

outside chronology. Tomorrow is a moment in a masterplan, a design for life which the track you play reveals in the present.

#### Amplitude Allah

Volume is an energetic force, a circuit of spiritual vibration that channels the universal order, amplifies the cosmic program that operates the human. In *The Creator Has A Master Plan*, Sanders is the secretary to the spirits, the humble transmitter of this energy; in *Let Us Go into the House of the Lord*, he's the reverential disciple. The prayerful inspiring breath carries into the Islamasonic prayer of *Hum Allah – Hum Allah, Hum Allah*. 'In all ritual song there is that slow beat, trying to call the Gods,' a Sanders devotee explains to Val Wilmer. 'There's no rush. It's a slow process as though one is praying.' One of Sanders' group described him as 'having a halo' when he played.

#### Zodiac Interface

Jazz becomes an amplified zodiac, an energy generator that lines you up in a stellar trichotomy of human, sound and stargaze. Alice Coltrane and Sanders are playing in the rhythm of the universe according to star constellations transposed into rhythms and intervals. Alice's state of *Universal Consciousness* occurs when the electric universe harmonizes its audience. Electrification, Indian tones and arrangements converge on jazz until it becomes a cosmic circuit diagram. Astro jazz becomes a sunship upon which the composer-starsailor travels.

#### High Energy State Human

Sun Ra, Alice Coltrane and Pharoah Sanders all generate a new African-American subject, the primaudial human. The holy being of Sanders' *Black Unity*, of Ra's *Astro Black*, of Roland Kirk's *Blacknuss* and *Black Mystery Has Been Revealed*, lives in a world where mental tension and muscular torsion dissolve in a confluence of high-fidelity faiths. *Black Mystery Has Been Revealed* is a mystery drama for tiptoeing bass and tape-splice: 'AaaHAAa... The case of the Mystery Black Notes... that have been stolen for years and years.' [*Strings swirl with the flourish of a curtain drawn back*] 'Just listen... with all your might. Listen!!' [*Bottle smashes*]

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## MOTION CAPTURE (INTERVIEW)

"Afrofuturism comes from Mark Dery's '93 book, but the trajectory starts with Mark Sinker. In 1992, Sinker starts writing on Black Science Fiction; that's because he's just been to the States and Greg Tate's been writing a lot about the interface between science fiction and Black Music. Tate wrote this review called 'Yo Hermeneutics' which was a review of David Toop's *Rap Attack* plus a Houston Baker book, and it was one of the first pieces to lay out this science fiction of black technological music right there. And so anyway Mark went over, spoke to Greg, came back, started writing on Black Science Fiction. He wrote a big piece in *The Wire*, a really early piece on Black Science Fiction in which he posed this question, asks 'What does it mean to be human?' In other words, Mark made the correlation between *Blade Runner* and slavery, between the idea of alien abduction and the real events of slavery. It was an amazing thing, because as soon as I read this, I thought, my God, it just allows so many things. You can collapse all of these things; science fiction and music, they're the same. And then from there, it was pretty much out. It was out – and various people started using it in various ways. And Dery, through the Greg Tate route, simultaneously started doing it in '93, but he had no idea that there was anyone in London following it.

"More Brilliant than the Sun is a number of things. First of all, at its simplest, it's a study of visions of the future in music from Sun Ra to 4 Hero. One of its big strands is Breakbeat science, and Breakbeat science, as I see it, is when Grandmaster Flash and DJ Kool Herc and all those guys isolate the Breakbeat, when they literally go to the moment of a record where the melody and the harmony drops away and where the beats and the drum and the bass moves forward. By isolating this, they switched on a kind of electricity, by making the beat portable, by extracting the beat. I call it Motion Capturing: in films like *Jurassic Park* and all the big animatronic films, Motion Capture is the device by which they synthesize and virtualize the human body. They have a guy that's dancing slowly, and each of his joints are fixed to lights and they map that onto an interface, and then you've got it. You've literally captured the motion of a human; now you can proceed to virtualize it. And I think that's what Flash and the others did with the beat. They grabbed a potential beat which was always there, by severing it from the funk engine, by materializing it as actually a portion of vinyl that could be repeated. They switched on the material potential of the break, which had been lying dormant for a long time. So I follow that, that isolation of the Breakbeat through different spheres. Through Grandmaster Flash and the invention of skratshadelia.

