

66 of My Favourite 90s Albums of All Time

Shôn Ellerton, April 16, 2026

90s music here we come! Here are 66 of some of my favourite albums and records from this time period.



This is my third follow-up to the pieces I wrote earlier entitled, [66 of My Favourite 80s Albums of All Time](#) and [55 of My Favourite 70s Albums of All Time](#),

Ah! The 90s!

What makes this decade so special for me music-wise is its amazing exploration into some of the best electronica ever made. Therefore, you'll find that most albums in this collection belong in this genre.

After all, this was the decade of Aphex Twin, The Orb, The Prodigy, Future Sound of London, The Black Dog, Coil, and Meat Beat Manifesto.

There's a healthy mix of other genres in this collection including a couple of jazz ones, a classical-based soundtrack, some world music, singer songwriter and pop material. But yes, my taste of music during this decade is primarily electronica based.

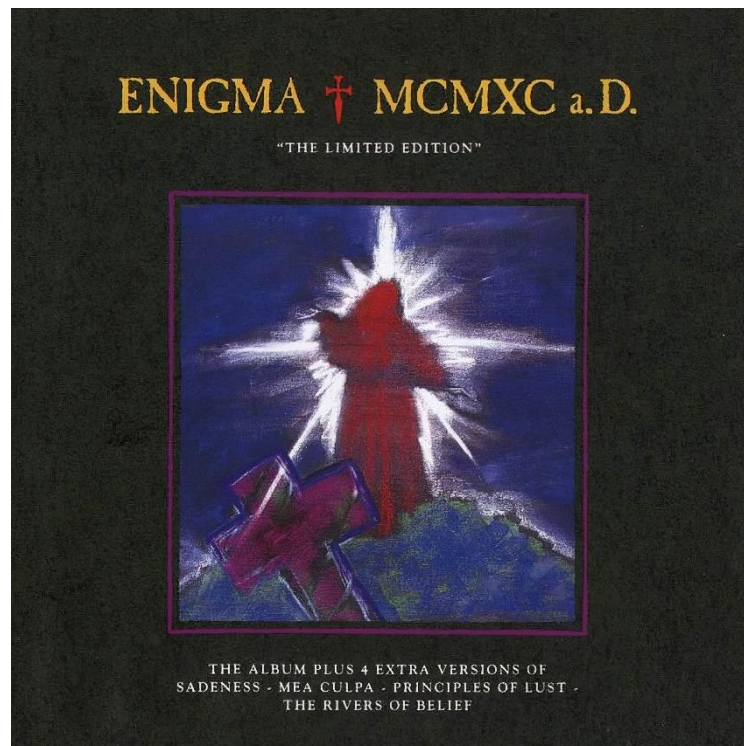
There are countless exceptional tracks which I can include from the 90s, but bearing in mind that we are focussing on identifying complete albums, this makes the exercise somewhat harder.

The following 66 albums represent those which I can play from start to finish over and over again.

Let's start from the earliest to the latest during this timeframe.

And any track which I highlight as *best* is, of course, subjective being my own opinion.

#1. *MCMXC a.D.* by Enigma (1990)



Dare I say this, but Enigma's debut album, *MCMXC a.D.* sounds dated. It has that panpipe synth sound accompanied with a soft ubiquitous rhythm which many instantly recognise from this era.

However, saying that, I've played this album many times and I have to say, the melodies are really nice and comfort-inducing. You can play this album to listen to with full attention or just as background music.

This is the kind of album which won't offend anyone either. Being suitable and accessible to all, it's a very nice album to listen to.

However, avoid the sequel, *The Cross of Changes* created in 1994. Not only did I find it patently boring, the sound quality is mushy and spongy.

#2. *Fire* by Inner City (1990)



I was excited to come across Inner City's second album as I so enjoyed listening to their first album, *Paradise*, released in 1989.

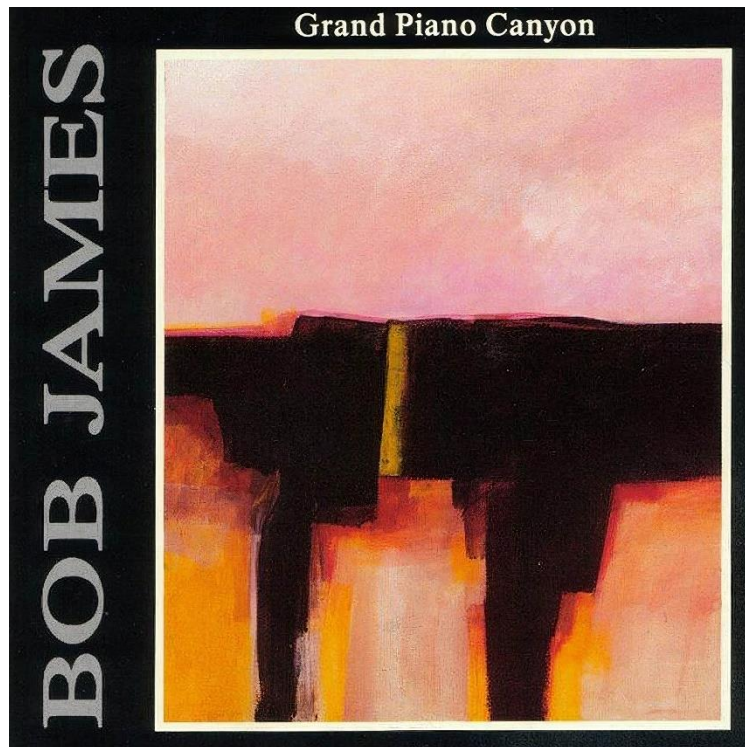
Fire was released next year in 1990 and has quite a different style of sound than the first album. It certainly didn't have the same impact as the first album nor its catchy simplicity. However, after several listens, I became quite partial to their second album.

The third track, *Fire*, is more like Inner City's style in the first album with quite a dollop of thumping bass and energy.

'Till We Meet Again is a nicely played smooth and rich track with a lovely melody. But my favourite track is the second track, *That Man (He's All Mine)* which has all the elements of house, dance, and techno all together in one.

Grows on you, this album.

#3. *Grand Piano Canyon* by Bob James (1990)



If you like that traditional jazz sound melody with more modern crossover and smooth thrown in, Bob James's *Grand Piano Canyon* is an essential album to have.

Play this on a seriously good stereo and you'll get one of the most immersive jazz experiences.

It's a sophisticated sound, much like that modern look portrayed on that album cover. You can picture yourself with a bourbon in a bar lounge overlooking a city at night while someone in the corner of the dim-lit room is playing that grand piano.

The three most notable tracks are *Bare Bones*, a great intro for the album, '*...stop that!*', a crazy mix of modern synth with trad jazz, and my favourite, the wonderfully nostalgic sounding and smooth *Just Listen*.

#4. *The Best of Mantronix (1986-1988)* by Mantronix (1990)



Yes, I know. It's not an album but a compilation of Mantronix material from the late 80s, but this great compilation, not very well known, was released in 1990.

Technically, I should have added this to my 80s collection, but, too late. Here it is.

This record has so much energy combining rap with some real heavy-sounding synth drum beats. All very 80s in sound but it works!

Turn up the volume and listen to this compilation right away.

Four great tracks to listen to include *Ladies (Full Length)*, *Electronic Energy Of ...*, *Bassline (Stretched)*, and *Scream (Remix)*.

#5. *Violator* by Depeche Mode (1990)



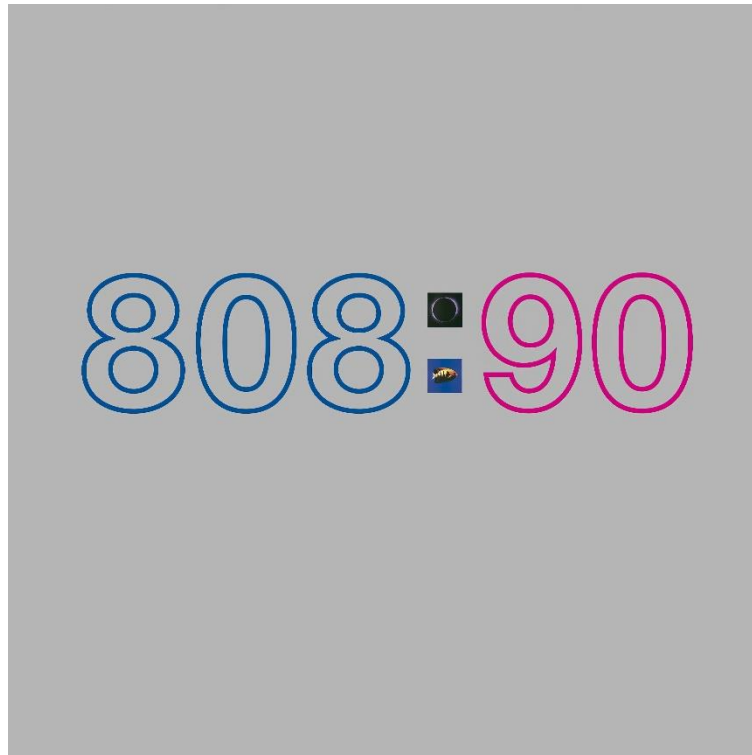
I mentioned in my 80s list that my favourite Depeche Mode album is *Music For The Masses*. *Violator* is a very close second.

I was fortunate in getting a vinyl copy when it first came out and it seems to be one of those prized vinyl pieces which has gained significant value over the years.

The funny thing with *Violator* is that it became more of a masterpiece during the 2020s than when it first came out. Every track is a great listen. From punchy tracks like *Personal Jesus* and *Enjoy The Silence* to some rather introspective bridging pieces like the one between *Enjoy The Silence* and *Policy Of Truth*, the entire album is a great listen from start to finish.

From a sound quality perspective, it is so crystal clear and when played on a high-quality rig, it will blow you away.

#6. *90 by 808 State (1990)*



808 State's *90* album is one of my all-time favourite techno albums of all time. I had played it so many times. There was nothing like it then. In a way, this album led the way into techno of the 90s.

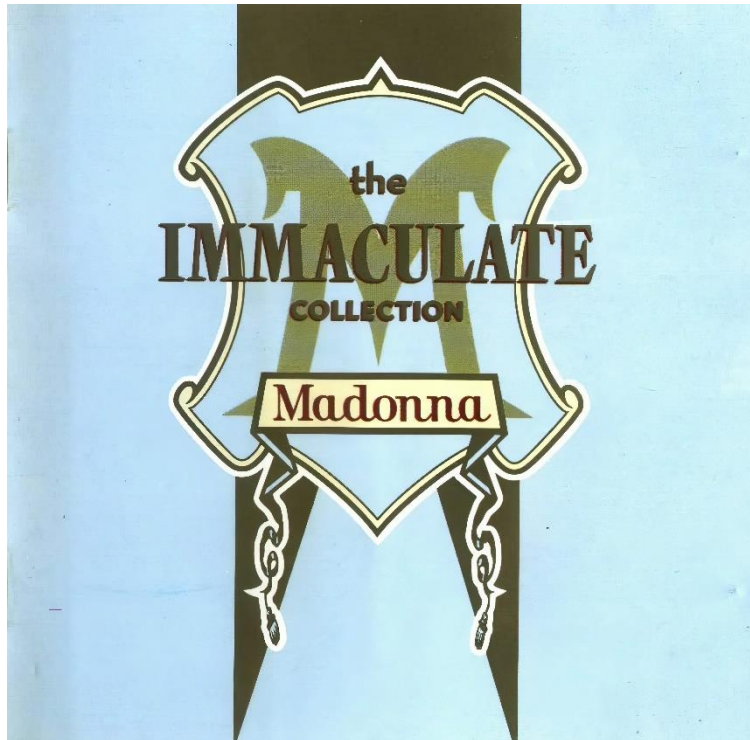
Combining acid, techno, trance, and house, this album was just one extravaganza of big-sound electronic music.

The album is most famous, of course, for its *Pacific 202* track but every track is a great listen.

Most noteworthy tracks are *Ancodia*, for its crazy energy, *Donkey Doctor*, a kick-ass bit of acid techno, and *Sunrise*, which is a bit dub-step with some mystique stuff going on in the background.

This is a memorable album in the realm of electronica.

#7. *The Immaculate Collection* by Madonna (1990)



Since she first gained popularity in the 80s, I've been a fan of Madonna who's put out a lot of great material over her musical career.

Can't say which album I like the best but her compilation record, *The Immaculate Collection*, is superb.

Some may find this collection blasphemous because the songs have been altered sonically to enhance the stereo separation. Not only that, some of the tracks have been sped up a little as well.

However, be that as it may, it works for me.

#8. *Love's Secret Domain* by Coil (1991)



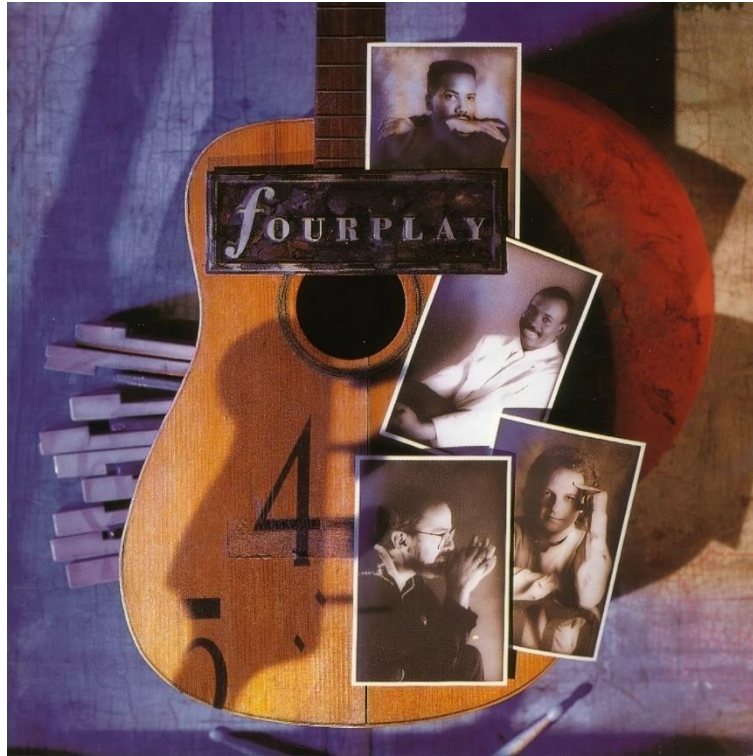
Coil produced some of the weirdest, darkest, and some of the creepiest music known to mankind in my opinion. For those who like Throbbing Gristle, Psychic TV, and Genesis P-Orridge might like Coil.

