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ELECTROSTEP

SALES AND MARKETING NOTES

"Electrostep is quite simply the most breathtakingly personal album by a drum & bass artist since 'New Forms'. John B has single-handedly created a new genre in 'Electrostep', and it would be criminal if he didn't go on to achieve a similar level of acclaim as Roni Size did at the 1997 Mercury Music Awards." – Knowledge Mag.

"John B is drum and bass's eccentric anomaly! Not afraid to uniquely express himself... open minds should investigate!" – DJ Mag.



cover artwork

Formats : Limited Edition Double CD /// Single CD /// DJ-Friendly 3x12" Vinyl
Sampler Single : "Stalking You On Myspace" (BETA 017) /// Out June 26



JOHN B

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"I think my way of fitting in is by being the opposite of everything you would expect from a typical junglist"

WORDS TECHNICOLOR, PHOTOGRAPH NICKY FARLEY (NICKYVALLEY.CO.UK)

ROBO80SPUNKROCKELECTRO

DRUM & BASS' ANSWER TO DAVID BOWIE IS BACK WITH A NEW ALBUM, GUARANTEED TO SPLIT THE SCENE DOWN THE MIDDLE ONCE AGAIN. BUT THEN JOHN B WOULDN'T HAVE IT ANY OTHER WAY.

'GUTEN TAG!', John B bellows down the phone in his usual, overly-melodramatic way. He's just returned from yet another marathon tour of gigs and parties in Europe and America and is finally taking a few days out at his home to have a chinwag with Knowledge. 2005 was the busiest year yet for the exuberant make-up wearing firebrand from Maidenhead. His third full length album 'In:Transit' preceded a gig list as extensive as anyone within drum & bass, touching every corner of the globe. His time has been at an absolute premium (this interview has been conducted over several days and several timezones), but in-between gigs and international hellraising, he's managed to make a new LP, scheduled for release this month. So how's he managed it, and more importantly, what's it like?

It's been 18 months since the release of John's last album. The long player got universally positive

reviews from press and public alike and John is unsurprisingly very pleased the way it was received. 'I was lucky to get such nice press and a really good, long lasting reaction from the fans,' he says. 'I still play tracks like 'Take Me Home' and 'Midnight Air' in my sets and people actually sing along and know all the words. It's great to see, and really gave me the confidence to get working on the next album and make it bigger and better.'

Entitled 'Electrostep', a term coined by John to describe the sound encapsulated within, the new album is a compendium of his best work over the past year. 'In:Transit' was a real patchwork quilt of styles, ranging from heavyweight dance floor bombs to liquid funk, through to increasingly more electro and trancey flavours. But on the new album those external influences have taken precedence in a major way. In fact, in many ways, 'Electrostep' isn't a

drum & bass album. It's roots are undoubtedly based in the genre, but there are only a couple of tunes that could genuinely fit into the universally accepted framework of d&b. Instead, the electro, disco and trance styles have taken centre stage, combined with vocals and live musicians across most tracks. The music of the 1980s have always been a major influence on John, but where once those influences may have been tempered with a more drum & bass ethos, on 'Electrostep' they are unabashed and unflinching.

It seems as though John B has finally had enough of pandering to what die-hard drum & bass fans want and has made the album he really wants to make. When 'In:Transit' was released early in 2004, this journalist interviewed John B and he said there were more generic, straight-up d&b tracks on it aimed at 'silencing the doubters'. They were well



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received, but listening to this new album, and the obvious passion and fun that has gone into making it, one can't help but feel they were perhaps made for the wrong reasons; that they were created because John felt he should, rather than because he was truly inspired to do so.

"I guess since the last album I've learned a lot about the sound and image I'm trying to portray with everything," John explains. "What I do in the studio crosses over to the whole scenario in clubs, setting the scene with my outfits, make-up and general attitude. I've had 18 months persistent touring since the last album which has given me the opportunity to build up a good following and acceptance for what I'm doing. I guess it's given me more confidence to really do what I believe in and push things further."

So how would you describe the album then? "Well it's all d&b, well, d&b speed; I'm not sure if you can class it as a purist d&b album. This stuff has taken on a life of its own. It's more poppy, catchy, rather rude, but funny. Like an alpha male, straight drag queen. It's hi-energy robo80spunkrockelectro!"

The response to the new tracks on these marathon tours have clearly been very positive, and galvanised John's belief in them. "I think I've reached a stage now where even though my stuff isn't to everybody's tastes, they recognise that I'm doing my own thing and respect that," he explains. "The good thing about d&b is that it's diverse enough to fit everyone in somewhere, and guys like me can operate in an almost completely different world from the mainstream 'ravey ravey' Helter Skelters or whatever and still have a massive fanbase."

It's difficult for UK heads to gauge the swell of support John B has gained in the last year, as he plays so rarely in this country. His musical style and outlandish appearance may make him an unknown quantity for UK promoters that are unwilling to take a risk on something other than the usual DJ circuit pool. But throughout Europe and the Americas, he's built up a fervent and devoted following that is approaching rock star status. "I did a show in Budapest last year and was greeted by all these kids dressed up as me," John says. "And plenty of people have come up and said the last album changed their lives, or turned them back onto d&b. They probably say that just to get into bed with me though, so I don't take it too literally."

In spite of this massive international fanbase, there are of course always going to be the doubters. John B is the kind of artist that will always attract criticism, simply because he chooses to do things which are perceived to be so different from the status quo. A simple search on the major drum & bass internet

forums reveal some pretty cutting remarks about his career. Many d&b die-hards, still hankering after dance floor killers like 'Up All Night' and 'Sight Beyond', hate what John is up to now and almost resent the direction he's taken. "I'll always have critics, that's a given," John admits. "I was playing in Munich recently and someone handed me a note saying I was shit. I think he was one of those neuro-nerd people I keep reading about on the internet."