"When scratching first came out people thought it was a gimmick first of all, then they thought of it as an interesting effect. And then, if you look in books, when most people talk about skratshadelia, about scratching on vinyl, they say it's a rhythmic rubbing of the vinyl in a percussive way, so as to accompany the rest of the song. And they read back vinyl in terms of some kind of rhythmic process. But actually a rhythmic process isn't really what's going on. What's going on is a new textural effect. There's no parallel to scratching; it never existed before being used in this incredible way. Scratching is more like a transformation sequence, more like the audio parallel of *The Thing* or *American Werewolf*, where you see the human transformed into a werewolf, and just before they finally become a werewolf you suddenly get a glimpse of the human, then it flashes away again. That's what skratshadelia does. It's this unstable mix of the voice and the vinyl. It's this new texture effect. You could say the voice has phase-shifted into this new sound. So I follow skratshadelia through Grandmaster Flash into Electro, with another group called Knights of the Turntable. And I follow it through to

Goldie and 4 Hero, specifically in terms of graffiti, in terms of Breakbeat's involution via Wildstyle. Because Wildstyle is like this cryptographic language, in which the single letter turns into a typographic environment that you enter. It's very much a perceptual gymnastics, looking at Wildstyle. And there's a big interface between graffiti and the break. Goldie says, 'My beats are sculpted in 4D, in 4 dimensions.' And, similarly, there's this famous graffiti guy called Kaze 2 who back in '89 was already talking about the step beyond Wildstyle. Wildstyle was 3D, but Kaze 2 was talking about 5 dimensions, he was talking about Computer Style. He said, 'In my work I do the Computer Style, I do the 5th-dimensional step-parallel staircase.' This is straight out of Escher. So I follow Breakbeat science right from this isolation of the rhythmic DNA right through to its Escherization, right through to its moment of involution – and then I follow that into Drum'n'Bass where, of course, because the beats are digitalized, it's information to be manipulated. I follow Breakbeat science, I follow it to the conclusion of tracks of people like 4 Hero, specifically *Parallel Universe*, where I turn the emphasis and focus on the science in Breakbeat. And the thing I notice about Breakbeat science, about the way science is used in music in general, is that science is always used as a science of intensified sensation. In the classical 2 cultures in mainstream society, science is *still* the science that drains the blood of life and leaves everything vivisected. But in music it's never been like that; as soon as you hear the word science, you know you're in for an *intensification* of sensation. In this way, science then refers to a science of sensory engineering, so *Parallel Universe* announces this, when it has titles like *Sunspots* or *Wrinkles in Time*, these are the points where the laws of gravity and the laws of time and space collapse, and they're simultaneously saying rhythm is about to collapse when you enter these zones. So you've got someone like Goldie who does *Timeless*, and *Timeless* is obviously referring to simply the infinite loop of the Breakbeat, which Goldie's trying to tap into.

"Then there's the synth race, entering the synth race, which is Techno, the whole interface between the first Detroit guys and what I call the Import Ear. The guys listening to this stuff coming out of Europe, coming out of England, listening to the whiteness of the synthesizer and using it because that sound would make them alien within America. That's the secret behind all of the early Detroit records. All those guys – Model

500, Cybotron – they've all got these affected Flock of Seagulls-type accents. Why do they have this? Because they want to be alien in America. How do they do this? By singing like white New Romantic English kids. So it's the idea of white music being exotic to black American ears. So it's trying to turn the exotic eye back onto the English, because that's part of the process that happened. Also what happened, Techno was happening without the registering mark of the UK media, without the traditional steps in which America comes out with an original music, and it's usually bastardized in England and Europe and mixed, remixed, and then sent back. That was reversed; in this case, it was America bastardizing, taking English music and doing strange things with it. Hence the famous embarrassment when English journalists would head over to Detroit to say, 'Where's this music come from?', only to find out this music had come from where they'd just been, only to find out that *they* were the origin. This is the first explicit case where white music is the origin, and where the black American musicians who are the adulterators and the bastardizers. So Techno's a complete reversal of the classic 60s myth of the blues and the Rolling Stones, the entire rock heritage which starts out with this famous myth of Muddy Waters and the Rolling Stones. In Techno, you've got an immediate reversal. In Techno, Kraftwerk is the delta blues, Kraftwerk is where it all starts. In Techno, Depeche Mode are like Leadbelly. A Flock of Seagulls are like Blind Lemon Jefferson. So Europe and whiteness generally take the place of the origin. And Black Americans are synthetic; the key in Techno is to synthesize yourself into a new American alien. So I look at the synth race in terms of various developments of that, for instance, there's a whole Darkside with Detroit which I talk about. And then I go into Underground Resistance, especially, who've developed an entire war, an entire military assault, a whole kinaesthetic of war based around the release of their single. How each single becomes like a missile launched in war against the programmers.

"But the main point is that I'm trying to bring out what I call the Sonic Fiction of records, which is the entire series of things which swing into action as soon as you have music with no words. As soon as you have music with no words, then everything else becomes more crucial: the label, the sleeve, the picture on the cover, the picture on the back, the titles. All these become the jump-off points for your route through the music, or for the way the music captures you and abducts you into its

world. So all these things become really important. So a lot of the main sources of the book are from SleeveNotes; they're the main thing. A lot of the book talks about SleeveNote artists. It talks about the guys who did the covers for those Miles Davis sleeves, this guy Mati Klarwein, another guy Robert Springett, who did the covers for Herbie Hancock's early 70s albums. There's different interfaces between different Sonic Fictions, between the title and the music. Hendrix would say, 'What I'm doing is a painting in sound.' And you can say reversely with the SleeveNotes. The reason the SleeveNote pictures capture you is because they're a sounding in paint. If you listen to them, you imagine them as weird visions conjured up through the music. It's really strange.

