul Chowdry), a scratcher from UK said "the feedback I got was they enjoyed it 'cos it's not something many of them have done a lot of. Took away a lot of the mystery in



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Clockwise from top left: DJ Sam Zaman (UK) sharing about his Asian Underground music; DJ Daito Manabe (Japan) showing his use of laptops to turntablist DJ Wordy (China); DJ Langstrumpf (Italy) sharing about italo-disco; participating DJs.

scratching." As to his goal for participating in the ImPULSE workshop, DJ Moyma explained, "I wanted to meet new people, see what other DJ's are doing in other countries. I love what I see here in Beijing; it's a fast developing country, especially with music. Lots of new stuff coming through; the whole music scene here is fresh. For example, hip hop here is relatively new yet very popular."

Two internationally acclaimed

DJ's: Sam Zaman of State of Bengal and Ges-E of Nasha Records who provided a close-up on the representation, translation and migration of Asian and European DJ-culture. Both were key figures in the origination of the Asian Underground music scene, introducing distinctly ethnic sounds into mainstream club music. In 2001, DJ Sam Zaman performed in the Forbidden Palace as part of a three-week tour of China.

Comparing his experiences then and now, he's observed the music scene in China has "progressed and evolved a lot." Asked if China's DJs have developed their own unique sound, he remarks, "The day when there is a switch to include more of their own ethnic elements would be a sign that they are empowered, that they have the ability to design their own music, that its okay to do so. It's still early stages now."

China DMC champ, DJ Wordy spoke about the unique challenges of DJ-ing in China. For a start, "information is hard to come by." Most of the accessible information is derived from the Internet and most of this is in English which most Chinese DJs do not speak. He's fortunate in that he understands the language but is stumped by the wall of economics: "To be a DJ / Turntablist in China is tough. You can't buy vinyl (records) in China." He orders his vinyl over the Internet, which can be prohibitively expensive. "So, 90% of DJs in China use CDs. Few people want to do the original DJ style—using a turntable. I want to educate people about what is real DJ-ing... more old school funk, hip hop, drum and bass."

And here we touch a sensitive nerve: Is Turntablism the only real DJing?

CDS, LAPTOPS VS TURNTABLES

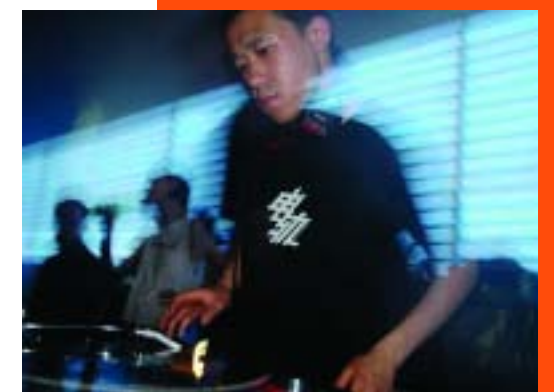
This whole issued flared up during the workshop with considerable heat. Some DJs rely almost entirely on CDs, some go as far as to even bypass CDs choosing to perform with a laptop alone. In some ways, the DJ world can be divided clearly into two camps: the new media technologists vs the old-school turntablists. A couple of issues lie at the heart of the matter: entertainment value and sound quality. On one hand, who wants to see a DJ with his nose plugged into a computer screen? Let's face it, the idea of watching a guy punch buttons is boring; the showmanship of the DJ cueing, scratching, back spinning the vinyl is as much part of the entertainment as is the music. On the other side, one argues it's not the format or delivery system of the music being played that matters, but the music itself that counts. If a DJ packs the dance floor, does it matter if he or she is using vinyl, CD or MP3?

DJ r-H takes the middle path: "it's very personal, it's really to each

his own... at the same time, technology is changing so quickly, especially in music that if you are not up with the times, you will definitely lose out." His advice to budding DJs is "turntablism is very important. A DJ must have a basic knowledge of it. If you don't and immediately jump into computers, you're not going to deliver what you could if you knew about practical mixing with turntables. At the same time, I can do with my PC what would be impossible with just a turntable. If you have ambitions to be a DJ and jump straight to a laptop, I can guarantee the sounds you produce will be really bad."