And then there's the aforementioned problem with getting booked in the UK. John B played 148 DJ gigs in 2005. And only 12 of those were in the UK. That's quite a snub when you consider his back catalogue and how long he's been making beats. "It's a shame, but not a problem," John says. "I'm really lucky to be in this position, so it would be wrong to complain too much. I mean, all it takes at a multiple DJ event in the UK, is for someone after me to just launch into the standard anthem bashing routine, and all the good work that I've done trying to turn the crowd onto a new mindset is undone straight away. So it's understandable. But I still do get miffed about it."

So despite the confidence in your particular musical path, you still care what 'the scene' thinks? "Of course," John insists. "It's important to have validation from your peers. As well as the gig thing, I still wish the big name DJs would play more of my music. I think it's reached a point now where they just write it off as unsuitable even before checking the tracks, which is a shame. I've had big DJs instant messaging me asking me for tracks that they've heard a local DJ playing before them and demanding why they didn't have it. Truth is, I sent them the track six months ago but they ignored it. Luckily it doesn't matter so much these days whether the big DJs jump on a tune or not. There are plenty of other ways to promote yourself."

Which brings us onto the new bastion of self-promotion, the internet. When it comes to getting your name known and building up awareness on the web, John B is head and shoulders above anyone within drum & bass. His website features live mixes (the last of which has been downloaded over 100,000 times), picture galleries and a web log. The most entertaining section however has to be the library of video diaries from gigs throughout the world, with John acting as presenter, giving a running commentary on the locations and people he meets on his travels. If you haven't seen them yet, do so. They're hilarious and give a great insight into life on the DJ circuit. "It's fun to document the weird stuff that that happens to me and to share the situations that I get into on tour," John explains. "The thing is, I do all my gigs alone, travel alone, so I guess it keeps me occupied and also gives me a chance to gener-

ate some humour out of what are really quite surreal experiences."

And have they ever got you into trouble? "Well I've had to go back a couple of times and edit parts out that I hadn't spotted first time around," John admits. "One was in a car on the way to a gig and you could see up a girl's skirt in the back seat. And another more serious one featured one frame from a 'home movie' of mine that was on the tape before the tour. Luckily some honourable people spotted it and let me know pronto!"

Despite the fun that goes into making them, the library isn't just a forum for John to nurture the narcissistic side of his personality. It's also a great way of advertising himself and trying to show those doubters he's succeeding, despite his low profile in the UK. "If it wasn't for my website and all the photos and videos I bet the d&b scene would think I'd gone off and joined a Buddhist community in Tibet or something," John chuckles. "It's my way to combat, or to compensate rather, the lack of exposure I would otherwise get if my music was more middle-of-the-road d&b. It also shows how great my gigs are and how rammed they always are!"

There can't be a solo artist within d&b that encounters so many mixed opinions than John B. Abroad he's one of the biggest stars in the circuit. And in the UK, whilst maybe not reaching those heights, lots of heads, even if they are not into the new sound he is cultivating appreciate what he is trying to achieve. But on the flipside there are also still many who think he has let d&b down in some way by moving in the direction he has. So with this cavalcade of differing opinions, does he think he still belongs in the drum & bass scene?

"I have my own little place, I guess," John concludes. "I think my way of fitting in is by being the opposite of everything you would expect from a typical junglist, and it's fabulous the way most people seem to accept that and let me get on with it. If you'd told me ten years ago at the Blue Note that today I'd be knocking about at a Renegade Hardware event at The End wearing make-up and lipstick with 'Andy Warhol Stole My Ideas' on my shirt, I would have thought you were crazy."

It is a crazy notion. But with John B's enthusiasm for music, you can't but wish him every success in the world.

'UP ALL NIGHT'

JOHN B'S TOP FIVE DRINKING DENS FOR THE MORE DISCERNING DRUM & BASSER

1. Marlin Hotel bar, South Beach, Miami.

I had my first ever chocolate martini here, so it's got to be number one. I think they've refurbished it so it should be a bit more glitzy for the Winter Music Conference this year.

2. Pravda, Lafayette St, NYC

I went on my first date with my (now ex) girlfriend here. Russian themed, underground but very posh bar/restaurant. Fab cocktails, and I got autograph hunted by a random fan; great kudos on the date..

3. Balthazar, Spring Street, NYC

Gorgeous French restaurant. They have the nicest Chablis there, and moules to die for. Both Pravda and Balthazar are mentioned in Brett Easton-Ellis' 'Glamorama' so they must be cool.

4. Freekyfreekydeeky, I can't remember the street, LA.

I went here with Dylan one night when we were both in LA. We met Lemmy from Motorhead at the Rainbow Bar, I made out with some hot stripper girl who wanted to put lipstick on me first, then we went to this mad goth/fetish club with a rock band whose name I forget, but it was insanely genius. I wish I could remember how we got there or what it was called.

5. Claremont Lounge, Ponce de Leon Ave, Atlanta.

This was described to me by locals as 'the place where old strippers go to die' so I had to go. Went with my promoter mate MJ, and Josh Clarke from Corrupt Souls and had a hilarious time. It was uncomfortable, and the drinks were kind of crappy, but the very amusing conversation and scenery made up for it, to say the least.



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'THE B IS FOR BENCHMARK'

10 ESSENTIAL JOHN B RELEASES
THAT YOU'D BE A FOOL NOT TO OWN

1. 'Sight Beyond' (New Identity, 1996)
2. 'Secrets' (Prototype, 1997)
3. 'Slamfunk' (Formation, 1997)
4. 'Starburst' (New Identity, 1998)
5. 'Pressure' (Formation, 1998)
6. 'Up All Night' (Metalheadz, 2001)
7. 'Blue Eyeshadow' (Subtype, 2002)
8. 'Without You' (Hospital, 2003)
9. 'Blandwagon Poos' (white label, 2004)
10. 'Vampire Eyes' (Beta Recordings, 2004)



words: Stu Cronin

JOHN B

WHO'S STALKING YOU?

