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iii Editor's Introduction

### Featured Articles

- |    |  |                |
|----|--|----------------|
| 1  | IDM as a "Minor" Literature: The Treatment of Cultural and Musical Norms by "Intelligent Dance Music"                        | RAMZY ALWAKEEL |
| 22 | Decline of the Rave Inspired Clubculture in China: State Suppression, Clubber Adaptations and Socio-cultural Transformations | MATTHEW M CHEW |
| 35 | Neotrance and the Psychedelic Festival   | GRAHAM ST JOHN |
| 65 | Too Young to Drink, Too Old to Dance: The Influences of Age and Gender on (Non) Rave Participation                           | JULIE GREGORY  |
| 81 | DJ Culture in the Commercial Sydney Dance Music Scene  | ED MONTANO     |

---

### From the Floor

- |     |  |                    |
|-----|--|--------------------|
| 95  | Convergence and Soniculture: 10 Years of MUTEK           | TOBIAS C. VAN VEEN |
| 118 | The Hardcore Continuum?                                  | JEREMY GILBERT     |
| 123 | The Abstract Reality of the "Hardcore Continuum"         | MARK FISHER        |
| 127 | 12 Noon, Black Rock City                                 | GRAHAM ST JOHN     |
| 137 | The Inverted Sublimity of the Dark Psytrance Dance Floor | BOTOND VITOS       |

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### Reviews

- |     |   |                          |
|-----|---|--------------------------|
| 142 | <i>We Call It Techno! A Documentary About Germany's Early Techno Scene</i> (Sextro and Wick)  | HILLEGONDA C<br>RIETVELD |
| 144 | <i>Lost and Sound: Berlin, Techno, und der Easyjetset</i> (Rapp)  | SEAN NYE                 |
| 147 | Chromatic Variation in Ethnographic Research: A Review of <i>Psychedelic White: Goa Trance and the Viscosity of Race</i> (Saldanha) | ANTHONY<br>D'ANDREA      |
| 150 | <i>Global Nomads: Techno and New Age as Transnational Countercultures in Ibiza and Goa</i> (D'Andrea)                               | CHARLES DE<br>LEDESMA    |
| 152 | <i>Breakcore: Identity and Interaction on Peer-to-Peer</i> (Whelan)   | EMILY FERRIGNO           |
| 155 | <i>The High Life: Club Kids, Harm and Drug Policy</i> (Perrone)   | LUCY GIBSON              |
-

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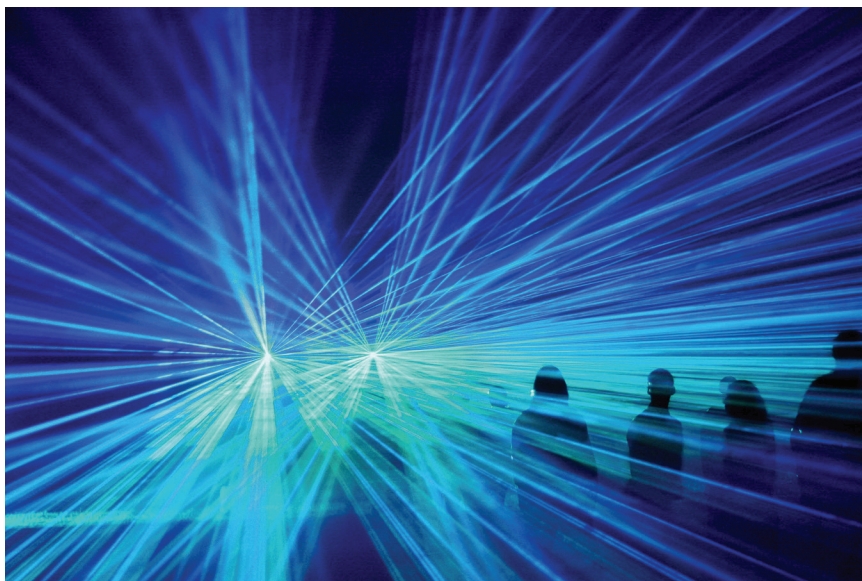
*Dancecult: Journal of Electronic Dance Music Culture* is a peer-reviewed, open-access e-journal for the study of electronic dance music culture (EDMC). A platform for interdisciplinary scholarship on the shifting terrain of EDMCs worldwide, the journal houses research exploring the sites, technologies, sounds and cultures of electronic music in historical and contemporary perspectives. Playing host to studies of emergent forms of electronic music production, performance, distribution, and reception, as a portal for cutting-edge research on the relation between bodies, technologies, and cyberspace, as a medium through which the cultural politics of dance is critically investigated, and as a venue for innovative multimedia projects, *Dancecult* is the forum for research on EDMCs.