"Part of the point is very much to reverse traditional accounts of Black Music. Traditionally, they've been autobiographical or biographical, or they've been heavily social and heavily political. My aim is to suspend all of that, absolutely, and then, in the shock of these absences, you put in everything else, you put in this huge world opened up by a microperception of the actual material vinyl. What immediately happens, in almost all accounts, people immediately look over, they literally look *over* the vinyl to whatever transcendent logic they can use, instead of actually starting with the vinyl. The book is very much a materialization of this. So I'm looking at all these Sonic Fictions, I'm looking at all the different levels of science that exist within the material object.

"Motion Capture sounds like a mechanical operation being conducted. Part of the thing is that all these terms are already familiar to a lot of us. They constitute an unofficial mythology at the end of the century, this entire range of Sonic Fictions. There's pretty much a shared language amongst a whole generation of people. The difference between the over-40s and the under-40s is a real familiarity with different dataverses or polyverses stacked on top of each other. There's all kind of fascinating implications, which I want to work out in the book. Things like the 21st-century nervous system. If you go back to Norman Mailer, *The White Negro*, he talks a lot about building a new nervous system. And then if you read on a bit to Ballard, Ballard often talks about the conflict between the geometry and posture, the competition between the animate and the inanimate and the way the inanimate often creeps in and wins.

"To me, it makes complete sense to see action movies in the same stratum as skratchadelia. There are the same velocities, the same vectors, the same sounds: the sound of a car as it skids round a corner is the same sound the wheels of steel make as they ride around. You're captured, abducted by the same sounds in each. It's this fantastic sound of velocity, as 2 surfaces in friction literally converge and then shoot apart at fantastic speeds. It's an incredible excitement. These things are happening concurrently – at any moment in time it's really easy to see that's where sonic invention has gone. It's part of being captured by tiny moments of time, being obsessed with tiny moments of time. Part of what happens with sampladelia is that you've got a lot of music based on sampler memory, so that a lot of the hooks, a lot of the music that abducts you, will have to be 4 seconds or 9 seconds. So there's this huge psychedelia based upon disguising these seconds; it's like Mark Sinker says, finding the universe in a grain of sound – and that's what the sampler does. There's this huge psychedelia grown up in which you're able to fall into a universe of sound and it's granular, microphonemes of sound. In *Abba on Fats Track* by Tricky, there's this woman who whispers to her kid, 'Can you fly fast as you can to be with Jesus' – she really whispers it. That whole sample must last, I dunno, 5, 7 seconds, 8 seconds, 11 seconds, but there's something so incredible about it. It abducts you so *much*, because you can hear an atmosphere in it, you can hear an ambience, you can hear levels of foreground within that sample. You can feel yourself getting abducted by it. So there's a way in which the visual really seems to suggest that. Then there's this whole thing I was reading by Michel Chion. Chion is a really interesting guy, this student of Pierre Schaeffer who started by composing *musique concrète*, who then became a theorist. So he's the best person on film and sound ever. Part of my relation to sound is that Chion talks about sound in film, and I'm only just realising now that a lot of my favourite samples are from sound in film.

"So sampladelia opens a continuum between visual sound and audio sound. Visual sound is always feeding in from one to the other. Which is why I love a lot of film samples. Probably why I love the visual so much is that it's always being grabbed anyway by the music. By extinguishing the visual output, the music is switching it on elsewhere. It's as if the eyes start to have ears, as Chion would say. Your ears have had their optical capacity switched on. In a strange way, your ear starts to see.

Chion is saying that *each* of the senses have the *full* capacity of all the others. It's simply that hearing happens to go through the ear, but all the other senses can go through the ear as well. The ear is meant to hear, but it can do all the other things as well, if it was switched on to the right capacity.

"A similar thing that happens a lot is a big transference to tactility, which I talk a lot about as well. Whenever sound gets subdermal, whenever in Drum 'n' Bass the sound gets very scratchy, with lots of shakers and rattlers, there's often a lot of sounds where the percussion is too distributed, too motile, too mobile for the ear to grasp as a solid sound. And once the ear stops grasping this as solid sound, the sound very quickly travels to the *skin* instead – and the skin starts to hear for you. And whenever the skin starts to hear, that's where you feel all creepy crawly, and that's when conduction creeps in, when people say, 'I felt really cold', or that the music is really cold: which is because their skin has dropped maybe a centigrade as the music has hit it, as the beat has pressed across it. So I follow all those kind of things. I think with light and sound, there's a stratum across which both elements cross all the time. They've both become versions of a sampladelia. And that sampladelia, by definition, lets you analogize a lot of things. And not only does it analogize, it lets you mutate and recombine.