Whether you're a lover or a hater of the eccentric and eclectic John B's, failure to acknowledge his contribution to Drum 'n' Bass over the last 10 years should earn you a little b&b at her Majesty's expense in Broadmoor. Based in Maidenhead, John graduated in Cell Biology from Durham Uni before thankfully deciding to reserve his scientific exploits to the sonic landscape. Those in any question of the aforementioned contribution should take a quick flick through his discography before coughing up their two pence worth. With releases on seminal D'n'B labels including New Identity, Formation, Metalheadz, Renegade Hardware, Hospital, Moving Shadow, Good Looking and Breakbeat Kaos amongst others, it's not an argument worth starting.

With a sound and image that has evolved constantly over that decade, it would be naïve to try and squeeze John in a pigeon hole of any description. Indeed, whilst releasing prolifically on D'n'B labels over the years, John has also had releases on imprints as diverse as Mike Paradinas's Planet Mu or Against The Grain, as well as across the four contained within his own Beta stable. So how exactly do you go about defining the indefinable? John touts himself as a 'robot electro Drum 'n' Bass DJ Producer man 80s boy' – right, well that clears that up then!

With a passion for the 80s bordering on the insane, John's forthcoming album 'Electrostep' (a word he coined himself to encapsulate the sound contained within the new LP) includes a crazy Electro laden Drum 'n' Bass but not as we know it, cover of the Soft Cell classic 'Tainted Love' and another of Toni Basil's 'Hey Mickey'. So, is there a Holy Grail style artist or track that John's determined to get his paws on? 'I've already done unofficial remixes of most of the classics I'd want to have a go at', he explains.

"I'm really into a lot of the new Indie/Rock stuff about the moment. Bands like the Editors, The Departure, The Rakes and The Shins. I'd like to get on it with official remixes for some of those guys but I just don't have the time to break through all the red-tape-office-monkeys to get things officially sanctioned at the moment. I'll have another bash once the album is out."

Carefully scanning through John's back catalogue over the years, some say that he's moved away from a so called 'purer' sound and sold out. However, these Electro and synth sounds have always been evident in his music and over the years, as John has moved towards producing the music he is most comfortable with, they have merely become more prevalent.

So where does this passion for the 80s scene, its imagery, sounds and attitudes come from? "I just try to do stuff that no one else is doing", replies John, and push D'n'B in directions I'm interested in and influenced by. I see no reason in churning out boring, generic, forgettable crap. People moan about CDs or the internet supposedly damaging their sales – well how about a bit of quality control, thought and development. It's no wonder a lot of stuff isn't selling, it just sounds like a million other tracks out there."

John started his own label Beta Recordings in '99 to facilitate the releases of his trademark sound. True to his status as a musical chameleon, Beta has since branched into three further sub labels – Tangent, Chihuahua and Nu Electro, allowing him to spread his wings with everything from Latin to Liquid to Electro Jungle.

So what makes him tick and when does he feel Drum 'n' Bass was at its best? "In terms of popular Drum 'n' Bass, it would be the era when I first got into it," remembers John, "when Metalheadz had the Blue Note and Leisure Lounge parties and the Techstep sound was dominant. We were all pushing the boundaries with what could be done with edits, and filters and stuff. In terms of my own personal output and style, with DJing and producing, I'd say now. I'm glad I've finally found a sound I'm interested in pursuing, that is successful and totally different from everything else in D'n'B at the moment."

So, as John continues to beat his own path through the Drum 'n' Bass landscape how does he feel the rest of the scene is doing currently? "I'm not really into the majority of popular Drum 'n' Bass at the moment," he concedes. "There are still tracks that kill me but that's a lot rarer than a few years ago. I'm glad Concord Dawn have got on it again – their new album is gorgeous. Everything I hear from Calyx these days is monstrous too and fits really well into my sets when I'm in the Trance and Bass mode. I just wish more producers would do a bit of Electro D'n'B. I spend most of my time listening to other genres – Electro, House, Techno, minimal and a lot of new Indie Rock bands. I get my inspiration and ideas from outside D'n'B 100%."

Self-promotion is clearly the name of the game and a quick glance at John's Beta Recordings' website shows he's the leader of the pack when it comes to this game. There are photo and press libraries, tour dates and downloadable live mixes. There's also a library of hilarious videos shot on tour, courtesy of John's mini DV camera, which show the ups and downs of his travels to far flung places like Estonia and Russia and all the crazy people who have crossed his path along the way.

It will also reveal John's penchant for pretty hot women and the odd adult entertainer on his global travels. After all, it can get lonely out there on the road. What advice can he offer ATM readers when it comes to chatting up porn stars? "Hah," scoffs John, "that's top secret! I don't go to strip clubs or waste money on lapdances though. I've been studying social dynamics, body language and group theory a lot recently though and it helps. Most guys just don't know how to relate to women, or approach them in a way that isn't like the last 20 guys that tried to chat them up that day."

Sadly though, it's not all models and margaritas and, having travelled around 45,000 miles over a two-month period, John's video diaries reveal his fare share of bomb scares and cancelled flights. "Getting delayed in airports sucks," he grumbles, "especially when you've had very little sleep! Losing my bags on the way to a huge rave in St. Petersburg wasn't nice. All my make-up and DJing outfits were in the suitcase, so I had to go out and get some new make-up and customise a shirt before the show. I just wrote 'THE AIRPORT LOST MY BAGS' in big pen on my shirt."

Having been endorsed by the likes of SS, Grooverider and Goldie early in his career, John has gone on to become something of an anomaly in the UK scene. A quick look at his tour date page reveals that of the 43 dates listed since the turn of the year staggeringly only four have been in the UK and none in London. Bad news if you're a John B fan living in the capital, but do you think it bothers him one bit? "I don't find it hard to get bookings in the UK," he points out. "I don't really

try – my diary just fills up with whatever comes in. I'm not really interested in playing the sorts of big D'n'B parties you get over here to be honest either. I can be a lot more flexible with a two to three hour set abroad, where I'm headlining and have control over the MCs, etc. Rather than cramming in a 45 minute set between anthem-bashing business with constant MC chatter. It's just a situation I don't like being in and doesn't allow me to perform the way I want to."