From dancehall to raving, club cultures to sound systems, disco to techno, breakbeat to psytrance, hip hop to dub-step, IDM to noisecore, nortec to bloghouse, global EDMCs are a shifting spectrum of scenes, genres, and aesthetics. What is the role of ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, religion and spirituality in these formations? How have technologies, mind alterants, and popular culture conditioned this proliferation, and how has electronic music filtered into cinema, literature and everyday life? How does existing critical theory enable understanding of EDMCs, and how might the latter challenge the assumptions of our inherited heuristics? What is the role of the DJ in diverse genres, scenes, subcultures, and/or neotribes? As the journal of the international EDMC research network, *Dancecult* welcomes submissions from scholars addressing these and related inquiries across all disciplines.

*Dancecult* is published twice a year.

## editor's introduction

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*Fusion Festival 2007, Germany. Photo by Sam Rowelsky*

Electronic dance music culture (EDMC) is changing rapidly. Even the genre, subgenre or microgenre you thought you knew yesterday is undergoing a transit that you are barely able to recognise. This rapid transformation in EDMC, across a spectrum of fields, and in multiple locations, in the mainstream and a vibrant underculture, was a critical motivation for the formation of this journal, whose first lines you are now reading. A journal that will aid those who hold intellectual and research interests in EDMC, comprising something of a group mind as it hosts wide ranging input from international scholars on research associated with EDMCs. Well, that and the fact that, until now, there has been no journal for the EDM research community, whose members hail from multiple countries, with various disciplinary backgrounds and holding manifold research interests. “Community” is the appropriate term here since the signs are that EDMC is a growing field of research internationally, with an emergent network of researchers. And why wouldn't it be, if we recognise that clubbing is one of the principal leisure pursuits of our times, or that contemporary life has become flush with the genres, scenes and aesthetics of electronic music.

Research has evolved rapidly in response to these conditions. Scholarship has grown apace with the acceleration of EDM movements and cosmopolitan scenes. From raves to clubbing, techno to hip hop, dancehall to psytrance, dub-step to ambient, dance cultures and their music have become contexts for the development of urban leisure economies, production industries, new spiritualities and alternative modes

of citizenship. Studies have emerged to investigate forms of electronic music production, performance, distribution and reception within mainstream and underground contexts. Some researchers explore the role of the DJ from aesthetic, economic and regional points of view. Others focus on how electronic music has filtered into popular culture (e.g. cinema, literature and everyday life). Others still, explore the role of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, age and class in the formation of EDMCs. With connections to disciplines engaged in inquiries upon music, media, religion, society and culture, an international EDMC research network has grown steadily, at least since the formation of the mailing list [dancecult\\_1](#) in April 2005, with the assistance of Geert Lovink and Listcultures; and soon after, with the launch of [www.dancecult.net](http://www.dancecult.net), the research and information portal for the EDMC research network built almost single handedly by Eliot Bates. The open and archived email list has over 200 scholars subscribed, and the Dancecult portal features an EDMC-specific bibliography with almost 300 titles. *Dancecult*, the journal, also known as *DJ* (as in *Dancecult the Journal*), an open-access peer reviewed e-journal that uses the Open Journal Systems (OJS) software developed by the Public Knowledge Project and released under the GNU General Public License (and brought to life here by Eliot where it is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 3.0 License](#)) grew out of that development. It was a fairly natural growth in my view. An organic development. All that was needed was the dedication to get it sprouting. And so, together with Managing Editor Eliot Bates and Reviews Editor Karenza Moore, we have conspired to bring you the inaugural edition of this great adventure. And when I say “we”, I also mean our 25 strong Advisory Board comprised of experts across all the disciplines with interest in EDMC, the contributors to this edition (the authors of feature and “from the floor” articles, and the reviewers of books, films and events), and you, readers and future contributors.