Coil's *Love Secret Domain* was the first Coil album I listened to. Immediately, when listening to it from the beginning, I was hooked into this odd assortment of very weird music and sounds.

This album has a crazy range of differing sound atmospheres from evil circus-like sounds with backward-sounding vocals, to mysteriously dark Japanese-sounding ambient music, to sinister didgeridoo pieces, to weird ethereal sounding tracks that are colder than experiencing a winter on Saturn's moon, Titan.

Out of all the Coil albums, this one is probably the most accessible of them all. The tracks, *Windowpane*, *The Snow*, and *Love's Secret Domain*, holds up on their own as great pieces of avant garde electronica.

#9. *Fourplay* by Fourplay (1991)



Fourplay is a smooth and crossover jazz group featuring one of my favourite musicians, Bob James, along with three others.

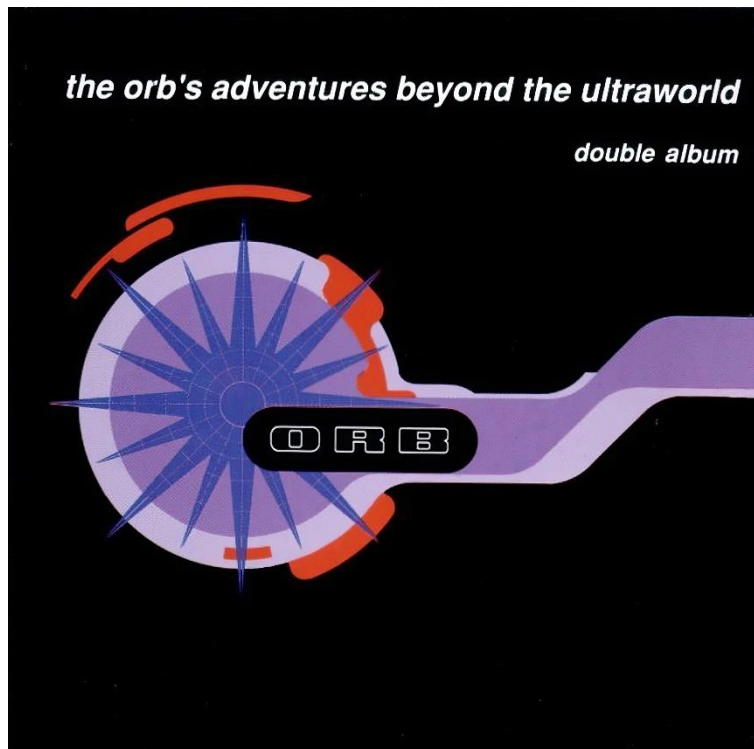
Now, for hardened traditional jazz fans, they would probably shun such music. Although it was produced in the early 90s, it has that 80s synth jazz feel, and certainly errs a bit on the sentimental gluey side of things.

However, the performance is quite engaging and many of the tracks have very hummable melodies which stick in the head after listening to them.

The sound quality is very nice as well and balanced. It's decisive and clear with excellent slam and dynamics making this album neither soft nor mushy despite the musical content.

I like most of the tracks on this album, but my favourite by far is *After The Dance*.

#10. *The Orb's Adventures Beyond The Ultraworld* by The Orb (1991)



The Orb is one of the defining ambient techno groups from the 90s which remain with us today as being utterly timeless.

This is quite a long album and not one I can listen to throughout unless it be as background music. These tracks are long tracks averaging around nine to ten minutes. This is not usually my style of listening to music but all the same, the style of the music is quite ethereal but with rhythm. It's like a futuristic and spacey version of the stuff that Enigma put out during 1990.

Little Fluffy Clouds is well-known, although I prefer the version to be found in the *Aubrey Mixes* which I list as the next album below.

As for a track on this album to listen to with undivided attention, it has to be the second track, *Earth (Gaia)*, with its Flash Gordon sound samples. It's so outer planetary sounding, trancelike, and mysterious.

#11. *Aubrey Mixes – The Ultraworld Excursions* by The Orb (1991)



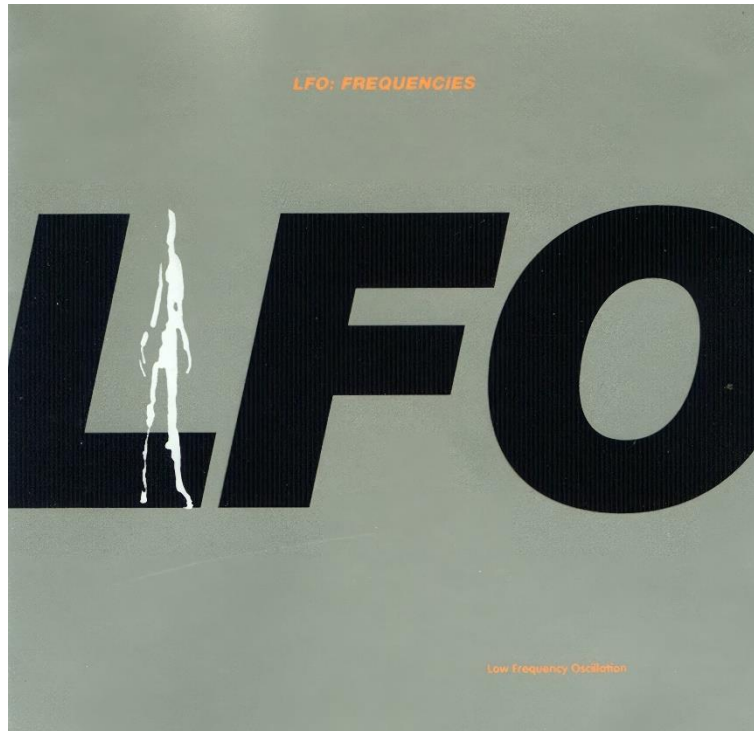
The Orb's *Aubrey Mixes of the Ultraworld Excursions* is a far less known remix album based on Orb's aforementioned *Adventures Beyond the Ultraworld*.

Although a remix album, this was the first Orb album I heard and it's still my favourite.

I love the *Little Fluffy Clouds (Cumulo Nimbus Mix)* and consider it a superior version of the original. Longer and far more atmospheric.

Another great track is *Outlands (Fountains of Elisha Mix)* which is real sci-fi ambient stuff.

#12. *Frequencies* by LFO (1991)



LFO has an unmistakable late-night lounge-like techno sound. The sound is definitely simplistic in many ways, almost being minimalist in sound but the melodies are very catching.

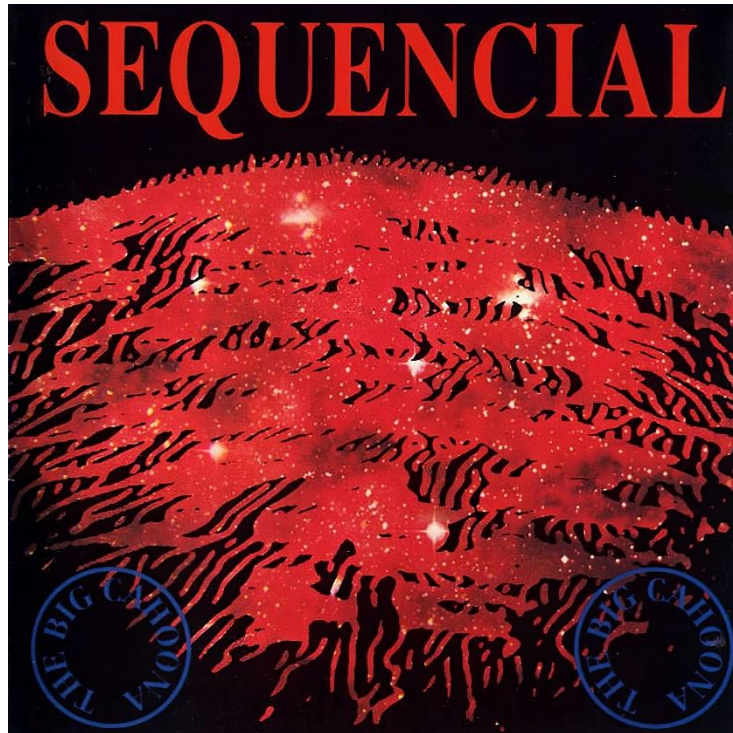
LFO's *Frequencies* is not an album which can be appreciated with a lot of background noise, for example, driving in a car. It's almost soft and muffled but at the same time being ambient and techno at the same time. It needs a quiet space, preferably in a blackened room, to be really appreciated.

I'd say that this album is on that borderline of being IDM (aka 'intelligent dance music') and ambient with a little bit of techno thrown in, but not a lot.

LFO, from a technical sound perspective, may seem crude and basic as if played on some quite average equipment, but the compositions are good and the melodies are engaging and interesting.

Noteworthy tracks are *LFO*, *Freeze*, and *Think A Moment*.

#13. *The Big Cahoona* by Sequential (1992)



Sequential consists of three techno artists who came together to deliver only one album, an album not very well known. Neither is it hosted on Spotify unfortunately.

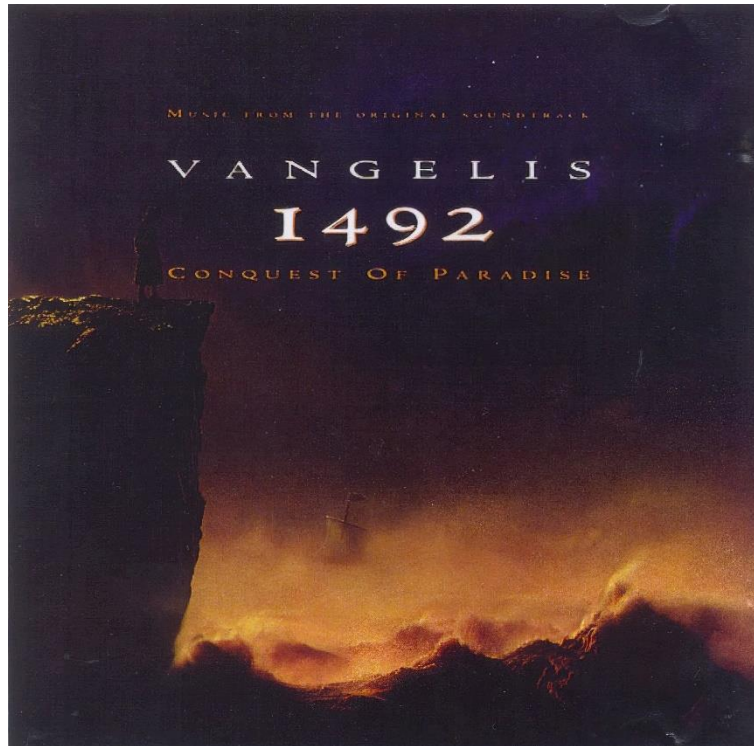
My sister having introduced me to this album during the early 90s, I managed to pick up a CD from Lou's Records in Encinitas just north of San Diego.

At times, it sounds a little outdated, however, it's a great mix of psychedelic trance techno stuff mixed together.

If you stumble upon it, grab it.

Noteworthy tracks include the combined *Visions of Capahuari/The Other World Of Gayomart/Transmutations* and *House Of The Dead*.

#14. 1492: Conquest Of Paradise by Vangelis (1992)



Vangelis's *1492: Conquest of Paradise* is a stunning piece of music used for the soundtrack for the equally stunning movie of the same name.

The movie, itself, documents the discovery of the New World by Christopher Columbus. The soundtrack compliments this movie perfectly. From joyful themes like *Conquest Of Paradise* to cathartic and tragic melodies like *Light and Shadow*, *Deliverance*, and *Hispaniola*.

The movie is not for the faint of heart with some scenes leaving a disturbing impression on those expecting a good family historical movie. And the music adds to the whole seriousness of the movie.

Soundtracks often have an overly repetitive nature throughout with many fragmented pieces, but not this one.

A superb album.

#15. *Tous Les Matins Du Monde* by Jordi Savall (1992)



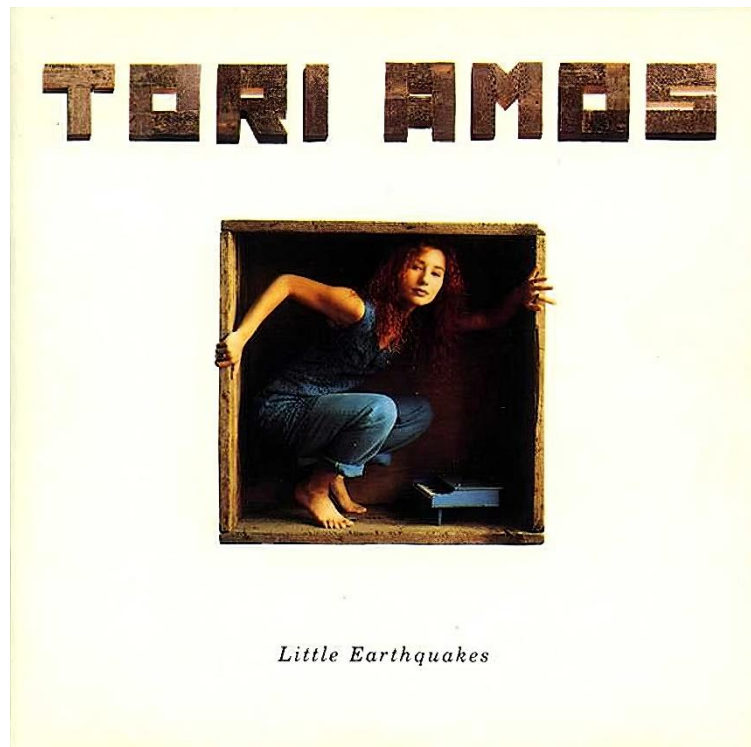
This is another soundtrack, and funnily enough, the film features the same actor, Gerard Depardieu, as in the aforementioned *1492: A Conquest of Paradise*.