'Performing the way' he wants to has brought John a massive international following – he has over 20,000 friends on MySpace and regularly plays to huge sell out crowds around the world. This continued success is due in part to his vibrant and entertaining DJing and the variety of influences he brings to his sets. "I try to be as visual and animated as possible," explains John. "I play loads of new stuff they won't have heard before, communicate with the crowd directly, get on the mic (try to speak in the language if it's abroad) and generally have a good party with the clubbers. I think the worst thing you can do as a DJ is stand there looking all serious and shy, avoiding eye contact. I don't care if people think I look gay in the make-up, I just do my best to be larger than life, bring the energy levels up in the venue, make sure everyone has a really good time and can see that you don't have to be ultra serious geekboy to play D'n'B."

The album is preceded by a single 'I've Been Stalking You On MySpace' – a hilarious tongue in cheek rocked out affair. With a MySpace page and internet site to keep up to date, John admits to spending a couple of hours every day keeping up with the Joneses. So, what poor soul has he been stalking on MySpace? "I'm the one that gets stalked," he laughs. "I don't have time to stalk anyone really. It's just a Rock/Pop cross over track I did about the phenomenon and my own personal experiences."

An album full of pomp, confidence and direction, Electrostep is clearly the work of someone at the top of his game but more importantly someone focused on what he wants and loves. A behemoth of a creation that straddles an orgy of musical styles like some crazed 80s Pop whore, this record is sure to leave shop owners the world over scratching their heads collectively, wondering where the fuck to file it. While previous work may have flirted with the ideas and sounds that John so obviously adores, this new long player unabashedly tips its hat to the nu-romantic era of Depeche Mode, Human League and Howard Jones et al.

That's not to say that he's now moved away from the dancefloor killers that some may have been hoping for – indeed there are a handful of tunes that could and will wipe the floor in Fabric on a Friday night. He's just writing the music he wants to, like a child let loose in a sweet shop, and should be lauded for his diversity, not condemned. The contribution of his work, along with that of other artists like Pendulum, Logistics, Cyantific and Fresh will only serve to diversify and ultimately improve the ideas at the table of Drum 'n' Bass. Otherwise there's the danger of it all stagnating in its own gene pool. After all, variety is the spice of life!

Expect Electrostep on the shelves in July! For more info on John check www.john-b.com or go stalk him over at www.myspace.com/johnbetta



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Beyond Drum & Bass

It's drum & bass but not as
we know it. Electro d&b,
anyone?

HE wears more make-up than Boy George, is obsessed by the '80s and makes Oakenfold-endorsed trance - Maidenhead's John B is not your average d&b head nodder.

Against a scene slave to purist mechanisms and copycat production, drum & bass has garnered few LPs as bold, electric and - hold onto your hoodies, junglists - glam as John B's '80s influenced 'Electrostep'. Sparkled by decadent New Romantic attitude and teeming with tongue-in-cheek satire (check 'Russian Bride' for one particularly pant-wetting example), it does away with Armageddon bass rumbles and cold aggression and ushers in body-

popping robo-beats, glistening trance synths, crisply delivered vocals and electropunk guitars.

"'Electrostep' is the album title, and also the sub-genre I've created," revealed John. "It's a hybrid of d&b spliced with electro/clashy/robopunkrock and '80s."

'Electrostep's complex yet unpretentious chemistry should be little surprise, though. Since the tech growl of 1997's Grooverider fave 'Sight Beyond', this Durham Uni science grad has experimented with every sub-group of d&b's periodic table. Coffee table jazz sessions, soothing liquid rollers and even South American flavoured jump up in 1999's 'Salsa'.

**"95% of
modern
d&b bores
me to
death."
John B**

"I knew the scene's traditional forms had to be flipped on their head and I was the guy with the guts to try it," said John. "Less hoodies and caps - more girls, make-up and robot dancing."

"95% of modern d&b bores me to death. There are about 10 producers that inspire me. The rest are mostly irrelevant to me. "But I've never been a typical 'junglist'. I've had massive hits in every sub-genre of d&b and been instrumental in the development of a few, but get bored and move on rather than churning out generic dancefloor tracks that will date within weeks. It's more satisfying to create something that takes a while to understand." **ALLAN MCGRATH**

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ON THE COUCH

JOHN B



WHAT WERE YOU LIKE AT SCHOOL?

"Oh that's easy! I was an absolute boffin really, completely square with straight As. I was a music geek as well, in fact I was generally a total square dude. Basically I just kept my head down, did all my homework and was a good boy, and from time to time they called me up to do keyboard solos in assembly when everyone's coming in. I'd stand there with my keyboard doing the latest song Jan Hammer!"

WHAT'S THE LAST BOOK YOU READ?

"I've been reading quite a lot lately. I've been reading stuff about seduction, and the last book

I read was 'How To Get The Women You Desire Into Bed' by Ross Jefferies, which was actually shit. It was written in 1988 and he uses types of hypnosis to pull women."

WHAT WAS THE LAST FILM YOU SAW?

"Whatever I watched on the last plane I flew on. I haven't seen a memorable movie for a long time. I watched CSI yesterday if that counts?"

CATS OR DOGS?

"It depends what type... cats are less responsibility and dogs are great as long as they're somebody else's and you don't have

to clean up their poo. Dogs are more fun for outdoor frisbee-throwing though!"

WHAT WOULD YOUR BEST FRIEND SAY WAS YOUR BEST QUALITY?

"My BBQs and the fact there's also always white wine in my house. They're excellent social occurrences and I'm an excellent BBQ chef!"

...AND YOUR WORST FAULT?