"Sampladelia is a *mandate* to recombine. That's what it is, that's how it works. You start to realise that when most people try to praise something, they praise it in terms of something that's gone 30, 40 years ago. You start to see the drags people place on the emergence of the new, the way people constantly put the brakes on any kind of breaks. So if I'm reaching for parallels, I'll always try and reach for parallels that are actually ahead of what I'm suggesting. Hence, don't think of Breakbeat in terms of some kind of ancient technique which has been resuscitated. For instance, you see a lot of people saying the Breakbeat is the African drum, the return of the African drumming sound, but really it's the other way around. The Breakbeat should be moved forward. Think of it in terms of a motion-capture device being made on vinyl, before there was any digital equipment to be made. If he could have been, Grandmaster Flash would have been a computer designer; if he'd been an animator, he'd be doing motion capturing. He's just doing it on vinyl first.

"So these are the kinds of things I tend to look for. It's all about trying to establish kinaesthesias, because that's really what's happened. I think with almost all the different varieties of rhythmic psychedelia, there's a warzone of kinaesthesia been established. There's a sense in which the nervous system is being reshaped by beats for a new kind of state, for a new kind of sensory condition. Different parts of your body are actually at different states of evolution. Your head may well be lagging quite far behind the rest of your body. In Drum'n'Bass, there's obviously quite a lot of attention, through dub, to the stepper. There's the idea that the feet may well be more evolved, and hands obviously, feet and hands. Terminator X spoke with his hands. Other djs yelled with their hands. I've got this brilliant skratshadelia album called *Return of the DJ*, put out by *The Bomb* magazine in Frisco, and it's all done by djs, it's a brilliant album. One guy's done a track called *Terrorwrist*, so his wrist is a terror, his wrist sends out terrifying bombs. The idea of a terroristic wrist action is fantastic. That's a predatory wrist. So you can see in that the dj has really evolved the hand that sends terror by a flick by the way it touches vinyl. So I often think that the actual body is at different stages of evolution. There's a constant war on.

"A lot of mainstream media's main job as what I call a futureshock absorber is to maintain a homeostasis, maintain traditional and inherited rules of melody over harmony, beats over rhythm, beats over melody, to maintain matters in terms of proper music, or true music, or respectable music – and that's always a way in which people try and hierarchize the body. Part of my big thing is to talk about dance music simultaneously as a kinaesthetic and a headmusic, because it tends to be both. As soon as you listen to dance music at home, its repetitiveness becomes headmusic-like. I've never understood why they can't be, why they *aren't* the same thing.

"Part of this thing is that HipHop is headmusic, not stage music, HipHop never works best on stage. And that's because it's using all these Sonic Fictions; so there's a whole kinaesthetic direction, and simultaneously a head continuum. HipHop even has a term, 'heads', which is more or less saying that HipHop has its own hippies and progressive music. So I talk about Cypress Hill, HipHop and its whole drug-tech interface. Simultaneously, I say that John Coltrane is the first hippie. I look at John

Coltrane's last records, records like *Cosmic Music*, *Interstellar Space*, *Om*. Coltrane famously tripped in '65, then did this record *Om*. Manuel De Landa has this line, about when you trip you become a liquid computer, because your brain liquefies, and I think that's what happened to Coltrane in about '65. He starts using 'Om', the Indian chant, and he's trying to assemble a universal music, and the whole thing about the Om is that it turns the human into this huge, giant, vibrating powerstation really. Om is this operation to turn yourself into this energy field. So you have this late 60s jazz where all these guys were turning themselves into power generators – and this incredible music that was trying to bootstrap a universal sound. And it worked. I look at that whole strain of music, from Coltrane through to Sun Ra, through to Alice Coltrane. A whole kind of holiness through volume, a holy amplification.

"The reason I don't talk about the literary is that there's just no need to, what with thinking about amplification and the sensory environment of amplification, of loudness in itself, the sensory impact of volume, the sensory impact of repetition, of broadcasting, all these things. There's so much to talk about, just at the level of volume, of pressure. There's a way in which you can directly connect those with everything else. You can talk about the audio-social and immediately you've connected the sound to everything else; the literary just never really seems to appear, except as different kinds of Sonic Fiction. In which case, precisely because they're on record not in a book, they don't come out as literary, they come out as more like the difference between reading a paper and hearing it read out on the news. You get the idea of hearing a voice coming at you through various channels: just as you never hear the news directly, you always hear an audio feed, you always hear a voice transmitted through a whole series of other things before it ever gets to you. That's what happens to fiction once it gets on vinyl; you hear it through the studio. So it's not literary – the literary doesn't work in that space at all. Simultaneously, there's no need for representation, for the signifier, or for the text, or for the law. There's no need for any of that.