I watched this film as a student at the Barbican Centre in London. Can't remember the film at all, however, I love its classical score. I do remember the film being quite good though.

The style of the music is baroque with heaps of lovely viol playing along with a few choral passages. The sound quality is crystal clear and beautiful as well.

It's a slow-moving album but wonderful both as pure listening or as background music. The last track is a great finale for the album.

#16. *Little Earthquakes* by Tori Amos (1992)



If you're after female singer/songwriter material, then you're missing out if you don't have Tori Amos's *Little Earthquakes*.

Tori Amos's voice, her scathing lyrics, and her piano playing is just supremely good.

Tori Amos created one of the most powerful tracks of this genre, the one titled *Precious Things*.

#17. *Nonsuch* by XTC (1992)



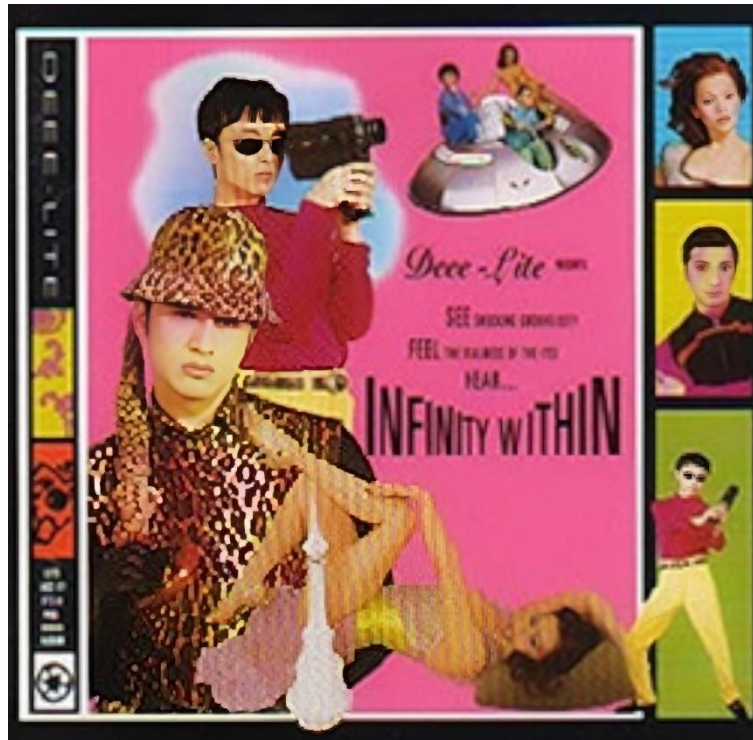
Apart from the track, *Making Plans for Nigel*, I didn't know much about XTC at all. However, after reading a review from a music magazine about XTC's latest album of the time, *Nonsuch*, I decided to buy the CD.

Instantly, I knew I found a gem. Every single track on this album is a great piece of music. The lyrics are awesome as well, many of them being politically charged and dystopian. While others are nostalgic and a little bit nonsensical.

The melodies are very strong which make first-time listening easy and appealing. Also, the sound quality is top-notch.

I don't know how many times I've played this album but one should definitely listen to the track, *The Smartest Monkeys*, to get an idea of this album.

#18. *Infinity Within* by Deee-Lite (1992)



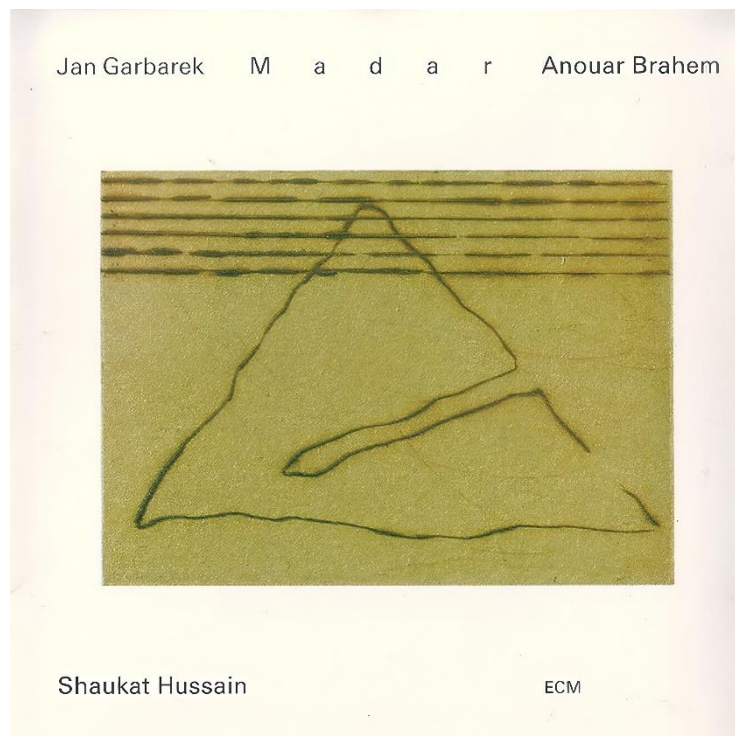
Most people will associate Deee-Lite with their hit track, *Groove Is In The Heart* on their *World Clique* album which is generally rated as an excellent album. However, their second album, *Infinity Within*, is my favourite despite it being much less known and lower-rated than the first.

The first album sounds a bit more funky and pop-like than the second album which replaces the funkiness with some classic house and dance themes.

While the melodies are simple, catchy and a little bit cheesy in places, the feel of the album is more late night dance stuff after the popular stuff for the masses had been exhausted earlier.

Great tracks include *Runaway*, *Two Clouds Above Nine*, and *Thank You Everyday*.

#19. *Madar* by Jan Garbarek, Anouar Braham and Shaukat Hussain (1992)



I have to throw in an ECM record in my lot of favourites. Based in Munich, ECM has produced some of the finest fusion of East meets West classical music, many of which feature the saxophone artist, Jan Garbarek.

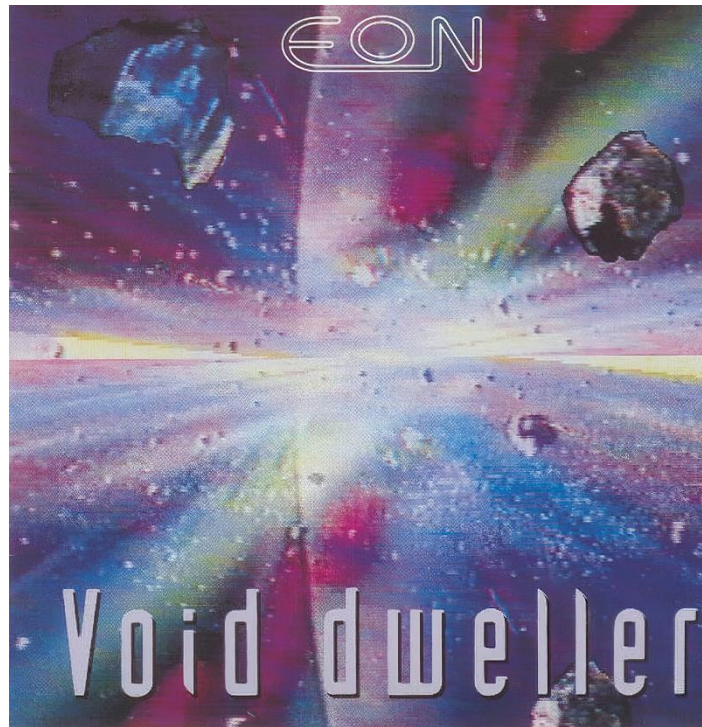
ECM are especially renowned for delivering exceptionally high quality sound with meticulous care in their state-of-the-art recording studios. Although nothing to do with the music, the artwork is wonderfully minimalistic and contemporary, some being abstract in nature, if that's your kind of art.

Madar was performed by the Norwegian jazz saxophonist, Jan Garbarek, accompanied by Ustad Shaukat Hussain from India and Anouar Brahem from Tunisia.

The sound is decidedly Middle Eastern in nature being sparse sounding to almost being skeletal in nature. Although, don't be fooled. This is very complex music. Every little pluck of the string, voice pop, drum tap, can be heard with utmost clarity. All this accompanied by the soft droning sound of the oud giving the sound a haunted and mysterious sound as if bouncing across vast waves of gigantic sand dunes.

The entire album is great for pure and background listening. My favourite tracks are *Sull Lull* and *Jaw*.

#20. *Void Dweller* by Eon (1992)



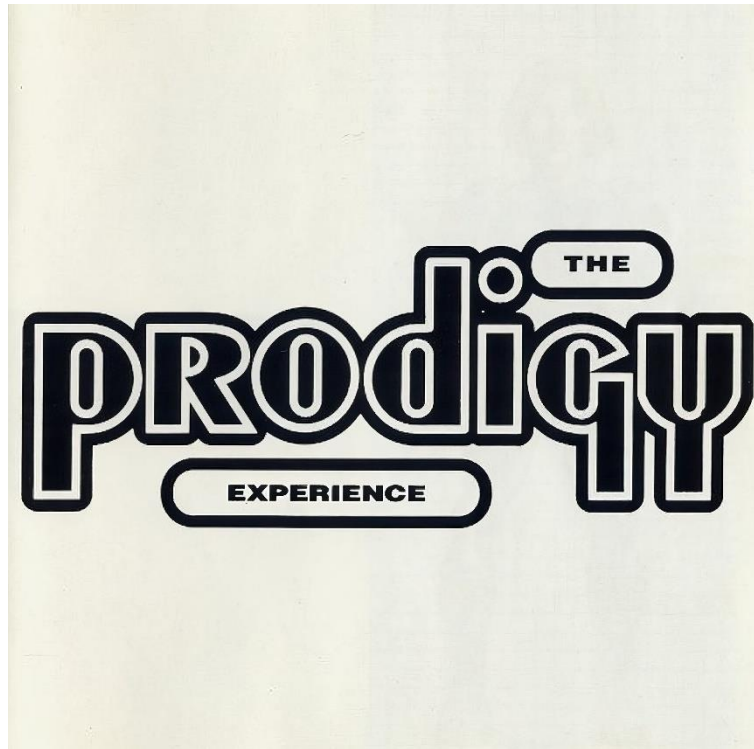
Anyone who likes techno simply must have this album. Eon, a.k.a. Ian Loveday, produced a great techno acid house album with themes dedicated to space travel and David Lynch's *Dune*.

Trust me, you won't be disappointed. Listen to the entire CD and get absorbed with it.

If you want to sample at least one track, play *Final Warning (Raucous Dub Mix)*, which, in my opinion is one of the most exciting acid house techno tracks ever made. And wow, that low throbbing bass!

Beware the mind killer!

#21. *Experience* by The Prodigy (1992)



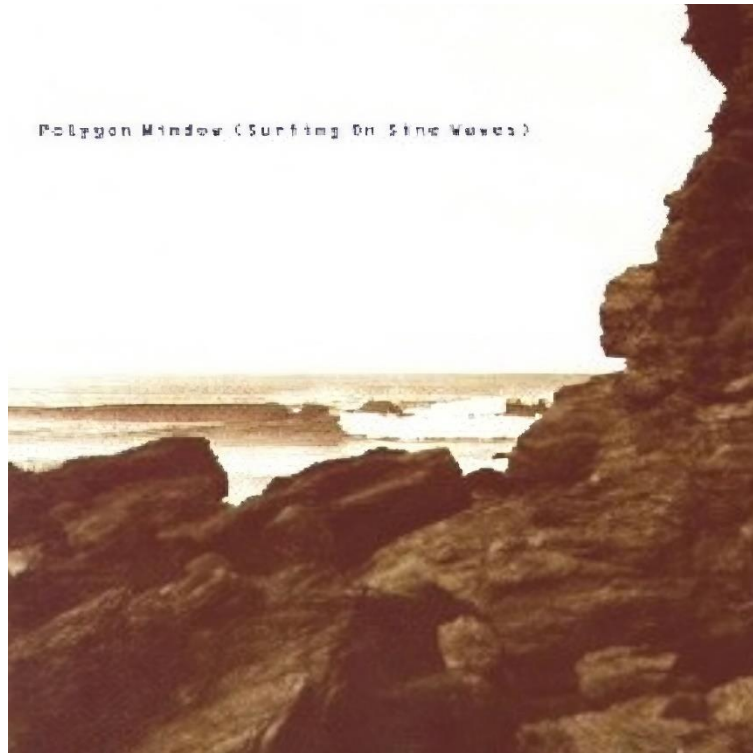
For techno lovers, I don't think The Prodigy needs much in a way of an introduction. The Prodigy represents one of the lynchpins of rave and hi-energy, if not the great granddaddy of them all.

This is my second favourite Prodigy album, the first being *Music For The Jilted Generation*.

This is one of those essential techno albums of the 90s without a doubt. And I'm pleased to say that I have a near-mint double LP pressing of it as well!

My favourite tracks are *Jericho* and *Out Of Space*.

#22. *Surfing On Sine Waves* by Polygon Window (1992)



Polygon Window is one of Richard D. James's alias, his main one being the all-too-famous Aphex Twin.