"I can be selfish and a stickler for being on time. I get moody with people if they make me late or I have to wait ages for them and, although I don't generally react in a mad way, I'd say that it's a quality I try to work on."

WHAT ARE YOU GOOD AT THAT WOULD SURPRISE PEOPLE?

"Running. I can run a long way quite quickly. I did a half marathon in one hour 47. I run four miles two or three times a week and generally do it in about 30 or 32 minutes which is okay - it's not particularly fast but it's okay."

WHEN WERE YOU LAST EMBARRASSED?

"Today, a bit. I'm wearing really short shorts, '80s shorts, and a cut-off Michael Jackson 'Bad' T-shirt, which I'm perfectly happy about. I was walking down the high street to the post office and although I'm proud and don't care it's still slightly embarrassing when people point and laugh. But they do that because they don't understand my exquisite taste."

IF YOU HAD TO SPEND A YEAR ON A DESERT ISLAND, WHAT THREE PEOPLE WOULD YOU TAKE WITH YOU?

"Well, I'd take a really hot babe who fancied me. If I could affect their opinion of me then it would be a famous hot babe. I'll be non-specific, just a super famous hot babe that was secretly in love with me! Then I guess a really cool musician, say somebody like David Bowie who I could learn a lot from and presumably have intellectual conversations with. And then somebody like Daley Thompson because he

could keep me fit and show me exercises when I got bored. Maybe I could forget Thompson if the hot babe was also a sports person."

IF YOU DIDN'T DO WHAT YOU DO, WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

"Well before I got into music, I studied biology at university, and I was intending to do an MBA and work in a drugs company. So I'd probably be like working in management at Glaxo Smith Kline or whatever."

WHAT ARE YOU SCARED OF?

"Sharks. I'm scared of the prospect of being bitten, eaten, mortally wounded or killed by a shark while swimming in the sea."

WHAT UNFULFILLED AMBITIONS DO YOU STILL HAVE?

"Well, massively improving my level of musical superskill, getting my music heard by more people and essentially being more famous and successful. I want to blow up like Beethoven!"

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN ARRESTED?

"No. Never ever!"

DO YOU BELIEVE IN LIFE ON OTHER PLANETS?

"Yes I do. Not anywhere near us though, but it's statistically probable. I don't believe in aliens coming to planet earth and all that, but if there's life on our planet then there's bound to be life on other planets."

AND FINALLY, YOU'VE GOT 30 SECONDS TO PLUG WHAT YOU'RE UP TO RIGHT NOW...

"Well the number one thing to talk about is my new album 'Electrostep' which hopefully will be out by the time you read this. The first single for that, 'Stalking You On Myspace' is out now too. Check out my websites too: www.beta-recordings.co.uk and www.myspace.com/johnbbeta. There's lots of amazing stuff on there, and all my videoblogs and photo journals from my tours and stuff."



Dedicated Follower Of Fashion

He's the most daring dresser in D&B, Fabio Sciana meets John B to find out what is going on! Images by Nicky Farley

John B is quite simply the most extravagant and flamboyant character in D&B. Just look at some of those outfits; this guy makes Russell Brand look tame in comparison! Looking at his blog, which shows mountains of women queuing up for photos as well as his cosy friendships with several pornstars you'd certainly be forgiven for mistaking John as an international gigolo instead of a jet-setting DJ.

Whilst some people may question his sexual orientation ("he must be f*cking gay cos he wears f*cking make-up!" John B is more than comfortable with his heterosexuality. As is apparent, he certainly doesn't watch what people think and clearly doesn't take his image very seriously. At the opposite end of the scale though, he takes music VERY seriously and is somewhat of a marketing genius; he runs his own label, was one of the first people to make use of Myspace and has over 25,000 'friends'. Meanwhile, those outfits get him a hell of a lot of press and exposure; just last year he made 120 appearances around the globe, while his genre-defining new album is his seventh in 10 years! He just apologises for not having brought him to you sooner!

John: The outfits. What's going on?
It's part of what I do. Obviously music is the most important thing but I want to do everything I can to put on an interesting show and be a good performer. I don't care if people think I look stupid or decide I'm gay as a result of it. The image and the look go with the music, which is derived from new romantic '80s style and electroclash. It's rubbing off on the kids at parties now. I see guys turning up to D&B nights in make-up, skirts and ties. But it's hard to mix with the fingerless gloves and wrist warmers?
[Laughs] Admittedly, the accessories can get in the way but not to the point where it's a problem.



You're very well spoken, old chap!
Thanks. My mother was a teacher and she would always correct my grammar! When I got to America I ended up hammering it up even more and going all Hugh Grant, the girls love the accent there.
So how does a guy hook up with international pornstars?
Funny enough they got in touch with me! The first official pornstar I met was Mary McCormack. She'd heard my electro stuff and had been stripping to a track I'd made called 'Celebrity'. Now we've become very good friends and we hang out when I'm over in the US.
Sooooo, any pornstar action?
[Laughs] I don't know! There's no way I'm gonna answer that!



Are you more DJ or international playboy?
Well, I like meeting new people, sometimes this business can be quite solitary and if I'm flying to a city on the other side of the world, it's cool to know I've got a few friends there. It's nice I get to meet all these people and forge friendships, whether they're with hot babes or just dudes!
You're one of the first people to use Myspace as a promotional medium - did you see the phenomenon coming?
I used something similar before Myspace came about and I have a lot of American friends so I got to hear about it earlier than most of the UK. I could see how useful it was going to be.



The image and the look go with the music, which is derived from new romantic '80s style and electroclash.
The first single from the new album is 'I've Been Stalking You On My Space'. Are you stalking or do you have any stalkers?
Funny you should say that as I've got a few guys stalking me but they're friendly so it's not a problem. One of my ex-girlfriends has been stalking me though. She saw all the pictures of me with girls at gigs and she'd be calling me about it. "Oh my god you f*cked her didn't you? I know you did. She's a slut." We split up two years ago now so she's gone a bit mental! But I actually wrote the track because I wanted to make an indie/rock/D&B crossover track while talking about what annoys me about Myspace.