"But of course the way to introduce theory is to realise the music is theorising itself quite well. For example, there's a concept I like called percussapella, which is percussion and accapella and percussapella is just the beats on their own. Some dj thought up a term which describes this sampladelic alloy of percussion going solo, of percussion as an

accapella. And it's just brilliant. So I can use that, and as soon as music's instrumental, these things suddenly loom into shape and you start to use them. And there's so many concepts already extant in the music that all you need do is extract them and use them to build the machine you want to build, to use them as parts in the giant connection machine that you want to build. You just hook a concept on and solder it onto the next concept that you want. So part of the whole drive is very much written as a book of emergence. It's not a history at all, it's very enjoyable to resist the urge to history, because, especially in Black Music, there's a whole drive towards history and tradition and continuity, and this book is explicitly about the breaks, about the discontinuum. Marshall McLuhan talks about the twentieth-century discontinuum. Well, this book is all about the breaks and the cuts. Inheritance has been extremely overstressed in ideas of Black Music. By bringing up first the machine then second the actual vinyl, all the different qualities move between the machines, and become as much effects of the machines. So this is the idea that the sonic can produce identities in itself. For example: George Clinton is black but the Star Child is an alien animatronic figure — it's hard to say what colour the Star Child is, the Star Child is pure animatronic. And part of the book always looks that way, always looks to see which hallucination the sonic engenders and then chases that. I never try and collapse the sonic back into the social, and precisely because this is such an almost unanimous tendency, I've gone quite far the other way, I've exaggerated it entirely. When you read someone like Sun Ra, Sun Ra would talk a lot about cosmic music. And I think in cosmic music, he meant it in the sense of, What would cosmic music be? It would be the music of the electromagnetic field, the music of radio transmissions, say, crossing the electromagnetic field. It would be the music of electrical disturbances, the atmospheric cosmic disturbances that exist in the sky. And if you listen to Sun Ra's *Astro Black*, those are exactly the sounds he's making with his Moog, he's turning the Moog synthesizer into something like a circuit which can act as a giant alternating current between the people listening, the Arkestra and the cosmos itself. The Moog is the amplifier that directs current in and out. On one hand, there's a very material way in which he does this because the actual Moogy sounds are really similar to — if not identical to — the sounds of the cosmos. So it's really fascinating, because Sun Ra often said, like 'I am an instrument' and 'the Arkestra is an instrument'. On one hand, he said the Arkestra were tone

scientists, sonic scientists; on the other, the Arkestra were his *instruments*. So you get this idea of music as this sonic production circuit through which — as Gilles Deleuze was saying — molecules of a new people may be planted here or there. That's very much what Sun Ra's doing: he's using the Moog to produce a new sonic people. Out of this circuit, he's using it to produce the new astro-black American of the 70s.

"So that's absolutely what I do all along. I extend the sonic outwards, thereby getting at this feeling of impossibility which this music often gives you. At its best, any music should strike you with its impossibility, and its complete evasion of the rules of traditional fidelity to a live sound. And the way to get at the strangeness of music — rather than to habitualize that music via any other kind of field — is to exaggerate the sonic, to use the sonic as a probe into new environments. Because every new sonic sensation that I can magnify is simultaneously a *new sensory lifeform*. So there's this constant play between the sonic and the sensory, which become the same thing often. It's partly a shift between scales. Often you can open the scale and the sound really wide and then you disappear into a sound. Often you can shut the scale back up and withdraw to look at the vinyl, or withdraw to look at the sleeves. There's a constant telescoping of perception from very close attention to a record to pulling back to looking at the vinyl. I think this is new and fresh. Because vinyl is often ignored. The things most immediately pleasurable about buying a record are the things which are always ignored. It's bizarre. So by bringing that to the front the book should be written with a sense of familiarity. People will take it to their hearts. The book's been designed to have a very tactile feel, in the same way that your fingers hunger for a sleeve. When you see a sleeve that you like, your fingers reach towards it, they can't help themselves, they really want that. It's quite obvious that this is what I'm trying to do — every object is a machine of subjectivity. The record player is, the record is, the book is. I simply want my book to become a machine for producing subjectivity. It should be a machine for putting music together.

"In the last ten, 20 years, there's been no gap between science, art and music, they all form the same thing. It's simply that at any one time things tend to be blocked, and when you have moments of rhythmic psychedelia, it's easy to see what can be dislodged and brought out and made into connection machines with other things. And other times,

things seize up. Breakbeat has opened various retroactive chapters. Similarly the breakdown of the longheld notion that Techno's origin point is Kraftwerk means that people can zip between the 70s and the 90s in a much freer way, move between Krautrock, say, and Herbie Hancock. There's a certain openness in music.