The 90s was a peculiar decade insofar that techno and electronica musicians often liked to be known through pseudonyms rather than their actual names. I guess it was the fashion during that time as anonymity was seen as cool whereas the newer EDM material from 2000 onwards focussed more on the artist especially through visual means as we progressed into the age of the Internet.

Richard James's *Surfing On Sine Waves* is one of those albums that every IDM lover must have. There's no silliness here. It's a little dark in places, however, it's not a slow moving album. It's quite a fast-paced album with thumping rhythms designed to put you in a different space. Perhaps a liminal space where we don't really want to be.

For example, the first track, *Polygon Window* to me sounds like being lost in an abandoned tube station deep in the heart of London somewhere. Circular tunnels with greenish-looking tiles leading to seemingly nowhere. A portal to the Underworld.

Then we have the trance-like pulsating and rhythmic *Quixote* which is fast-paced but somehow, melodramatic and lonely at the same time, with echoes of lost voices resonating in an unnatural world.

Absolutely love this piece of work.

#23. *Selected Ambient Works 85-92* by Aphex Twin (1992)



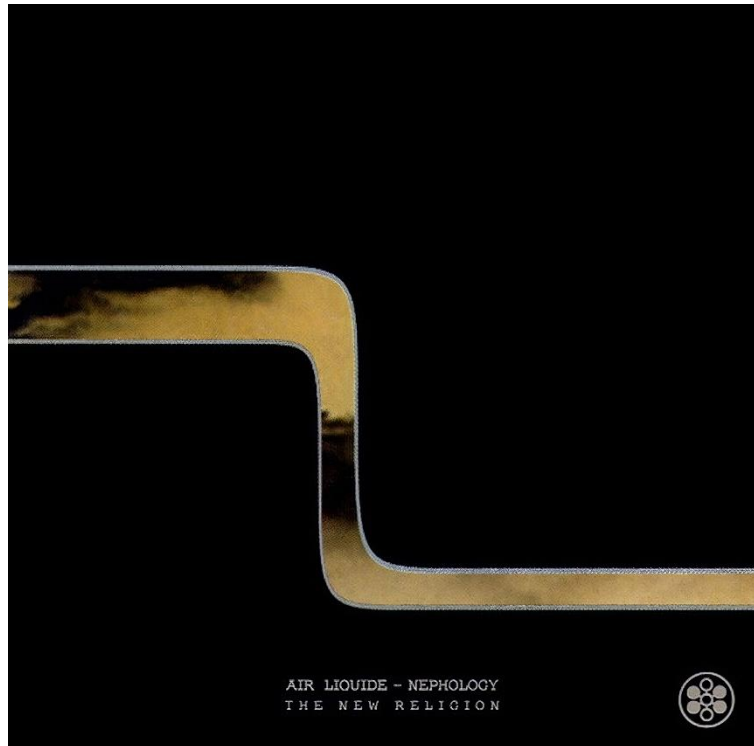
Aphex Twin's *Selected Ambient Works 85-92* is so well-known to fans of electronica that any introduction seems largely unnecessary.

I think it's a great album to have, however, it's not something I play very often. And this is only because of so much other amazing material out there which was produced around this time.

Aphex Twin lovers might have found that comment offensive as so many of them preach this as the ultimate album of its type.

Nonetheless, if you want to listen to just one track, try *Ptolemy*.

#24. *Nephology* by Air Liquide (1993)



Air Liquide is basically a couple of German dudes in the electronica techno acid trance scene. I'd say they're not that well-known by many, and this album, *Nephology* is hardly known at all.

And this is confusing because Spotify host an album called *Nephology (Restorated)*, which is the same as the German 1993 original. But I bought the CD in the UK which is a bit longer and different. For example, on my version, the first track is *The Cloud*, which is disappointingly absent on the Spotify version.

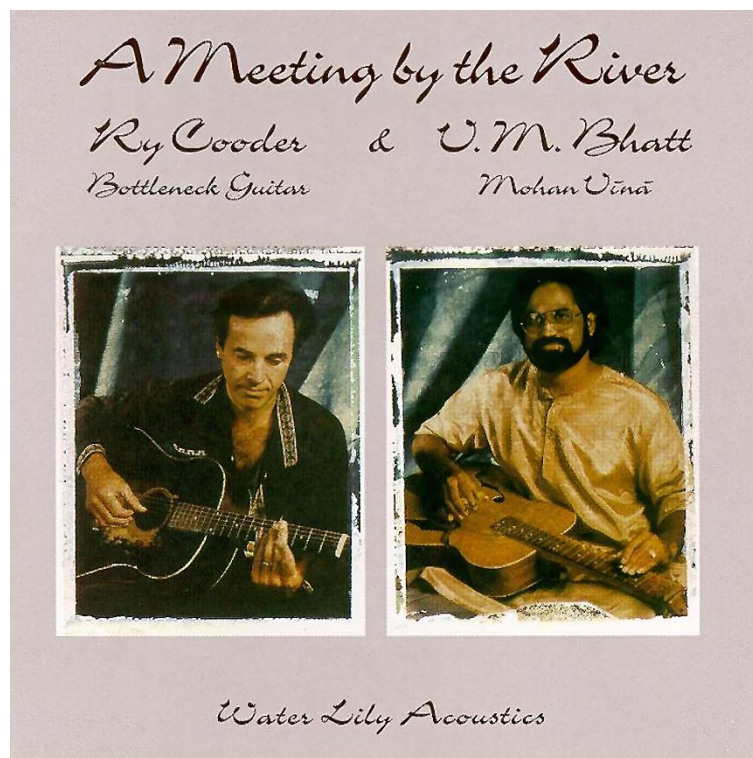
Nephology, the album with the first track starting with *The Cloud*, is a dark acid trance album, some tracks being frenetic and thumping while others are a bit of a 'creepfest'.

If you listen to this album in the dark, you may see strange things floating around your ceiling, I kid you not!

Best tracks are *The Cloud*, *Semiwave*, and the slow and creepy *Im Grlenmeyerkolben II*.

If you like dark and scary acid trance, this one is for you!

#25. *A Meeting By The River* by Ry Cooder & V.M. Bhatt
(1993)



You know that moment when you dine at an Indian restaurant and you hear some of that relaxing music in the background? Well here's a very beautiful version of that.

Extremely well-recorded, this is just one of those albums that demonstrate how well West can meet the East.

A truly lovely album.

#26. *Technohead – Mix Hard Or Die* by Various Artists (1993)



Obviously, this is not an album, nor is it one artist but a collection of high-energy techno artists which gave the 90s the accolade of being the decade of the hardest and fastest of all techno of all time.

This compilation is just pure fun and energy. Loud, fast, very fast, and really fast. It epitomises everything about the hard techno scene and its music encompassing all moods from being exceptionally silly to being seriously dark and dystopian in nature.

The first track, *The Passion*, is quite well-known in hard techno circles as being one of the first of its kind. The kind of music progressively getting faster towards the 200 BPM mark in which any faster would defeat the purpose because you'd just half the beats to keep up. The next track *Genetic Waste* demonstrates the paranoia of this genre for example.

For a real touch of dystopia mixed with super hard techno beats should listen to *Nightmares Are Reality*. Many would just class this as just noise but listen to this at high volume, without neighbours, and you'll feel like being in quite a strange world. Perhaps fighting off the Skynet machines?

Playing this record real loud is just pure fun, but make sure your neighbours are away!

#27. *World Techno Tribe* by Various Artists (1993)



World Techno Tribe is a compilation of various techno artists during the early 90s by Universal and Rising High Records.

There's some seriously good stuff on this compilation with each track seamlessly flowing into the next making this one of those compilations to listen to in its entirety.

The compilation has some really hardcore stuff with stuff from Caustic Window (an alias of Richard James of Aphex Twin), Suburban Hell and CJ Bolland. Then there are the lovely and beautiful mellow tracks from Sequential and Sven Vath. Other greats include those from Laurent Garnier, Resistance D, and Dave Angel.

Recommendation? Get this compilation and listen to it throughout. Loud!

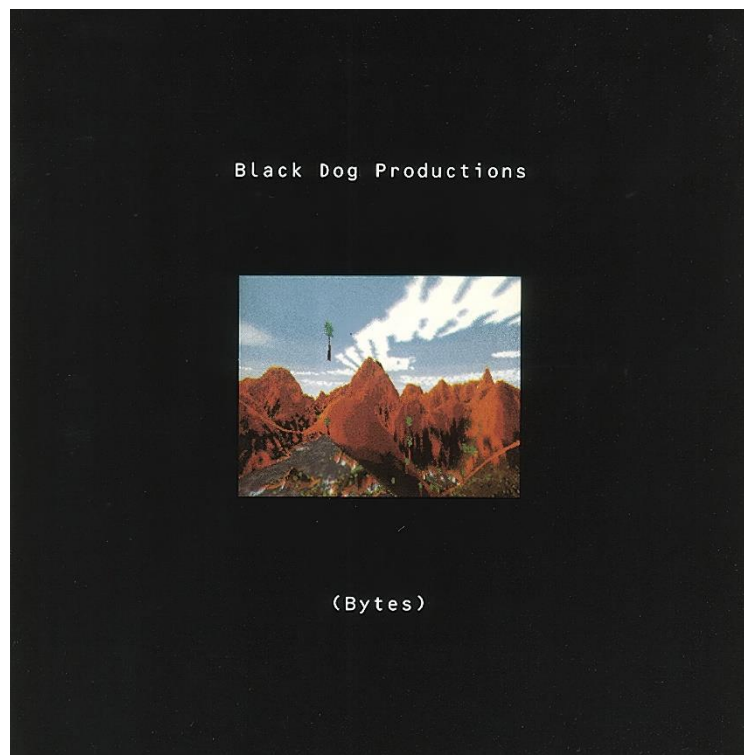
Notable pieces include the pairing of the third and fourth tracks by Caustic Window's *Joyrex 4* and Suburban Hell's *List 2*. This is just hardcore stuff and it's awesome.

For something mellower and inspirational, try Sequential's *Sequential*.

For complete relaxation and space-like charm, the last track by Sven Vath, *Barbarella*, is exactly that. Remember the movie *Barbarella* starring Jane Fonda from the 60s? This is *just* that!

This compilation is one of the best ever made for the combination of house, techno, IDM, and acid ever made.

#28. *Bytes* by Black Dog Productions (1993)



If I had to choose one IDM compilation ever, this one would be it.

Remember, IDM is a peculiar acronym meaning Intelligent Dance Music, which is odd because why is it intelligent and why is it danceable?

IDM is *not* mainstream by any definition. It's never anything you'd encounter at your local nightclub unless you've got some renegade DJ who wants to inject some IDM into the crowd for further enlightenment, should I say.

Bytes is a compilation by Black Dog Productions and represents one, if not the best collection of IDM tracks ever.

The melodies and harmonies are wonderful, evocative, and, to me, highly nostalgic. The times of the 90s. The eve of the bizarre and wonderful world of eclectic IDM music.

Great tracks include *Object Orient*, *Caz*, *Fight the Hits*, and my favourite, *Merck* by Balil which is just sublime.

Interestingly, the artist, Bjork, rated this as her favourite album of all time in an interview for a Muzik magazine during the 90s.

#29. *No Limits* by 2 Unlimited (1993)



No Limits by 2 Unlimited is quintessentially the stuff of nightclubs *should have been* playing during this time. I say this because I don't recollect anything from this great dance album ever being played in a nightclub, which is a bit of a shame. However, a not too dissimilar album by Capella called *U Got To Know* did manage to get a lot of its material on to the dance floor in many nightclubs.

This is a great album for those who like dance music.

Great tracks include *The Power Age*, *Break the Chain*, and *R.U.O.K.*

#30. *Kamakiriad* by Donald Fagen (1993)



If you're into Steely Dan and Donald Fagen, you'll probably know this second album by Donald Fagen after Steely Dan split.

It's a bit of a mixed bag in a way, however, it's got some very catchy material on it.

Like Fagen's previous album, *The Nightfly*, it has a somewhat nostalgic feel to it. Whereas *The Nightfly* was about 1950s and 60s halcyon arcana, this album is supposed to be futuristic in a way that those in the 1950s and 60s thought would happen.

The album is comfort music with some great melodies. Also, in typical Steely Dan fashion, great studio sound quality as well.

Notable tracks include *Springtime*, *Snowbound*, and *On The Dunes*.

#31. *Debut* by Bjork (1993)



My goodness, how many times did I play Bjork's *Debut* album?

Bjork had a completely new sound combining electronic dance, pop, and Icelandic folk music.

The album perfectly conveys the feeling of going out hard on a winter's night out in Reykjavik going from pub to pub and then ending up late at night at a private party.

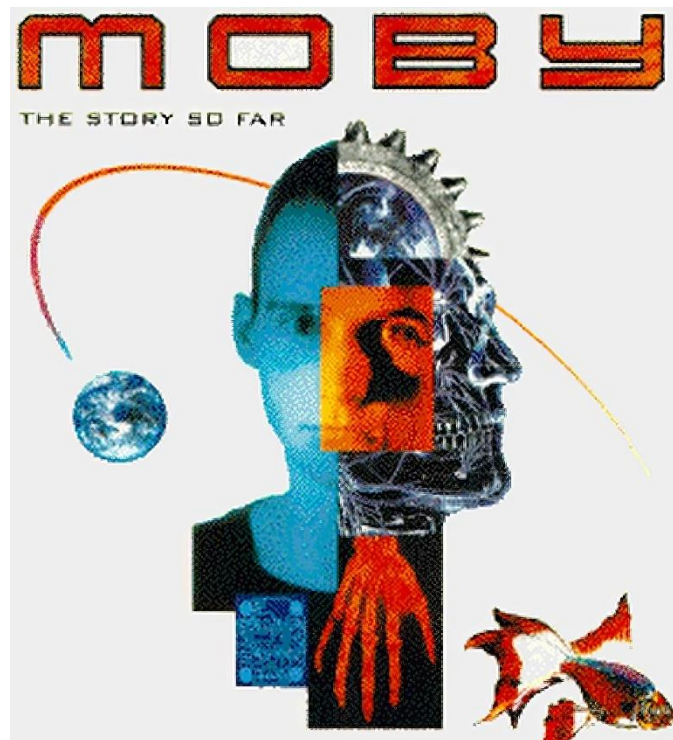
The first time one listens to Bjork will note the odd combination of musical scales which she often likes to use. For example, the track *One Day* is decidedly unusual in this fashion.