Like what?
[Laughs] Just the things you see all the time on there: like people who have gotten famous without having a talent as such and the self-obsessed narcissism and all that b*locks that goes on!
I've interviewed you for an hour - that's how long it's taken you to sweat!
[Laughs] I apologise...

John B's new album *Electrostep* is out now on *Beta Recordings*! For more, go to: johnb.com or myspace.com/johnb



John B: did you pack this hair yourself, sir?



John B

The drum n punker's top four travel peeves

“ONE. The lady on a flight who was listening to an Anthony Robbins Motivational seminar CD and reading Self-Help Motivational literature for the first half of the flight, then tried using it on me for the second half, as though I hadn't spotted what she was reading.

“TWO. People that take so long when they go to the bathroom on the plane and act surprised when there's a big line when they emerge.

“THREE. People that appear mystified when the seat in front reclines. I've seen guys get all mad and actually shake it, when the person in the seat in front was just leaning back a bit.

“FOUR. The strange man sitting next to me on the flight to Australia, who kept calling me Tom, and had a limp arm that kept 'mysteriously' falling on to my leg. And he kept getting up to go to the bathroom, and calling me Tom every time. Don't they know my name is John?”

JOHN B'S TOP TEN

1 JOHN B 'ELECTROSTEP'

BETA My new album.

2 CONCORD DAWN 'MAN FOR ALL SEASONS'

UPRISING Makes you cry.

3 LADYTRON

'INTERNATIONAL

DATELINE' CD-R (JOHN B REMIX)

I fancy the lead singer!

4 DEATH FROM ABOVE

'YOU'RE LOVELY' (JOHN B

REEDIT) 679 Heavy rock d'n'b.

5 DJ BTK VS JOHN B VS TIGA

'SUNGLASSES AT NIGHT'

CD-R Electro-riffic.

6 MY ROBOT FRIEND

'ISOLATION' CD-R A bleepy

Joy Division cover.

7 CASTOR 'AXE TO GRIND'

CD-R French horns in d'n'b.

8 BLOC PARTY

'HELICOPTER' CD-R (JOHN B

REMIX) We all like a bit of guitars now and then.

9 JOHN B VS CHASE &

STATUS VS DIGITAL VS

SCISSOR SISTERS

'COMFORTABLY DUPPY'

CD-R I hope it upsets Capleton!

10 DEPECHE MODE 'NEW

LIFE' MULTIS (JOHN B REMIX) Drop it!

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DRUM & BIZZLE

What to do? The World Cup is over, Wimbledon done and dusted... all that's left is that awkward period 'til the Charity Shield and the start of the Premiership in late August! Well the jungle never sleeps and there's still Carnival weekend to come and all the big parties associated with that... but I'll give you the low down on that business next month! There are two new albums that have recently hit the shops which I'm recommending; firstly *Drum & Bass Headhunterz* on Metalheadz. Yes, we have been talking about it for months and yes, we gave it five stars in RWD but now finally it is in your shops. Secondly the brand new John B album; *Electrostep*; **John B is either a very strange cat or perhaps just a marketing genius – there's the whole girls makeup thing, '80s clothing, very weird hair - who knows what it's all about?** But the album out now on double CD is heavy; you can't knock the music and John B's courage to experiment! Goldie and his Metalheadz imprint have a sh*t load on the horizon too; Commix has the *Perfect Blue EP* expected August time, and if that wasn't enough Commix releases his new album in late September - all on Metalheadz of course. They also relaunch the website (metalheadz.co.uk) and clothing range in September! Oh, there's more, because August also sees the launch of Metalheadz new label, Rufige. "The point with Rufige is to bring through new and up and coming artists in the D&B scene. We're looking to keep the same ethos as Metalheadz, however we want to establish the label as its own entity and with its own following," say the main men behind it all. Finally, the BIG one... the new Rufige Kru album (Goldie) has been pencilled in for Feb/ March '07 - ok that's a long way away, but worth mentioning! Later.





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- (1) Survival - Keep it Coming
- (2) Survival - Tron
- (3) Harmanecha - Strange Journey
- (4) XRS - Evening Sun
- (5) XRS - Retrato

STATISTICS

Dogs online: 2392
Record number online: 8050
Recruited dogs: 57,038

Posts on The Board: 5,349,037
Posts on The Grid: 522,893
Total number of posts: 5,968,785

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AUDIO

Q&A: JOHN B

Genre defying, crazy haircutted, sweatband wearing, pr0n star chirpsing D&B star John B has his very own brand of Drum and Bass to show you. Electrostep is his new LP and the man himself is here to tell you all about it...

posted by jeryl on 2006-08-02 13:05:02 [Read More...](#) | 44 Comments

Q&A: Q PROJECT: UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

After spending hours of my time researching everything there is to know about Jason Greenhalgh I knew I had to come up with something really special in order to be able to find out something we didn't already know. So, we met up mid-session in his local: the Met Bar and got our hands dirty. After loosening him up with a jug of Woo-Woo he really let the cat out of the bag on his private and personal life. Here is everything you need to know and more about Q Project...

posted by DJ CAMO on 2006-06-23 23:46:55 [Read More...](#) | 50 Comments

LEKE AEROSOUL

Aerosoul is a named that rings loud in the ears of dnb purists; they know the brand for both its 'junglist movement' slogans and for the way Aerosoul has helped to give drum and bass recognition in the big and bad world. This interview has been a long time coming but no-one deserves it more...

posted by DJ CAMO on 2006-06-11 21:14:05 [Read More...](#) | 22 Comments

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Drum & Bass



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DRUM & BASS
JOHN B

17TH BLVD MEMORIES

DC

Amazing, rock meets trance epic vocal tune this. The first new tune in a long while that really knocked me for six when I heard it. Definitely a highlight of my sets over the last couple of months, this is stadium rock d&b at its best!