"The key thing to do now is to move into a new field. I've stopped calling myself a writer: for the book I'm just going to call myself a concept engineer. That makes the whole thing much fresher, much more exciting and much less known about. Because that's what I'm really doing. I'm engineering, grasping fictions, grasping concepts, grasping hallucinations from my own area and translating them into another one, mixing them, and seeing where we go with them. I use these different concepts to probe new areas of experience, to anticipate and fastforward different explorations into new fields of perceptions which are always there, but whose strength lies in that they don't exist in traditional mainstream terms. Traditional mainstream terms are still completely bound up with the literary, and the 2 cultures – and thank God for that, because that means that they can't get in on what's going on. Which is just this sudden glance at the end of the century. I've renamed all the instruments: I've renamed the synthesizer the Sonotron. Iannis Xenakis called the synthesizer the Sonotron in his book. That's perfect because Sonotron just sounds like a superhero comic, so a convergence of sound into ballistics. And the drum machine should be renamed what it actually is: a rhythm synthesizer. I call this problem [r]earview hearing. The drum machine *isn't* a drum machine. It's pulses and signals synthesized into new pulses and new signals. There are no drums in it. That was a weird thing that confused me for years and years, until I worked it out. You'd listen and they'd sound *utterly* different from drums. The movement from funk to drum machines is an extremely incredible one: people's whole rhythmic perception changed overnight. And people of course pretended that nothing had happened, but it was a major shift, hearing bleeps and signals and different kinds of alternating current as sound. It was a huge shift. In a similar sense Edgard Varèse called the drum machine a rhythm synthesizer, and that's a good way to describe it. So all those kind of things, all those concepts, make a sense that the mainstream is just completely incapable of really grasping at all.

"There really is a sensory involution away from traditions, and from

whatever the divisions of art as supposed to be. It's very much like Sadie Plant says, it's not high or low, it's just complex, because it has so many travelling and spiralling arms that you can hook onto. This is why when the Americans lament about the virtualization of the body, it just seems bizarre, because it feels like we're doing the opposite, it feels like we're just beginning on this journey into the centre of our senses. It seems the opposite: science always means a *hypersensoriness*. Traditional science still means a depletion, cold scientists, extreme logic and all these corny cliches. But in musical terms, science is the opposite, science is intensification, more sensation. Science is rhythm intensified, rhythm estranged. And that's how a whole generation understands science. Then what they mean by abstract is sensations so new there isn't yet a language for them. So the shorthand is to just call it abstract. There's a whole generation who're grown used to thinking of sensory emotions without having a language for them yet. Rhythmic psychedelia's the psychedelic aspect of any particular scene. So it could be anything: from House to trance, to Breakbeat to jazz, it could be any scene – but I'm interested in the rhythmic psychedelia aspect of each scene, not the scene itself. I'm interested in the points of maximum rhythmic hyperdelia, that's what I'm really interested in. So it could be any of these...

"Postmodernism doesn't mean anything in music at all. It doesn't mean *anything*. It hasn't meant anything since at least '68, when the first Versions started coming out of Jamaica. As soon as you had the particular social condition of no copyright, this 19th-century copyright was already gone, instantly you had the freedom to replicate, to recombine. That encouraged a Wildstyle of rhythms which would attach themselves and recombine. And as soon as you had that, that's postmodernism accomplished and done with, right then in '68. Ever since then by definition you've had postmodernism and it hasn't been any big deal at all, it's just already been accomplished. For instance, Walter Benjamin's traditional 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction': this argument doesn't work any more – because one of Benjamin's main points [or the one his admirers use over and over again] is that in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction there's no aura left, the single, unique aura has gone. But of course as soon as you have the dubplate then that's all gone out of the window. The dub plate is where you've got the reproductive process, the mechanical process of pressing vinyl onto the plate that's being played, and suddenly in the middle of

that you've got the one-off remix, you've got the track that there's only one of in the world, but it's *not* an original, it's a copy, a third copy. So you've got this thing that's never supposed to exist in Benjamin's world: you've got the one-off copy, you've got the one-off fifth remix, you've got the one-off tenth remix, you've got the one-off twentieth remix. There's only one of it. So the dubplate means that the whole idea of the aura being over doesn't make any sense, because the aura is reborn in the middle of the industrial reproduction. Hence the jungle acceleration, the intensification of the dub plate; the dub plate is reborn as this Music of the Future. You're hearing music that won't be on the streets till ten months, 11 months later, immediately this gap opens up between you and now in 1996: you suddenly imagine yourself in '97, going 'Where will I be when I buy this?' — and of course you never will, but listening to a dub plate does this little projection on you. You feel yourself 18 months ahead, you literally feel ahead, you're on a plane of acceleration, you're moving faster than you are. So for that reason alone postmodernism just hasn't existed and as soon as you have a state of remixology — well, what happened is that remixology got held up in different areas. In jazz, for instance, you had Alice Coltrane remixing John Coltrane, but jazz tradition hated this and said it was blasphemy. You had the Beach Boys remixing their stuff and it being refused. So in the major corporations remixology was always stopped, and in Jamaica remixology just became the immediate state of play, first of all because it's simultaneously hyperpredatory as well, it allows a kind of agglomeration of rhythms, a ruthlessness of rhythms, a break war, what jungle producer Andy C calls a break war. People bid for breaks, or just steal them. There's this wild frontier, this wild break war going on, rhythms just going mad. So we're far beyond postmodernism here, and immediately all the traditional arguments drop out of the window. The idea of exhaustion, for example that's just gone, because music doesn't work in that way. It's already a gene pool, so it's not going to exhaust itself.