And then you get a strange and surreal change of style when *Come To Me* kicks in followed by the quite avant-garde techno-sounding *Violently Happy*.

The second and third tracks, *Crying* and *Venus As A Boy*, probably represent the best two tracks should one have to choose a portion of this album to listen to.

There's something very sexy and sophisticated about this most amazing of albums.

#32. *The Story So Far* by Moby (1993)



Now, I have to say this. I found Moby tend to be rather over-indulgent and somewhat annoying to my taste. For example, I simply do not like their, frankly overrated, album, *Play*, which came later during 1999.

However, where *Play* got all the rave reviews, I opt for the Moby's much earlier album *The Story So Far*. This album is exciting and so techno, whereas *Play* is, ugh, Pedestrian. They try to mix this bluesy stuff with vocals and then add an electronic track to it? No. And, seriously, please do not play *Natural Blues* from *Play*!

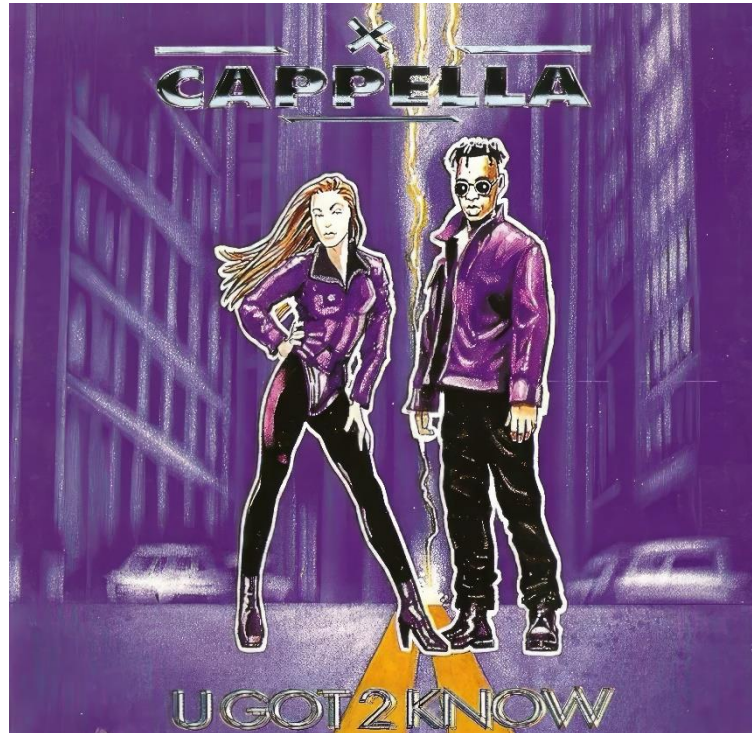
Why do I pick on their album *Play*? It's because if you ask most people or Spotify to play Moby, they will play something from *Play*!

The Story So Far represents fun of the techno and energy that Moby can spit out for the early 90s. So many good tracks on this album. So active. So housy. So 90s techno. Just fun.

And has anyone who likes techno actually listened to this album? Because they should if they haven't.

This album works particularly well in the car by the way.

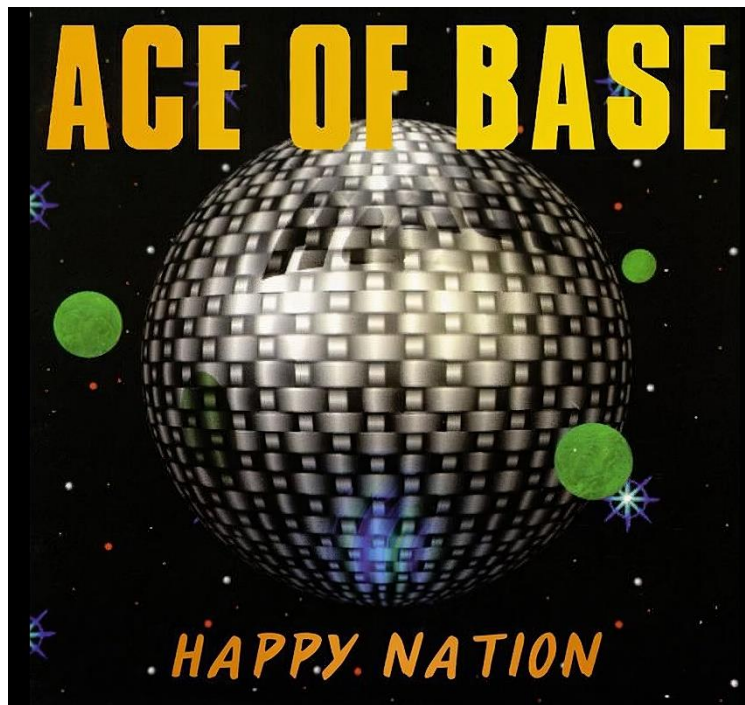
#33. *U Got 2 Know* by Cappella (1993)



Cappella was one of those legendary dance groups of the 90s which infiltrated some of the best nightclubs in London. I first listened to Cappella while being in the awesome theatre-turned-nightclub, the Camden Palace, a massive cavernous art-deco styled nightclub in northern London during the 90s.

U Got 2 Know was one of those legendary hits most techno dance fans would be familiar with. The other tracks are pretty good as well, but don't forget to listen to the truly inspirationally energetic track, *What I Gotta Do*.

#34. *Happy Nation* by Ace Of Base (1993)



Alright, I get it, Ace of Base is a bit, how should I say it, a 90s version of Abba maybe? Well, they are from Sweden and they sound very poppy and catchy like Abba in a way.

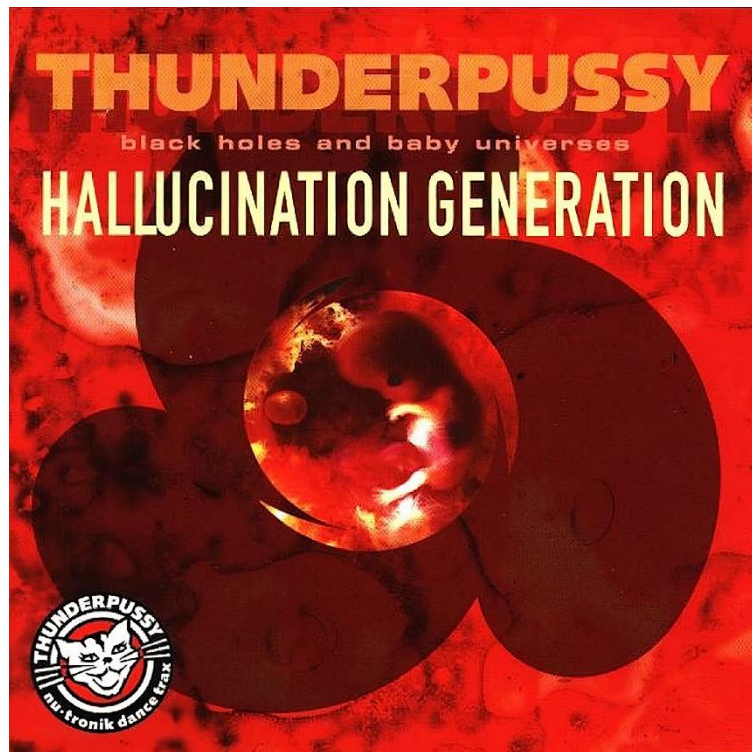
Although, different. Lots of reggae rhythm fused with electronic dance music in this album.

Now, don't get confused with Ace of Base's *The Sign* which is similar to *Happy Nation*. *Happy Nation* is the original and is, by far, the better. Make sure the album art is as above!

This is just one great album with memorable dance hits that everyone can enjoy.

As the name of the album suggests, it is a very happy sounding album to listen to.

#35. *Black Holes And Baby Universes* by Hallucination Generation (1994)



Hallucination Generation's *Black Holes And Baby Universes* is not an album which you'll easily find.

A friend of mine while at university introduced this quite interesting and deeply trance-like album to me.

Being very space-like with lots of seemingly subliminal voices in a space-like environment, this album ejects you into the world of the outer aether much like an Orb album would do. However, this is much more rhythmic and trance-like with riveting solid bass lines and melodramatic chord sequences.

If you want to choose two best tracks of this album, try the awesome tracks, *Planet Poom (No More Heartbreaks)* and *Magic Flux (remix 2: Total Emergion)*. Make sure the version you get has these two tracks!

Pleased to say that I have the original double LP vinyl of this great piece of deep trance techno music.

Feels kind of futuristic and seriously.... Out there.

#36. *Innerelements* by Ken Ishii (1994)



KEN ISHII INNERELEMENTS

The second you play this album, goosepimples will pop up because Japanese techno IDM music is inanelly different from what we're used to, being somewhat cold and distant as to what we're used to.

Discordant chords, bleeps, fractures of sounds with a curt and harsh rhythm defines this album. But inside, there's a real sense of Japanese style traditional music embedded in this.

For those wanting to experience what the Japanese consider their version of IDM, this is worth a listen.

Newcomers to this album should listen to the tracks, *A.F.I.A.C.* and *Pneuma*.

The techno-heavy track, *Pneuma*, has a very interesting, and somewhat, spooky Japanese sound to it.

#37. *Sinsekai* by Tanzmusik (1994)



It was during the 90s that I came across interesting techno and dance albums from a magazine called Muzik. They recommended this and, I have to say, I was not disappointed.

Tanzmusik, despite sounding German, is, in fact, a Japanese techno band. Their album, *Sinsekai*, is spritely, fun, extremely interesting, and *very* Japanese at heart.

This is not a well-known album, certainly not on Spotify.

From rich sounding tracks like *Air* to spooky tracks with that creepy Japanese vocal sound in *Sight* to crazy-ass Japanese techno material like *Container*, this techno album is serious Japanese frenetic techno at its finest.

So under the radar.

**#38. *Technohead 2 – Harder and Faster* by Various Artists
(1994)**



Another Technohead compilation!

Technohead 2 – Harder and Faster is another fun and frenetic hard techno album to enjoy.

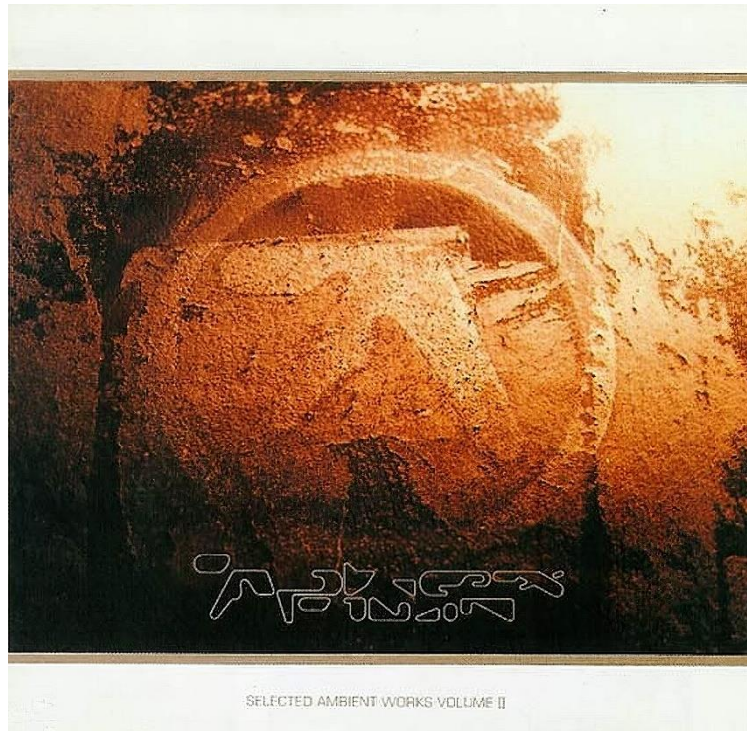
You do need a sense of humour to listen to this stuff. It's sometimes not what you expect.

The beats are hard. The rhythm is super-fast. But it's pure fun and actual physical sensation especially when played real loud.

It's at times, fun and jocular, but then it suddenly regresses into this dark and broody atmosphere.

The first track, *Accelerator 1*, is a seriously good bit of Technohead-music material.

#39. *Selected Ambient Works Vol. II* by Aphex Twin (1994)



Aphex Twin's *Selected Ambient Works Vol II* is a very long piece of strange and haunting ambient and often disturbing music.

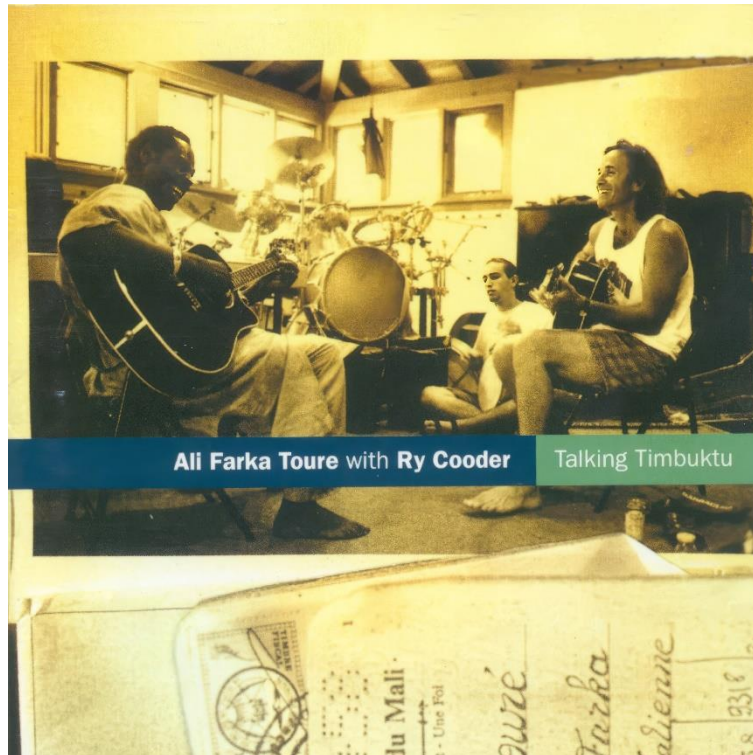
It is *totally* different from the first *Selected Ambient Works 85-92*. Rather than being rhythmic and pulsating like the first album, this one is more dissonant and alien-sounding.