Each night the DJs got the chance to perform at different venues in Beijing, each showcasing for an hour or so their music to different types of audiences. They spun what they normally played at in their home country so they could see how audiences in Beijing would respond. Things got really interesting.

In one venue, the DJs were kicked out because the clash of cultures was too much. In another, art met headlong with its perennial nemesis, the cash register. A local and regular club patron who would easily spend thousands of dollars a night had brought some business clients to the club without any clue his favourite music would be replaced by hardcore avant-garde laptop generated sounds, followed by electronic trance... well, suffice to say the situation almost got nasty. Comical in hindsight, the lesson was nevertheless stark: the most compelling sound is the till of a cash register! Contrasted against the success measured by feet per sq ft of dance floor, these incidents



Top to bottom: DJ's performing at Tango: DJ Sam Zaman; DJ Siuli K.O (Netherlands); DJ Yang Bing (China); DJ Yellow Mellow (Belgium)

Clockwise from right: Packed floor at Tango; DJ Katcha (Czech Republic); DJ r-H (Singapore); DJ Johanna of Sick Girls (Germany); DJ Daito Manabe (Japan)



Starting at 10pm, hour on hour the clubbers were treated to an unusually wide range of genres and styles of music. Much of the music played had never before been in Beijing.




DJ Ges-E (UK); DJ's partying with the audience.

were minor hiccups.

For two nights at Club Tango, Beijing's largest and poshest club, the audiences (primarily locals) were dancing right up to closing time at 4am. Starting at 10pm, hour on hour the clubbers were treated to an unusually wide range of genres and styles of music. Much of the music played had never before been in Beijing. Apart from Chinese DJs Yang Bing, a seminal figure in the emergence of club music in China, and Wordy, none of the other DJs performing were familiar in Beijing. Yet, their music in no way have been anticipated.

Much of the music performed was cutting edge and underground even in their own home countries. It's a measure of the depth to which the consciousness of urban China has been globalised and reflects the power of music in the digital age to unify people through a language that is unspoken, that's primarily sensual, emotional, dynamic and completely expressive.

By all accounts, the I'mPULSE Workshop amply accomplished its objectives: DJs left Beijing with fresh ideas, new friends and collaborators, and inspired by the power of their art to transcend boundaries of mind and space. 



I'mPULSE is a programme of the Asia-Europe Foundation's (ASEF) Cultural Exchange sector for the Asia-Europe Music Camp, designed to provide a platform for young people to exchange their ideas on music. Its primary aim is to encourage fresh minds to pursue the development of their music concepts by learning from each other. This ASEF programme label I'mPULSE was coined to stress the individuality and spontaneity that is apparent amongst young musicians.

The DJ Workshop in Beijing was organised by Leon Lee, Producer, Pentatonic Workshop (China), Aleksander Motturi, Artistic Director of Clandestino Festival (Sweden), and ASEF's Programme Manager for I'mPULSE, Vanini Belarmino.

Participating DJs

- Wolfgang Fuchs (Austria);
- Albert Vandebroeck, DJ Ishtar (Belgium);
- Pauline Doutreluingne, DJ Mellow Yellow (Belgium),
- Liang Wang, DJ Wordy (China);
- Katarina Hladka, DJ Katcha (Czech Republic)
- Tal Hadad, DJ Tal (France),
- Johanna Grabsch and
- Alexandra Droner, Sick Girls (Germany);
- Peter Homoki, DJ Szytepp (Hungary)
- Achmad Krisgatha, Krist, (Indonesia);
- Chiara Fumai, DJ Langstrumpf, (Italy)
- Daito Manabe (Japan),
- Masato Tsutsui (Japan),
- Rajesh Hardwani, DJ r-H (Singapore),
- Roman Babjak, DJ Romo (Slovakia),
- Eduardo Duque, DJ Latrama (Spain) .
- Siuli Ko-Pullan, DJ Suili Ko (The Netherlands)
- and Paul Chowdhry, DJ Moyma (United Kingdom).

Prominent Guest DJs

Sam Zaman of State of Bengal and Ges-E of Nasha Records (UK), both of whom pioneered the Asian Underground music scene. Yang Bing who had an integral part in defining China's underground music scene.