BLU MAR TEN HEADTURNER

TANGENT

I've just signed a fab single off Blu Mar Ten here for my soulful/liquid label Tangent. This one always makes me think of Barry White and the Chel off South Park being all seductive and funky. It's got a lovely discofunk loop filtering about, a really good drop and build-up for the dancefloor, and nice chunky drums that keep it manly enough to keep the dancefloor energy up.

DJ BTK VS JOHN B VS TIGA SUNGLASSES AT NIGHT (REMIX)

Perfect for what I'm playing at the moment, my mate BTK from South America surprised me with a heavy remix of the Tiga electroclash cover from a few years ago. I tweaked it up a bit and have been playing it every set over the summer. Hi-energy drum & bass with that catchy "I wear my sunglasses at night" vocal and synth line. A really good example of the d&b/electro crossover.

FISHERSPOONER EMERGE (JOHN B REMIX)

Another unofficial remix I put together over the summer. 'Emerge' was one of the biggest electroclash anthems, and the synth bassline really lends itself to a d&b rework, as do the robo vocals... I've been opening with this quite a lot too - nice and heavy, electro-y and hyper enough to wind the crowd up into a glam-a-thon-robotron state.

SPOR MOLEHILL

SUBTITLES

A dark beast here - smashes it every time. Sidechaining on the beats and bass really pump nicely, a la 'Messiah' or Noida's track 'Subdue' - but with some really cool atmospherics and drop-out edits along the way. A really good contrast to the other stuff I play and can really change the pace instantly. Nice one!



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Top Ten Chart With

John B

1. Concord Dawn - Man For All Seasons (remix) - Dub
2. John B - Electrostap LP - Beta Recordings
3. Castor - Axe To Grind - Beta Dub
4. BTK vs John B vs Tiga - Sunglasses At Night Remix - Dub
5. Fisherspooner - Emerge (John B remix) - Dub
6. Logistics - Beat Box Master - Hospital Records
7. Rufige Kru - Monkey Boy - Metalheadz
8. John B vs Chase & Status vs Scissor Sisters vs Digital - Comfortably Duppy Line (mashup re-edit) - Dub
9. Blu Mar Ten - Headturner - Tangent Dub
10. Limewax - Untitled - Freak Dub





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JOHN B

01. John B – Electrostep CD/LP
02. Concord Dawn – Man for all Seasons (Remix)
03. Ladytron – International Dateline (John B Remix)
04. Death From Above – You're Lovely (John B ReEdit)
05. DJ BTK vs John B vs Tiga – Sunglasses at Night ReEdit
06. My Robot Friend - Isolation
07. Castor – Axe To Grind
08. Bloc Party – Helicopter (John B Remix)
09. John B vs. Chase & Status vs. Digital vs. Scissor Sisters
– Comfortably Duppy - Line Numb Mashup
10. Depeche Mode – New Life (John B Remix)





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tunes



ALBUM OF THE MONTH



JOHN B

ELECTROSTEP Beta Recordings (UK)



If you're one of those who think that drum & bass has steered itself into an artistic cul de sac in recent years then you need to hear this album, for it's unlike any other thrown up from this scene. John B is one of the most prolific of dance music's DJs and producers (this is his seventh album), as well as one of the more flamboyant (check his blog and video tour diaries on www.john-b.com), and over the past few years, while concurrently writing trance and house tracks (some of which were commissioned by Paul Oakenfold), has almost single-handedly developed a drum & bass style that's soaked in '80s electro, rock, grunge and trance influences, not to mention doused in his

irrepressible tongue-in-cheek humour; and it has garnered him a fan base few of his contemporaries can rival.

2002's 'American Girls' got the ball rolling in controversial style, while further cuts such as 'Electronic', 'Celebrity', 'Blue Eyeshadow', 'Electrofreek' and his highly sought-after Marilyn Manson and NIN remixes further demonstrated his determination to buck drum & bass trends and carve out his own very individual sound. The 'Electrostep' album expands on this foundation and through the ingenious reinterpretation of familiar sounds and songs, all coupled with faultless production and hook after hook, the results are as accessible to the mainstream as they are a refresher for the under-

ground dance fan. Alongside original compositions like 'Russian Bride' and current single 'Stalking You On My Space', both of which demonstrate his take on life online, the album includes covers of '80s classics such as 'Tainted Love' and 'Hey Mickey', remixes of Howard Jones and Dirty Sanchez, as well as a dose of straight up tear-out D&B in the shape of 'Remember Tonight'. All of which are presented in a dynamic dancefloor mix, with the limited edition coming with a second DJ set that features extra tracks. If you only buy one drum & bass album this year, then make it this one, for there's little doubt you'll be playing it in years to come.

★★★★★
Lurch





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John B Electrostep

Beta Recordings



Electro d&b.

D&b has never been particularly noted for either a sense of humour or being too off the wall, so thank fuck for John B's

'Electrostep'. Both tongue in cheek and irreverently innovative, 'Electrostep' might sound like another newly imagined genre from the music journalist conveyor belt but it's actually one of the most refreshing, entertaining and exciting LPs garnered by the d&b scene all year. Expanding the visions he first flowered with '04 LP 'In: Transit', the make-up-loving eccentric covers semi-satirical electro d&b wig-outs, glistening trance n'bass, body-popping robo-funkers and the bubble-gum grunge of recent single 'Stalking You On Myspace', along with a jump-up d&b overhaul of 'Hey Mickey'. If only all d&b albums were like this. **Allan McGrath**

Mint track: 'Russian Bride'





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JOHN B **ELECTROSTEP**

BETA

Released in July on single or deluxe double-CD formats, 'Electrostep' is quite simply the most breathtakingly personal album by a drum & bass artist since 'New Forms'. John B has single-handedly created a new genre in 'Electrostep', and it would be criminal if he didn't go on to achieve a similar level of acclaim as Roni Size did at the 1997 Mercury Music Awards. The key to its success boils down to John having a whale of a time making it. Every nuance of his zany, cooky life has been liquidised into audio form for your listening pleasure. As such you'll laugh, you'll cry... and maybe even puke to 'Electrostep'. We're sure that John wouldn't have it any other way.