The sound of this album is much like being in the middle of a lucid dream. Old abandoned towns in the extreme latitudes. Being within liminal spaces you can't find an exit from.

I listened to this album in a darkened room while laying on my bed. I looked up at the ceiling, and when the fifth track, *Grass*, came along, I saw some really weird stuff going on up there. Shadows coalescing into each other, and other strange hallucinatory things going along.

Heard nothing quite like this before.

#40. *Talking Timbuktu* by Ali Farka Toure with Ry Cooder (1994)



If you're into world music, this album shouldn't be overlooked.

Ry Cooder teams up with Mali musician, Ali Farke Toure to create a great album featuring elements of sub Saharan Africa with Cooder's exemplary guitar-playing skills.

A lovely album to listen to.

#41. *Lifeforms* by Future Sound of London (1994)



I first encountered Future Sound of London during the early 90s when listening to their album *Lifeforms*.

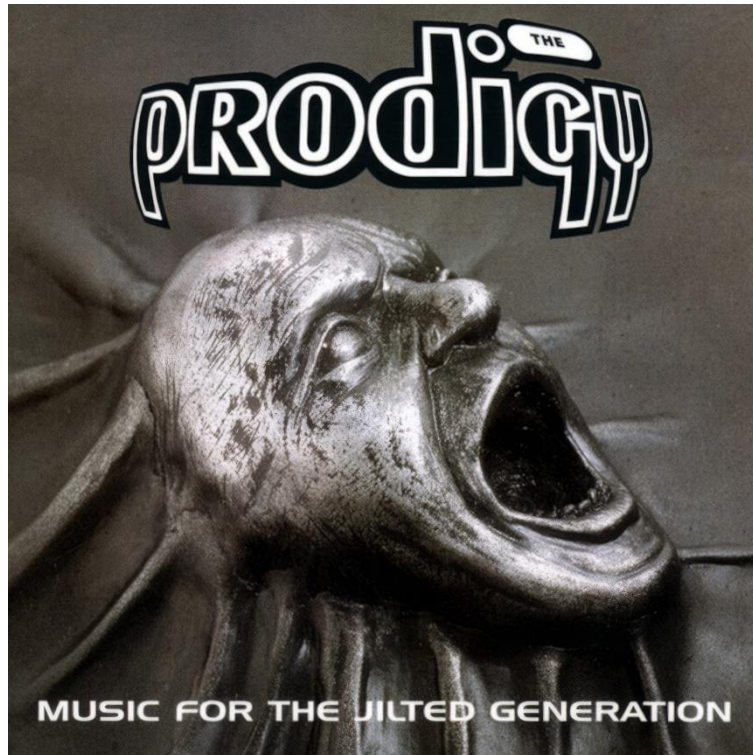
Lifeforms is a very atmospheric album that needs to be heard from start to finish. In some ways, this album is a bit like an Orb record, but somehow, more serious and introspective, much of which, Future Sound of London is like.

I will say that this is a truly epic example of how sophisticated electronica can get. It is sublime without being overly jocular and simplistic. It feels like this piece of work is a mix of electronica and classical, but also injected with a hint of the esoteric and the Orient thrown in.

It's a truly magnificent piece of work.

Two tracks especially worthy of attention are *Cascade* and *Lifeforms*.

#42. *Music For The Jilted Generation* by The Prodigy (1994)

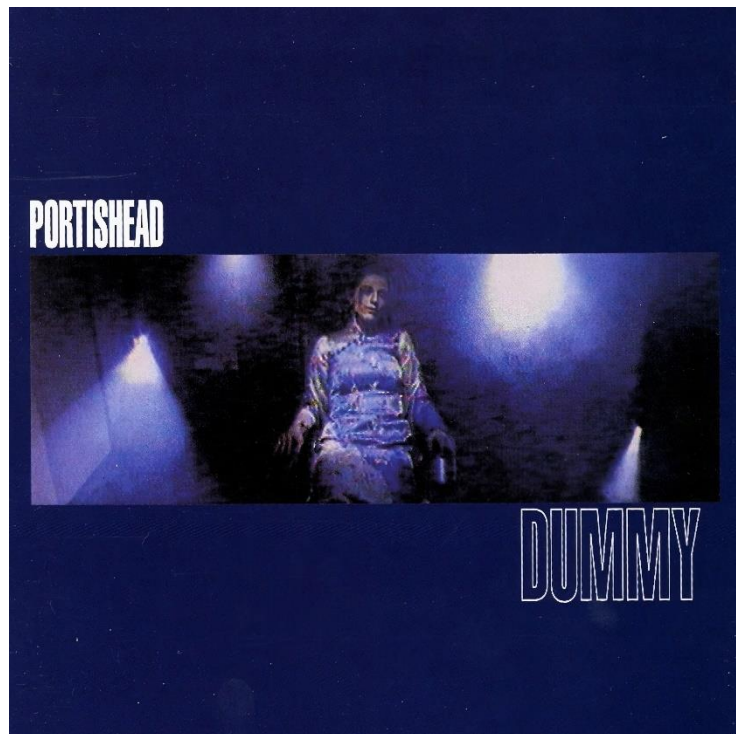


Prodigy's *Music For The Jilted Generation* is not only Prodigy's best album by far in my opinion, but also represents what high-energy rave techno music is all about.

There is no silliness, no messy grunginess, and no boring bits. It's exciting and fast, yet solemn and discordant in its sound. The one track which hit the radio in a shorter version is *No Good (Start The Dance)*, which, like all the tracks on this album, is an exciting track to listen to.

This album will always be that timeless piece and demonstrates in a way, just how *unexciting* things had become in the world of electronica from the 2000s on.

#43. *Dummy* by Portishead (1994)



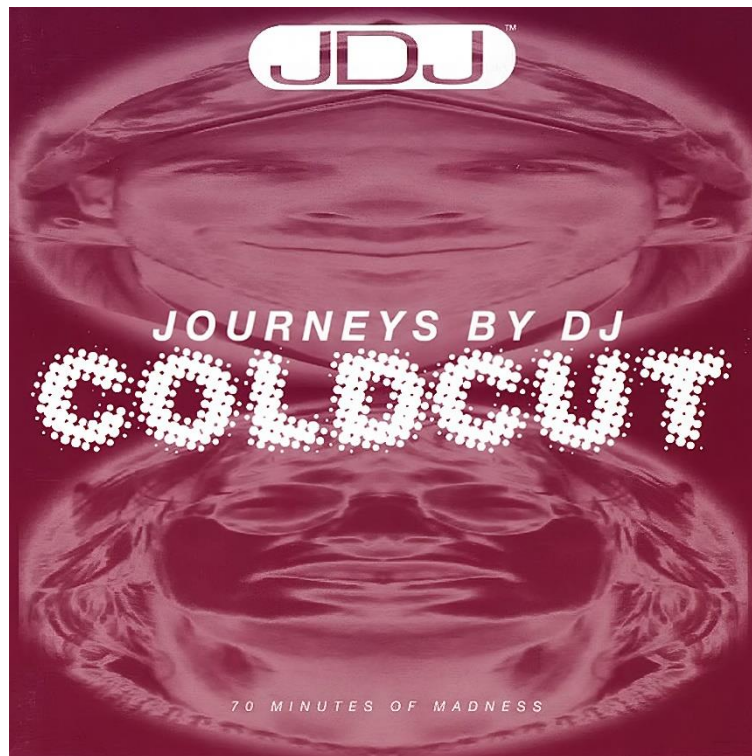
When I first heard Portishead, I discovered a sound which I've never heard before, the closest being that of Bjork, which, to fair, is still a *long* way off!

They call this kind of music lo-fi trip-hop and it's quite shady and mysterious leaning heavily on sombre minor scales, theremin-like sounds, and haunting vocals executed beautifully by Beth Gibbons.

I took to Portishead instantly.

A great album but wait until you hear Portishead's second album, *Portishead*, coming up on this list!

#44. *70 Minutes Of Madness* by Various Artists (1995)



70 Minutes Of Madness is a DJ mix of music by a collection of artists put very cleverly together by Coldcut, who also included some of their own material.

This is a very dynamic album and is meant to be listened to in its entirety. All one hour and 12 minutes of it!

It's fast with everything from hard-core jungle, to ska reggae, to scary techno, to inner city beats, to lounge house, and even to, what I consider, to be the best mix of the Doctor Who theme ever which later comes with a creepy Dario Argento opera vocal background.

This album is such an adventure!

#45. *Spanners* by The Black Dog (1995)



The Black Dog's *Spanner* album is one of the best finds I came across in the IDM ecosphere. Unlike Black Dog Production's *Bytes*, which is essentially a collection of other IDM artists, this album is Black Dog's own and has quite a distinctive sound I've never come across before.

It took a few listening sessions to really get into this. It's weird and complex in so many ways. This is the kind of music you listen to alone and as you listen to it, there is a certain raising of awareness and self-enlightenment that follows.

It's the perfect music that makes one think up ideas and thoughts.

At times, the sound can be edgy, but there are many moments in which there is a real sense of serenity and mystique.

The real star on this album is the ten-minute masterpiece, *Psil-Cosyin*, which successfully integrates a haunting Middle Eastern sound to the music. This track is one of the best pieces of electronica ever made in my opinion.

Another great track so typical of the best of IDM, is *Frisbee Skip*.

If you're into IDM, this album is essential!

#46. *I Care Because You Do* by Aphex Twin (1995)



I Care Because You Do by Aphex Twin is an album which keeps you on edge. Play the first track, and you'll see what I mean.

Hard rhythms, unexpected noises, and a somewhat creepy background throws you into some deluded paranoid dream which you kind of want to explore but kind of want to get out as well.

And then you go onto the second track, *Waxen Pith*, which is bizarre with laser-like sounds against sounds of cellos and violins. Very odd.

The fourth track, *Icct Hedral (Edit)* is one of the best IDM electronic tracks I've come across. However, it's for those who like scary and dark IDM. It's gothic and frightening with overthrows of pandemonium and Hell with a pulsating rhythm and sinister organ chords. Interestingly, this track attracted the classical composer, Phillip Glass, who created a version of this using a traditional symphony orchestra.

I must warn anyone not to listen to the fifth track, *Ventolin*, if they have any paranoia or prone to be disturbed by quite nasty acoustic effects. The overall sonic line of this track is this nasty high-pitched sound with distorted rhythms. It is decidedly disturbing, this track.

This album is like being an urban explorer. Be cautious! But it's a cool album and I like it.

#47. *Post* by Bjork (1995)



After listening to Bjork's debut album, *Debut*, I rushed to get her second album, *Post*.

This is such a different album from her first in so many ways. Not that it's better, but rather, it seems far more sombre, complex and inquisitive.

Not only that, the melodies are really quite complex with some very interesting chord combinations. For those who understand musical modes, Bjork employed the use of the least-used and rather sinister-sounding Locrian mode in her first track, *Army Of Me*. Now, if you don't like the sound of that track, it's possibly because you're not used to this most strange of modes.

After listening to this album, I came to realise that Bjork represents one of the most complex, and, at the time, one of the most underrated musicians to roam the planet.

Hyper-Ballad is one very strange track with lyrics depicting throwing things off cliffs including oneself. Not sure, but Bjork certainly seemed to thrive on the darker side of things.

Isobel is another great track and also, the one being fairly well-known.

#48. *Culture* by Liquid (1995)



I don't know much about the artist but I came across this album from a customer who brought in a CD to test out while I was selling hi-fi equipment for a shop in London during the 90s.

I don't think this album is that well-known but very happy, and somewhat surprised, to say that it's on Spotify as of writing.

This is simple and happy techno dance music with vocals and a hint of reggae thrown in. This album is equally as good listening at home on a chair or dancing full-out on a dance floor.

Culture is a very engaging house techno dance album which everyone can enjoy.

Notable tracks include *Rise*, *Closer*, *Hope Against Hope*, and *Sweet Harmony*.

#49. *Polar Sequences* by Higher Intelligence Agency & Biosphere (1996)



We have to talk a little bit about Geir Jønsen, otherwise known as Biosphere.

This Norwegian musician from Norway's northerly city, Tromsø, seems to like the remote, the cold, and the estranged. He's also an experienced mountaineer conquering some very remote and frigidly cold peaks, which most certainly, reflects in his compositions.

Polar Sequences is a very cold album and reminds me of my own journeys to an abandoned mine near the town of Longyearbyen, situated only a few hundred miles from the North Pole on the islands of Spitsbergen, north of Norway.

Apparently, he had a concert somewhere up high on a mountain in Tromsø accessible by cablecar to demonstrate this album. How otherworldly would that be?

