

2012 has been a big year for me, full of change and challenge: to be fair that was pretty much how it was advertised. 2013 will be the first year I haven't sent out a calendar since 1997 so this mix CD is intended as a substitute and is perhaps the beginning of a new tradition. The tunes are mostly 2012 discoveries (to me, anyway) and have been blended together with love and care, Triptych style. Let me know what you think of it!

1: Stein Urheim - Beyond Freedom

I found this amazing Norwegian zen blues LP when I was in Bergen in June for a job interview. The job didn't work out in the end but whenever I hear this I wonder what my life would have been like if I had taken it.

2: Newcleus - Computer Age

Push the button! Prescient lyrics from 1984: "Computer Age is here / Everyone must have a machine." Your kids would certainly agree...

3: Mick Ronson - Only After Dark

I'm more familiar with the Human League cover which I devoured greedily in my teenage hunger for all things post-punk. With posterity I must admit that the original is far better.

4: The Feelies - Everybody's Got Something To Hide Except For Me And My Monkey

I got this cracking original Stiff seven inch (BUY 65) in Kristina on Kingsland Road, the first shop I have seen for ages that sells only vinyl. They don't have any name on their shop sign outside, just distressed woodwork: such behaviour almost deserves a hipster red card, but the vinyl is great and they're nice chaps, so we'll let them off.

5: Ray Ellis - The Sheik

Full of eastern promise! Although I am somewhat blasé about the current obsession with all things retro (kinda been there done that, to be honest) it has thrown up a lot of rock and roll seven inch re-issues which I am happy to scoop up, and this is one of the best.

6: Poolside - Next To You

For my money the Poolside boys have come closest to nailing a modern version of the classic soft rock / disco sound that everyone is going nuts for right now. Taken from a great album that you can buy from their website, poolsidemusic.com.

7: Harold Melvin & The Blue Notes - Wake Up Everybody (Psychemagik Remix)

Psychemagik are so hot right now: I could listen to them tweak this loop all night.

8: Rell - Real Love

Found in the motherlode of second hand R&B vinyl that spawned the Frank Eddie album. It takes balls to re-make a stone cold classic (Electric Relaxation by A Tribe Called Quest) but I think they pull it off. It helps having Kanye and Consequence on the track!

9: Beastie Boys - B-Boys In The Cut

MCA's death hit me hard; the way he and the Beasties surfed their career wave to all those far-out places was truly inspirational. If you haven't seen the half-hour video he directed for Make Some Noise (so clear now why they couldn't star in it and also how they got that amazing cast) then stop reading this and go to your computer right now.

10: Yse Sant Lau'rant - Warm Wind Brewing

Airside did an ad back in the day which was soundtracked by the original of this well known sample (Lujon by Henry Mancini, first sampled by Dimitri from Paris) but the agency swapped it for a cheap sound-alike version at the last minute. So much better.

11: Warren Zevon - Midnight In The Switching Yard

Gavin Lucas introduced me to this track on a promo twelve inch; it took me a while to find one myself! No, the CD would not do just as well. This is every bit as good as his big hit Werewolves of London, and there's lots more there if you go looking.

12: Blende - Fake Love

Released by the ever hip Eskimo Records, my favourite slice of electro-pop all year. I am getting very bored with the current rave/R&B pop sound, and I don't think it's just me...

13: Dee Dee Sharp Gamble - Nobody Can Do What You Do To Me (Chalkhill Remix)

Great remix of an old Philly track. So many edits out there but the cream always rises...

14: Kon & The Gang - Get Yourself Together

...and here's another example: a mighty Bobby Thurston cut-up that completely transcends its source material. Best edit of the year.

15: Lulu James - Be Safe

Black Butter have had a good year, haven't they? Congratulations Olly! You can't argue with that Rudimental Number One single. This didn't do quite as well but it's just as good: future soul is back (so is it phuture future soul this time round?)

16: Gerry Rafferty - Cat & Mouse

I love Gerry Rafferty: sadly he died last year leaving a vast catalogue of brilliantly understated songs including lots of hidden gems such as this one, not to mention Baker Street and Stuck In The Middle With You. The British Harry Nilsson, perhaps.

17: Williams - Confused Arp Disco

More eastern promise, this time on a nu-disco tip. This track twists and turns all over the place - it's very good for freaky dancing.

18: Kiki Dee - Excuse Me

Shouldn't it be called 'Scuse Me? Kiki Dee has made some great records including the theme to Opportunity Knocks, plus she was the first white Brit signed by Motown. Go girl!

19: Donald Fagen - New Breed

It's traditional for me to put a Donald Fagen track on my mixes even though he has never cleared one yet: he wrote back in person to deny clearance for New Frontier on the Triptych but it was on the promo by then anyway - oops! From his cracking new album Sunken Condos: every bit as good as his Steely Dan stuff.

20: Don Costa - Charley (Onur Egin Edit)

I bought this in Berlin when I was there with Nat for her great Typo talk. Big band funk is one of my favourite things and this is blisteringly hot. Ouch!

21: Latoiya Williams - All For You

Another R&B nugget from the second hand pile. Apparently this is in fact by Snoop Dogg (feat. Latoiya Williams): not much sign of Snoop though. Must've had a lot on that day.

22: Prince - Black Sweat

This was supposedly Prince's attempt to re-engage with a mainstream audience: it's still bonkers though, isn't it? And all the better for it.

23: Ian Hunter - Just Another Night

More glam rock: I'm always looking for Bowie-esque stuff, ostensibly for my missus although I'm not sure she notices. I have had to work hard to get over my post-punk disdain of all things glam, but I always liked Mott The Hoople and this is great.

24: The Jon Spencer Blues Explosion - Sweat

Wouldn't you hate Jack White if you were Jon Spencer? He totally did the psyche-punk-blues thing first but without the massive commercial success. Here's the Blues Explosion's finest hour spliced with an intro from this year's comeback single.

25: Bernard Cribbins - I Go A Bundle

Another traditional participant in my mixes, willing or otherwise, and a lovely way to finish. I spoke to Bernard on the phone a while ago about a possible collaboration but his agent seems to have now gone cold on me. Ah well; it was a great pleasure to talk to him and I will always treasure his recorded output.

Special thanks to Soni at Sonsoles Print Studio in Peckham (now easily reached via the Overground) where I hand-printed the sleeves and of course my lovely wife Nat Hunter who inspired me to make this CD and then folded and stuck all the sleeves. I am lucky!