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JOHN B
ELECTROSTEP
Beta Recordings (UK)

Many drum & bass producers get criticised for not taking enough risks, but that's not an accusation you could level at John B. Here he mixes up his trademark blistering beats with '80s pop, electro and rock influences. The resultant set is like nothing else you've heard... and brilliant.





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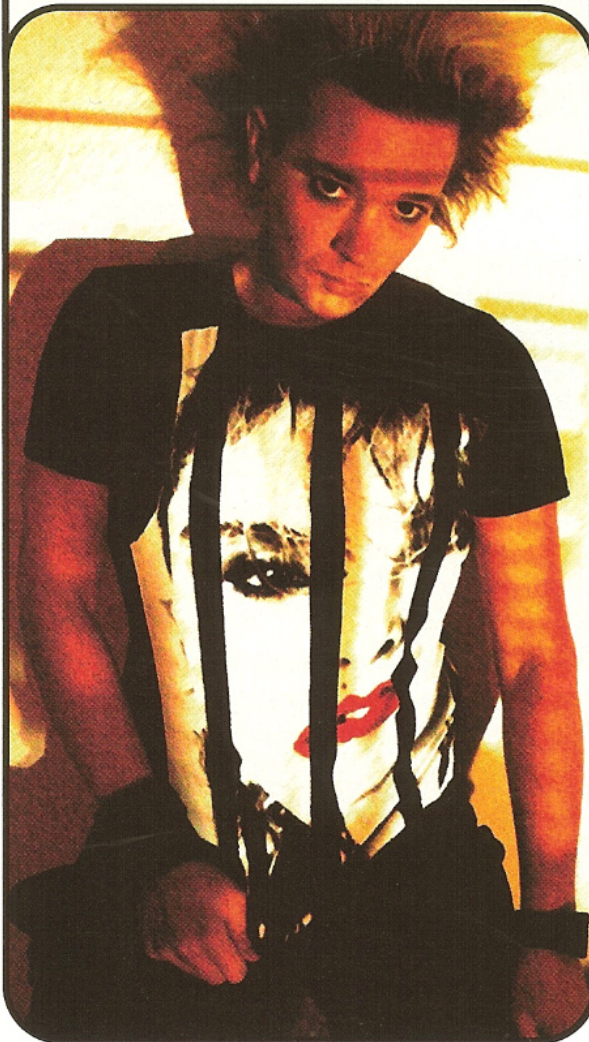
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JOHN B

'Electrostep'

(BETA RECORDINGS)

John B is not one to take himself too seriously and this eagerly anticipated album lives up to expectation. Pure jokes that put the fun back into musical fusions and, like the title suggests, all the tracks take on electro fused mash-ups. Think '80s, Speak and Spell, He-Man and She-Ra and the gay bar in 'Police Academy' and then you have half an idea where this is coming from. 'Russian Bride' is a funny exercise that is pure jokes. 'Electrostep' is a heady potion on bleeps and swirls, 'Midnight Air 06' is a beer infested monster. You also get a great rework of 'Tainted Love'. In a nutshell this is porn banging, nut grabbing, genre-smashing electro overdosing shenanigans for catwalk models and porn stars alike. Enjoy! **M8/M8**




m8



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John B
Electrostep
Nu Electro

While this album will clearly set as many tongues wagging as it does heads bobbing, driving a wedge right down the middle of the D'n'B scene, John B has never been about writing music for the masses. He has, however, obviously found his inner sound, delivering a whopping 29 tracks spread over two CDs. While some of it is not typical D'n'B, it still has that pace and energy, and the most part of it has its tongue placed firmly in its cheek – a lot like John himself. Feel Like I'm Falling opens like a Trance euphoria hit before slapping you in the face with a dirty, squelchy bass line a couple of minutes

In CD1 opens with the catchy, Kraftwerk style 'Rendez Vous' which sums up John's newly coined electrostep style of sound perfectly. 'Take Me Home' is a stomping, step-back to Old School Hardcore sounds under a vocal sample of a sex-crazed party girl's exploits on a night on the town. While admittedly some of the tracks wouldn't be out of place in a revamp of the Top Gun soundtrack, it's challenging and fun – and after all, that's what music's supposed to be isn't it? ☺





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JOHN B ELECTROSTEP BETA

Some people will grab a first listen of this album and wonder if it is a piss take! It could be... but it aint. John B is a strange guy, just look at mans wardrobe and excess use of eye shadow. If he tried to walk into AYWOL @ Paradise Club in 94 looking like that? MC GQ would have jumped off the stage and knocked him out. So clearly his fashion sense can be called into question but the contribution this eccentric musical genius has made to the D&B scene in the last decade is phenomenal, he's effectively created his own genre and a fan base that spans the globe with anything up to 120 appearances in a year!! so laugh at the photo but do check the album... and be open minded yeah!





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JOHN B
ELECTROSTEP
BETA RECORDINGS

Resident junglist joker John B looks like an 80's pop star! All pho'hekan and eyeliner, he's used this synthesized decade as his must for 'Electrostep'. On it he's let a drum n bass robot and a disco robot do the bare backed beast together and now we're invited to hear the Yamaha sparks fly. The 80s pop star Howard Jones collaborates on 'For You Se Me' (ah now we know where blonde John got his image from) and porn star Marcy Meow adds her Yankie drawl to a cover of 'Tainted Love'. And lest we forget the huge lead single 'Stalking You On MySpace' dedicated to the cool kids hobby de jour. But where's his rendition of 'Don't You Want Me Baby' huh?