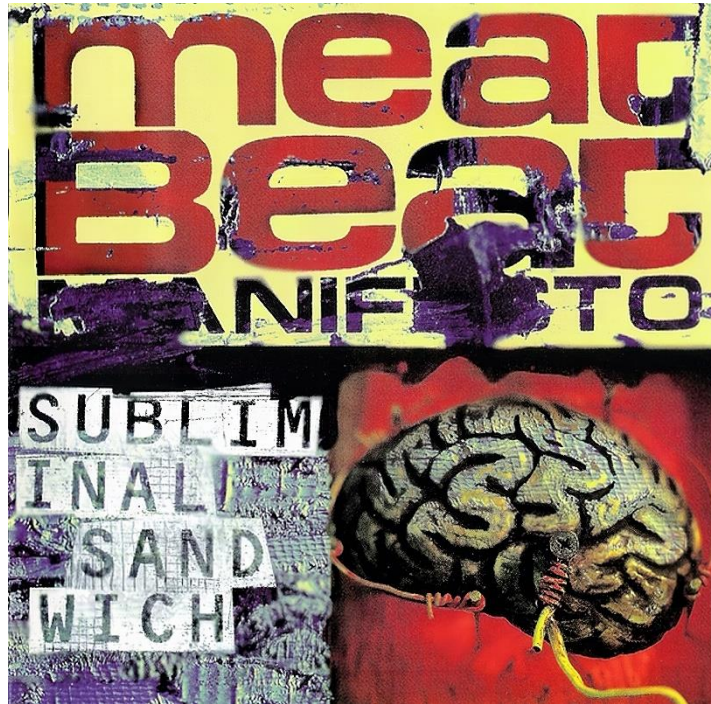
The first track, *Cimmerian Shaft*, depicts some nightmarish scene of dark, blizzard-like conditions, in which a series of mining elevator winches can be heard constantly hauling up ore from the deep earth.

Countdown to Darkness is a very eerie track as well which can bring your own living room temperatures down a notch or two just listening to this.

Even the album art of a typical Inuit shelter somewhere in the Far North of Scandinavia is both modern and cold at the same time.

A very, literally, cool album.

#50. *Subliminal Sandwich* by Meat Beat Manifesto (1996)



Meat Beat Manifesto came out with a prolific amount of material during the 90s. It's sound is electronica with a definitive dreamlike and lucid-like quality to it. Dissonant background droning sounds, lots of minor and diminished chord sequences, spacelike and distant hums, and alluring rhythms makes the sound of Meat Beat Manifesto quite unique.

Subliminal Sandwich is a double CD containing more than two hours of quite unusual material to take in. I can't really class it in any one type of electronica. It's not really IDM, not really techno, not really trance, but something else. Something very much otherworldly and dreamlike.

Much of Meat Beat Manifesto's sound is reminiscent of being stuck in a claustrophobic dream that you can't get out of. It's the perfect sound for a horror video game in which you have to find your way out of some horrible labyrinth.

Some very interesting tracks to talk about.

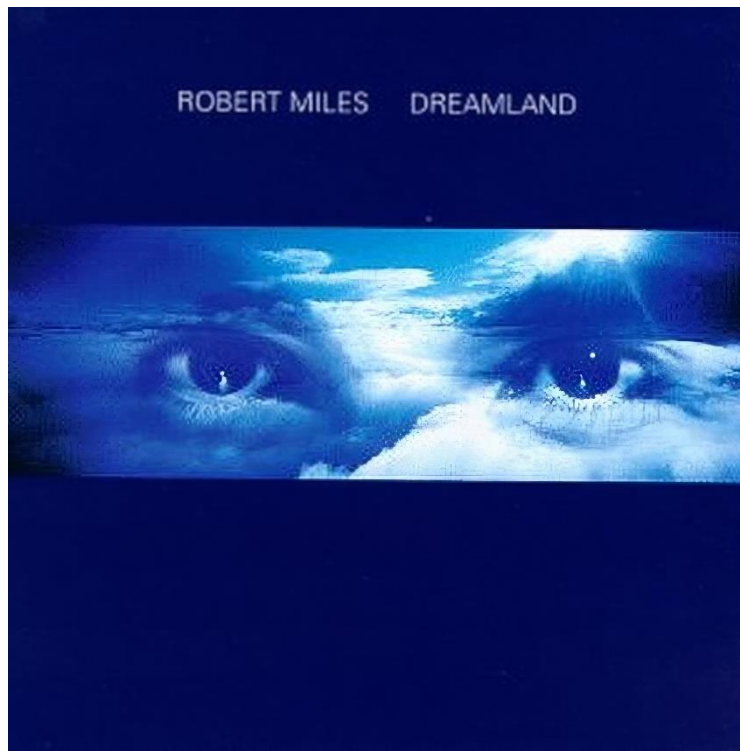
Addiction is just a screwed-up fabulous track to enjoy.

Stereophrenic is so out of this world and trancelike. Listen to this one loud. It will succumb you.

The last track, *Simulacra*, is indeed mysterious and cold, like the arctic tundra. As for the title, it does invoke the writings of Jean Baudrillard who wrote the rather heavy-reading *Simulacra and Simulation*. A book which, perhaps, inspired the movie, *The Matrix*.

This is the perfect music companion for lucid dreaming.

#51. *Dreamland* by Robert Miles (1996)



When I first heard *Children* by Robert Miles, I loved it instantly. It's a simple but beautiful melody accompanied by a good dance rhythm which can be enjoyed on the dance floor as well. It's spacey, rhythmic, and pensive as well. I had many sentimental moments with this piece during my nightclub days in my late twenties.

I bought the CD, *Dreamland*, and was not disappointed. Although some of the tracks were a little too similar and not particularly complex in any way, they were all good and offered great comfort music.

Favourite tracks are *Children*, *Landscape*, and *In My Dreams*.

#52. *Pansoul* by Motorbass (1996)



A lot of the electronic music I got during the 90s was chosen from reviews out of my favourite music magazine of the time, *Muzik*. Motorbass's *Pansoul* was mentioned as being a great find so I bought the CD at a nearby shop.

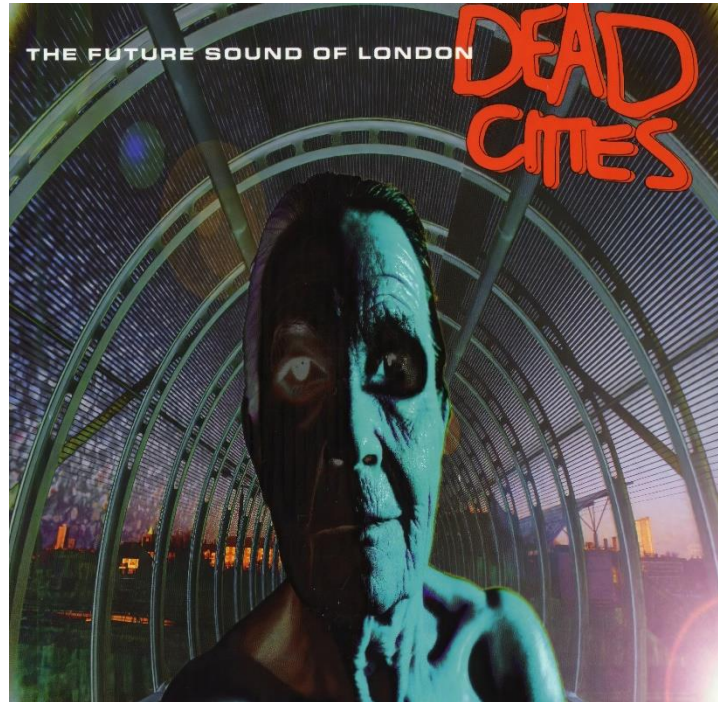
Motorbass is a French electronic group and only did one album, which is this one, *Pansoul*. This is a pity, because Motorbass's sound was so unique in many ways and I feel, somehow, they could have carried on a little longer.

Pansoul is so nighttime urban sounding. The concrete jungle at night. Staring out from one of those soulless tenement blocks on the outskirts of a large French city looking across a sea of bland orange sodium street lighting.

There's a little jazziness thrown into this quite complex sounding electronic soundscape. It's very difficult to describe this music but it's captivating. It's a little alien in places but at the same time, being in a familiar environment on the outskirts of a big city. Hard to describe.

A quite unusual electronic album which is astounding and not that well-known either.

#53. *Dead Cities* by The Future Sound Of London (1996)



When I saw the album cover to *Dead Cities* by The Future Sound Of London, I thought to myself, I remember seeing that exact tunnel across a bleak bit of highway traversing the north end of Isle of Dogs with the east London suburb of Poplar. The Isle of Dogs contains London's cold and sterile Docklands city with Canary Wharf being the centre point.

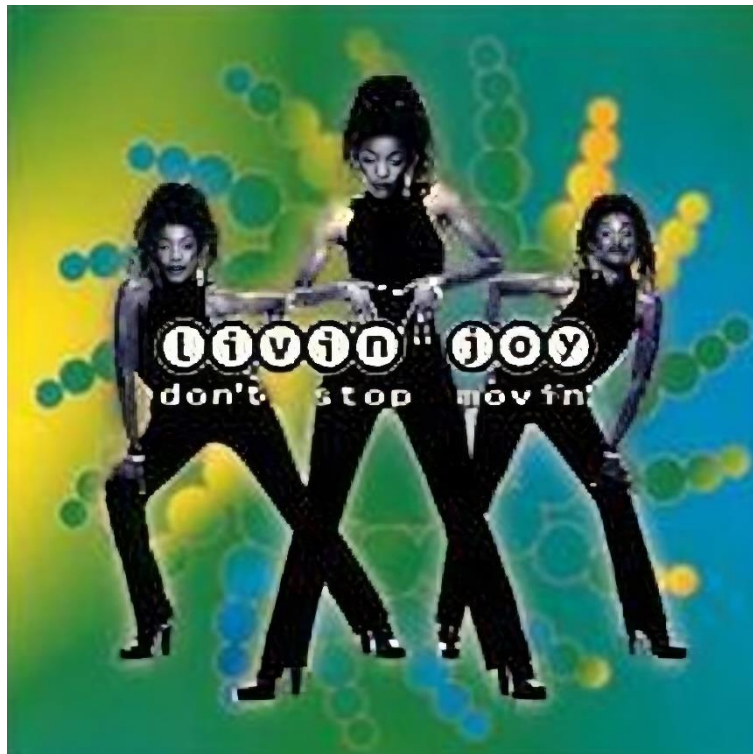
It's a cold and sterile place, and this album, *Dead Cities*, by The Future Sound Of London, is the perfect accompaniment.

This album is dystopian through and through, depicting suffering, loneliness, and decay of dying cities, as the album title suggests.

What is unnerving about this album is that so many of today's Western European cities have deteriorated so badly that this album may just be too close to the bone.

If you have to listen to one track, try *Dead Cities*.

#54. *Don't Stop Movin'* by Livin' Joy (1996)



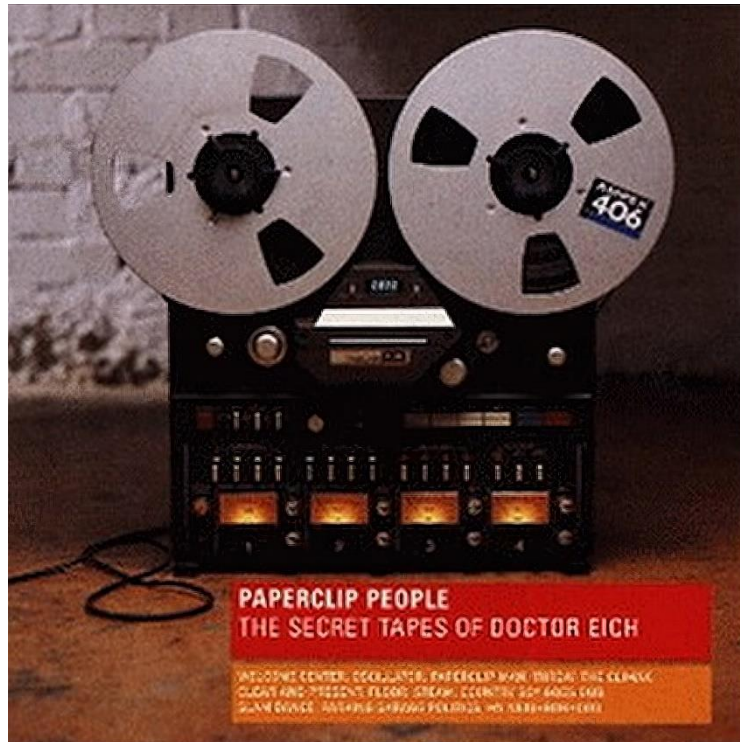
Clearly, the 90s was the decade of electronica for me, and here's another one.

Livin' Joy was not particularly revolutionary in the world of dance and electronica. However, they delivered some very catchy songs which made life so much fun at the nightclubs. Electronica snobs dismiss Livin' Joy as being pedestrian and too mainstream, but I disagree. I think they gave a new kind of sound and excitement to the masses and I have to say, I preferred listening to this music than some of the other stuff they played at the local nightclub.

In some ways, Livin' Joy reminded me of the time when Inner City came into being during the late 80s. They both offered good solid dance music which so many enjoyed in the nightclubs.

With most of the tracks being enjoyable to listen to, this is not a bad album at all.

#55. *The Secret Tapes Of Doctor Eich* by Paperclip People (1996)



Carl Craig, one of his aliases being Paperclip People, is a brilliant DJ who contributed much to the sound of house during the 90s.

The Secret Tapes Of Doctor Eich is a hard-paced rhythmic Detroit techno house album with some greats like *Oscillator* and *Slam Dance*.

This is a very interesting and well-received album.

#56. *Substrata* by Biosphere (1997)



Geir Jenssen's *Substrata* is this ambient kind of music which reflects cold arctic conditions or being stranded on another planet.