"And then a whole series of things — the idea of quotation and citation, the idea of ironic distance, that doesn't work, that's far too literary. That assumes a distance which by definition volume overcomes. There is no distance with volume, you're swallowed up by sound. There's no room, you can't be ironic if you're being swallowed by volume, and volume is overwhelming you. It's impossible to stay ironic, so all the implications of postmodernism go out of the window. Not only is it the

literary that's useless, *all* traditional theory is pointless. All that works is the sonic plus the machine that you're building. So you can bring back any of these particular theoretical tools if you like, but they better work. And the way you can test them out is to actually play the records. That's how you test if my book works, because I want it to be a machine. When I say works, I mean I want it to engineer a kind of sensory alteration, some kind of perceptual disturbance. I think I'd really like that very much, because even a tiny sensory disturbance is enough to send out a signal which can get transmitted.

"I think the combination of the dj and the writer makes a lot of sense. I think that both are different kinds of remixology at work, and that all we're really doing is bringing writing and putting it onto the second deck and just accelerating it as much as a record. I think because so much traditional Brit prose is so matey, and so blokish, and so bluff and nonsense, that encourages me in always going for the impossible, which can be registered as what the future feels like as sensation. That's why the key things in this book are McLuhan and Ballard, the guys I was reading throughout. McLuhan's famous lines about the human being the sex organs for the machine world, those lines are crucial. The Kraftwerk chapter is all about Kraftwerk as the sex organs of the synthesizer.

"The whole series of things about accidents, about bugs, about the producer being someone who can nurture a bug, who can breed a bug. Simultaneously most of the key musics have been accidents, they've been formed through errors. They're software errors in the machine's programming, and they form these sounds — and the producer's taken these sounds and nurtured this error, built on this mistake, and if you grab a mistake you've got a new audio lifeform. It's quite common: back with Can in the 70s, Holger Czukay was saying machines have a lifeform, repetition is the life of machines. So there's a whole thing about machine life that already exists with musicians anyway. Producers have *already* started working out a theory of machine life. As soon as you look at what they've been saying — magnify it, and start to use it — you realise that there's this series of Sonic Fictions and scientific fabulations, all of which I just call Sonic Fictions. There's 20 years of speculation on the machine as a lifeform. There's 20 years of music as cosmic fields, so what I'm doing is using this stuff, activating it, switching it on. That way the whole book feels alive: by using a lot of



producers who are living now and connecting them up to ones in the past, you switch on the sonic, you switch on a whole sonic register, a whole unofficial register. Nobody quotes Lee Perry as an authority, it's always the grotesque thing of Heidegger and then George Clinton, it's *never* the other way around. But it was Clinton that came up with mixadelics: the theory of mixology as a psychedelia, the theory of the mixing desk as a psychedelia. In 1979, there it is, mixadelics. That's his concept: he thought of a psychedelia of the mixing desk. So you don't need any Heidegger, because Clinton's already theoretical. So what I've done is extract these concepts and set them to work: they work because they're tied to records. And that's because the vector that a lot of this works on is the record player. It's the habitualness, you have to look at yourself as a machine programmed, as a biocomputer programmed by the decks. The motions you have to make to put a needle onto the record as the flight of the stylus takes across the groove: think of the hundreds of thousands of times that you've made that motion, the habitualness of putting it on. Here's a way to see this very clearly, for instance: when you're listening to a rare groove original, say there's a track you know really well, and you're listening for the first time to the original of it. You suddenly realise that the bit you *know* is only a tiny bit, just like a 3-second bit, and then the record just plunges, usually, into a disappointing mediocrity, before the next sound that you recognize comes up, and then it plunges again, before the next bit comes up. Sometimes with Parliament tracks you can hear about 5 of these in the first 2 minutes, and these bits, they recognize you, because what they're doing is recognizing your habitualness in putting them on. When you hear a sound, you have a memory flash, but you almost have a muscular memory, you remember the times you danced to it. You don't just remember the times you danced to it, you remember the times you bent over to put the needle on the record to play that bit. Sometimes you love that bit so much, you even remember going over and over and over that bit again. So when you hear that sound that you love, when you hear the recognizable sample in the middle of alien sound, that sound is recognizing your habitualness, and it's really incredible, you suddenly get a glimpse of yourself as a habitform, as a habitformed being, a process of habit formation. You suddenly see yourself over the years, how you loved this record. It's incredible, the sound takes a picture of your habits; it snaps your habits. And you suddenly see it very clearly. How many times have I put that on? That's what I want to get at. These

are new sensations which have never existed before, that feeling of being recognized by sound. That's new, it hasn't happened before. By definition, it *could* only happen in the sampladelic generation; by definition it could only happen to people who listen to sampladelic music. And those kind of things just haven't been written about, they haven't even been captured yet.