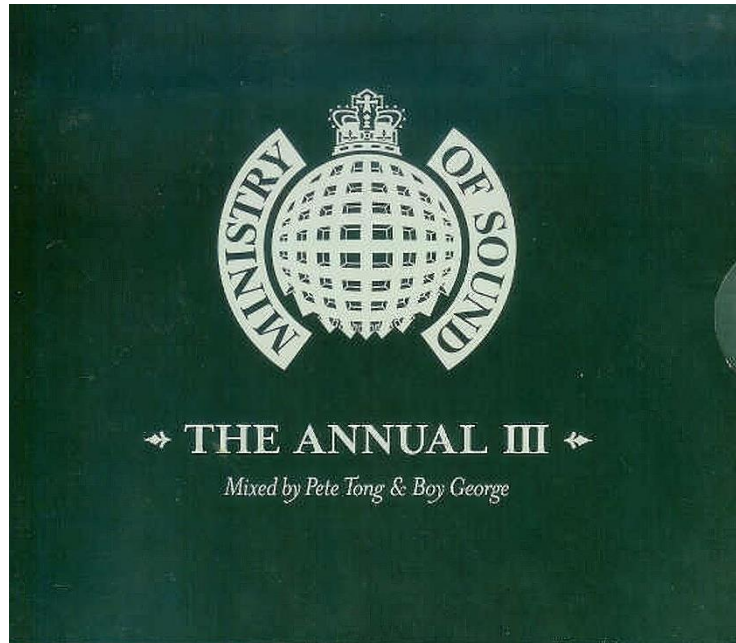
Or think of calm and mirrorlike deep fjords. What's at the bottom of them? Some strange secret that shouldn't be unearthed?

This album is much more contemplative than, say, Biosphere's *Polar Sequences*.

This album contains two excellent ambient tracks, *Poa Alpina* and *Antennaria*. They are both simple in composition but very atmospheric with a sense of unease.

A subtle album for those who like soft mysterious ambient music.

#57. *The Annual III* by Ministry Of Sound (1997)



Obviously, this is not an album, but rather one of Ministry Of Sound's Annual compilations. However, the Ministry of Sound's Annual III is such a great compilation that I feel forced to include it here.

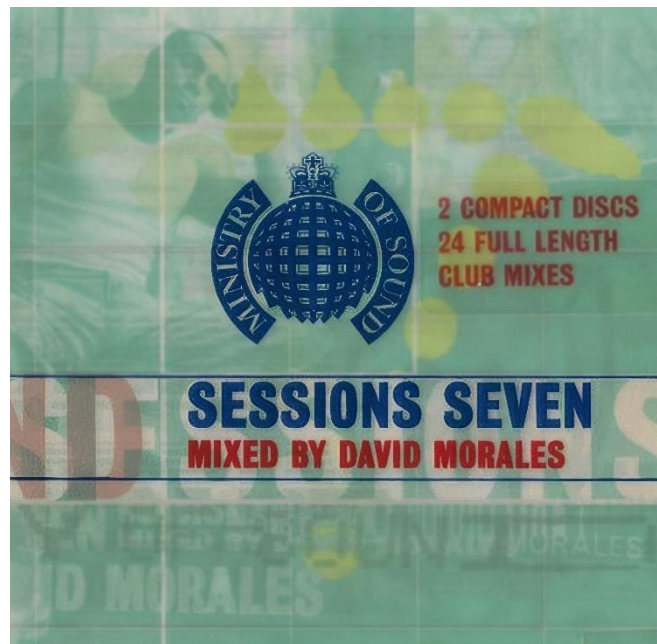
The Annual series of albums by Ministry of Sound, to me, represents the London side of nightclub house music.

Listen to the fourth track, *Something Goin' On*, and you will be jettisoned into the very best of the kind of sound that you'd hear in the best of the nightclubs during this time.

And then you get other great tracks like *Just Gets Better*, *RIP Groove*, which leads to the awesome dance track, *Spin Spin Sugar*.

I've got a lot of Ministry Of Sound CDs, but I think this third annual made during 1996, is one of my favourites.

#58. *Sessions 7* by Ministry Of Sound (1997)



If I had to choose one Ministry of Sounds compilation, *Sessions Seven* from the year 1997 mixed by David Morales would have to be it.

The Sessions series, unlike the Annual series, is more like the Detroit house scene rather than the aforementioned London scene.

This is genuine Detroit house club stuff and, to this day, still seems fresh and alive. The melodies are catchy, the bass is rich and deep, and how I love that augmented synth chord sequence sound which was so prevalent during this time period. The track, *Deeper (Epic Klub Mix)*, one of my all-time house pieces, demonstrates this perfectly.

All the other tracks flow seamlessly with perfection and most of them are excellent.

Great tracks include the pumped-up track, *Fired Up (Murk Vocal)* by Funky Green Dogs, *Living In Ecstasy* by Fonda Rae, *Just Follow The Vibe* by The Zoo Experience, *Deeper* by M&S Presents The Guy Next Door, and *Saturday* by East 57th Street.

I've played this compilation so many times when I need that burst of energy.

#59. *Torque* by Ed Rush, Nico, and DJ Trace (1997)



Around this time period, there was a movement that originated in urban Britain creating very dark, high energy, drum and bass, highly-paranoid techno music. *Muzik* magazine categorised this style of electronic music as ‘scary’ techno.

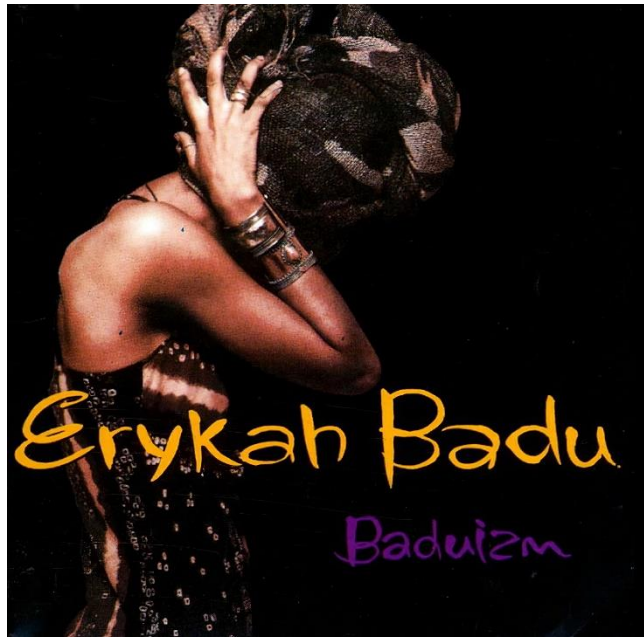
This compilation created by some of the best known masters of this genre, Ed Rush, Nico, and DJ Trace, is full-on industrial dystopian dark jungle techno stuff. No vocals, no respite, no bullshit.

If you want to experience this kind of music, be aware that it will wrap you in a frenzy of paranoia. And those out-of-scale synth chords which pop unexpectedly will give you the goosebumps.

I can’t recommend this album more highly.

Good tracks to try out first include *Proton* and *Technology*. Both nightmarishly dark in a Blade Runner sort of way.

#60. *Baduizm* by Erykah Badu (1997)



This R&B soul record, *Baduizm*, by Erykah Badu is simply stunning. With overtones of jazz, It has the deepest velvety sound I've come across in this genre.

Badu's vocals are lovely as well which accompany this almost stark and skeletal sound much like something that a rap artist might use.

This album never fails to please.

Best tracks include *On & On*, *Appletree*, and *4 Leaf Clover*.

#61. *Homogenic* by Bjork (1997)

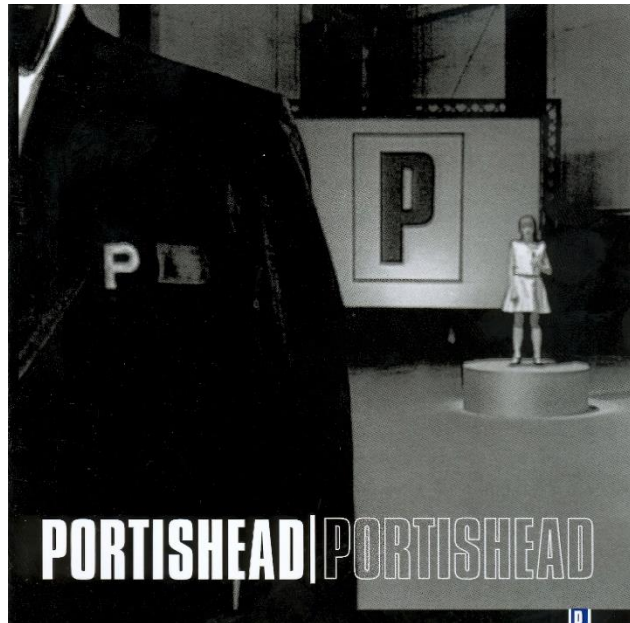


Bjork's *Homogenic* album is quite the dramatic album with some of it feeling that it belongs on a soundtrack of a tragic film. The music is wonderfully complex with a rhythm that always seems unpredictable.

Again, as in her album, *Post*, which is so different from her first, *Debut*, this album, *Homogenic* is quite different again. Lots of string and violin synths underlying layers and layers of sounds, including weird little noises thrown in to make it interesting.

Great tracks include *Hunter*, *Unravel*, *Bachelorette*, and *All Neon Like*.

#62. *Portishead* by Portishead (1997)



Don't you find it weird when an artist names anything but his first album the same name as the group? Well here we have it. Portishead's second album, *Portishead*.

This is my favourite Portishead album of the three that they've done. They don't just chuck out a lot of albums with a lot of padding and average content. Each of the three albums are superb.

Unlike *Dummy*, their first album, this seems somewhat more edgy and trippy. I remember listening to this album several times while diligently working away on a Saturday in an office in Watford doing database design for a telecommunications company. Strange how music can take one to a specific point of time and place.

My favourite tracks are *Elysium*, *Seven Months*, and the beautiful, haunting and theremin-sounding *Humming*.

**#63. *Speed Garage Anthems Volume 1* by Various Artists
(1997)**



Remember, these records are *my* favourites, ok?

Global Television did two double-CD speed garage mix compilations, both of which, in my opinion, are very good. *If you like speed garage!*

Speed garage is very British and sends me back to happy times on the dance floor. It's not techno. It's not even fast even if it has the name 'speed' in it. Probably no more than 100 beats per minute. Neither is it dance, really. It's certainly not trance, nor IDM, nor that Ministry of Sound or Cream house sound either.

The rhythm is commonplace and predictable but the melodies are actually really good throughout with some pretty cool jingles, noises, and extraneous sounds thrown in.

Just fun stuff! And yes, I *know* it's not an album!

#64. *Speed Garage Anthems Volume 2* by Various Artists (1998)



I won't say much more about this because this is just another great speed garage anthem compilation.

If anything, this could be even better than the first one!

#65. *Impossible World* by Combustible Edison (1998)



My sister got me into Combustible Edison and I'm glad she did.

Impossible World is one of those albums which you could only put up your hand and declare it as one of those hidden gem classics that almost nobody else has heard of.

The first time you hear this, you may think, hmmm, what *am* I listening to? A strange hybrid of Ennio Morricone, Star Trek themes, and 50s-style cocktail lounges?

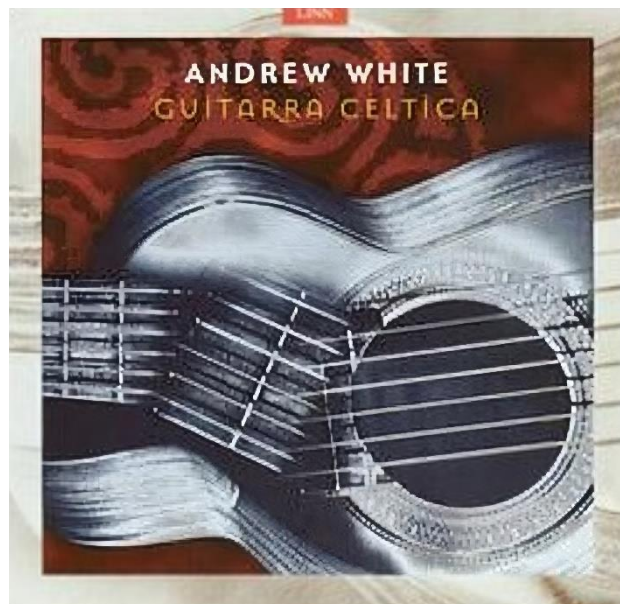
Yes, I want to be sitting on one of those lima-bean shaped green coffee tables sipping a martini with an olive surrounded by 50s paraphernalia with only dim lighting looking out of a window on a cityscape far below.

This is loungy and ultra-cool music and almost nobody has ever heard this music.

This is a classic album in my book.

Best tracks are *Utopia*, *Pink Victim*, and the Star Trek-like *Seduction*.

#66. *Guitarra Celtica* by Andrew White (1999)



I don't know anything about Andrew White nor do I know if he's done any other albums. However, a friend of mine gave me a copy of *Guitarra Celtica* and it's just a lovely piece of Irish-style music which I love as background.

It's mellow and the sound quality is crystal clear and engaging. Some of the melodies repeat a little bit but, in all, I included this on my list because I often chose to play this just to feel relaxed and at peace.

Also, it's one of those rare records which I like that my wife really likes as well!

It's the end once again, but to choose the top 10?

Yeah, a lot of people in my age group will contest that the 80s was the best time for music. However, the 90s had some real gems, especially in the world of dance, techno, and electronica in general.

It was the decade of electronic experimentation that everybody could access with music that made its way onto so many dance floors in our most popular nightclubs.

There was also the alternative electronic scene including the somewhat esoteric-sounding Intelligent Dance Music, the hardcore and mad technohead sound, the hi-energy rave scene, and the advent of amazing dance mix compilations from a variety of prolific and highly-talented DJs.

Now if I had to choose only 10 of these records?

In chronological order.

- 1) Bob James *Grand Piano Canyon*
- 2) 808 State *90*
- 3) XTC *Nonsuch*
- 4) Various Artists *World Techno Tribe*
- 5) Black Dog Productions (various artists) *Bytes*
- 6) Bjork *Debut*
- 7) The Prodigy *Music For The Jilted Generation*
- 8) Ministry of Sound (various artists) *Sessions 7 with David Morales*
- 9) Ed Rush, Nico, DJ Trace *Torque*

10) Combustible Edison *The Impossible World*