"So by extending the sonic further and further, I'm on the hunt, I'm chasing for, I'm trying to find out new perceptions: perceptions that have always been there, but haven't yet been grasped and haven't yet been connected to anything else yet. It's this exploration into the unknown.

"By now, I've stopped saying 'Black culture'. There's always been a much stronger perception in America of black culture and that's obviously partly because it's been counter-defined against the traditional knowledge apartheid structure which has been in place in America. And you can tell almost all American writers are working against this knowledge apartheid, which has been really firmly laid out. After all, everybody should know that most black Americans couldn't even get to art school until about 1969. That's how severe American apartheid was, from the knowledge structure on down. So most black Americans write in a way that assumes a unified black culture, then goes on to explain the dissensions between it, or not to. But sitting here in England, in London, it's much harder for me to even assume a unified anything, let alone a unified black culture. I tend to start from the opposite. I tend to think of things more freefloating, and there's various strange attractors trying to agglomerate things, there's various inertia-producing forces which are trying to centre, and trying to attract material to black culture, petrify it, solidify it, reterritorialize it, and then usually this gets called tradition, or it gets called history.

"I look at black culture much more as a series of material that's been agglomerated on one hand, and on the other, it's much more like a series of techniques. A lot of the producers and engineers I talk about see themselves as scientists or technicians. I tend to think of black culture then as an instrument or an environment that *they've invented*. I'm very much looking into the synthesizings, looking into new black synthetic versions. I can never think of a unified black culture out of which everything comes. To me everything now looks like it's synthesized.

There's obviously stuff that's been around long enough so that it feels solidified, calcified, but actually it's all synthesized. Because I'm looking at emergences, and by definition they're going to be really synthetic, like Techno. Because I bring the machine into it. It makes things much more complex because instead of talking about black culture, I'll talk for instance a lot about Ghanaian drum choirs, or talk a lot about the African polyrhythmic engine, the polyrhythmic percussion engine. And those will be very particular African traits. Sound is a sensory technology, so I talk a lot about black technologies. They're machines — and if we're talking about 19th or 18th century Africa, then they'd be machines built a long time ago and passed down. But in the present, it's more like black culture is this series of machines built here and there. The dub plate was one, built in Jamaica. The Breakbeat was another, built in New York.

"I haven't yet pulled back to make commanding statements about what it is in black culture that produces these kind of synthetic technologies. I haven't yet been able to pull back a stratum to the big what-if question. And that's probably because I don't think it really exists, because I'm so consumed and amazed by the teeming variety at the other end of the telescope that I can't pull back to see the view. Probably because I distrust the idea that there's views, but it would be more like a shift in tempo or scale. So shifting to a horizon view then switching back. But it could be that, one large thing Greg used to say which worked really well, was that the Middle Passage, out of Africa into America, forced culture to become immediately mental. All of the other things were by definition left behind, left ruined: architecture, everything else. So culture immediately became mental, immediately became dematerialized. So oral culture is all the things you carry in your head, and that's *it*. And then it has to be rematerialized, first through hitting the hands, or through the mouth. It had to be passed on again, and reinvented all over again. So there's that whole strain. And there's the key thing which drew me into all this: the idea of alien abduction, the idea of slavery as an alien abduction which means that we've all been living in an alien-nation since the 18th century. And I definitely agree with that, I definitely use that a lot. The mutation of African male and female slaves in the 18th century into what became negro, and into the entire series of humans that were designed in America. That whole process, the key thing behind it all is that in America none of these humans were *designated* human.

It's in music that you get this sense that most African-Americans owe *nothing* to the status of the human. African-Americans still had to protest, still had to *riot*, to be judged Enlightenment humans in the 1960s — it's quite incredible. And in music, if you listen to guys like Sun Ra — I call them the despots, Ra, Rammellzee and Mad Mike — part of the whole thing about being an African-American alien musician, is that there's this sense of the human as being a really pointless and treacherous category, a category which has *never meant anything* to African-Americans. This is particularly true with Sun Ra — just because Ra pushes it by saying that he comes from Saturn. I always accept the impossibility of this. I always start with that, where most people would try and claim it was an allegory. But it isn't an allegory: he really did come from Saturn. I try to exaggerate that impossibility, until it's irritating, until it's annoying, and this annoyance is merely a threshold being crossed in the readers' heads, and once they unseize, unclench their sensorium, they'll have passed through a new threshold and they'll be in my world. I'll have got them. The key thing to do is to register this annoyance, because a lot of the moves I've described will provoke real annoyance, the lack of the literary, the lack of the modernist, the lack of the postmodern. All of these things should provoke a real irritation, and simultaneously a real relief, a relief that somebody has left all stuff behind, and started from the pleasure principle, started from the materials, started from what really gives people pleasure."

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