The feature articles in this first edition offer an engaging crosscurrent of work in EDMC studies, addressing a variety of themes in research from various regions observed from the vantage points of multiple disciplinary perspectives. In our first article, Ramzy Alwakeel undertakes an investigation of Warp Records, Autechre and Aphex Twin by way of Deleuze and Guattari to conclude that IDM (Intelligent Dance Music) be read as a “minor” literature. In the second, the state repression and reflexivity of Chinese clubculture is investigated by Matthew M. Chew. It is a theme widely addressed elsewhere (especially in the UK), but this is the first research to address the state reaction to Chinese clubculture, and participant adaptations to these interventions. The third article, my own, addresses the role of the festival within psytrance (or psychedelic trance) culture, with specific reference to Portugal’s Boom Festival and its cultural history, with the article advancing the theory of “neotrance” and contributing to the study of the religio-spiritual dimensions of EDMC. Next, the study of female rave participation in Toronto warrants what Julie Gregory identifies as “accommodative resistance” facilitating and challenging discursive representations of age and gender. Finally, Ed Montano’s piece on Sydney’s commercial DJ culture investigates DJ selections in relation to what he regards as the imperatives of “entertainment” and “education”.

Another inspiration for this journal was the need for a professional venue for creative writing on EDMCs. This is imperative within an area of study which explores the interfacing of bodies and music, and contends with the experience of altered states. There is a common tendency within sociology in particular, and in the more clinical corners of cultural and music studies, to offer rather lifeless scientific or densely theo-

retical texts on EDMC, and to justify such approaches with the explanation that it is impossible to render states of Otherness (“trance”, “flow”, “vibe” etc), including one’s own conditions of mind and body alteration, through language anyway. Such is typical of the social sciences, and studies in religion, for example, where given the general body of “language” available, this comes as little surprise. I am speaking here of the history of disciplinary constraints which leave many scholars ill-disposed to communicate what they observe, let alone experience (in a style that might be considered illuminating, or exciting, or even accurate). We must often turn to the business of journalism to find the best writing on raves and so it is no coincidence that the work of Steven Shapiro, Simon Reynolds, Matthew Collin or Kodwo Eshun are widely hailed as the best introductions to EDMCs, pre and post-rave. This is extraordinary: academics sending their students to journalists to download the opening words and gain the original insights on EDMC. Does performing ethnography amount to an institutionalised exercise in ringing the life out of the subject matter in the name of science, discipline or canon; to produce a text that is inaccessible to all but the few versed in a torturous tongue?

I don’t know, since many academics, while holding that *Generation Ecstasy* is the best entry to rave, assume that the interest obtained will inspire “mature” ethnographies with research questions pursued within a delimited spatial area, and influenced by a thicket of appropriate heuristics shaped by developments in cultural and music theory. I do not question the importance of the latter. I am apprehensive, however, about how academic training may produce researchers and modes of representation remote from the subject matter, or which values personal experience and expression far less than theoretical frameworks that must be reproduced ad nauseam regardless of their relevance, or that apparently discourages heuristic innovations in the apprehension of the research subject. *Dancecult* represents an effort to overcome these tendencies, or at least to strike a balance. And it seeks to achieve this by not only publishing feature articles that are representative of cutting edge research developments across the field of EDMC, and which hold an energetic textual style, but by hosting work that is produced in the style of well crafted blog entries attending to field experiences and reports, interviews, and commentaries on current events.

These latter pieces (1500-3000 words in length) are hosted in the From the Floor section of the journal. In this first edition, *Dancecult* offers a diverse selection of such pieces. The first article addresses Montréal’s MUTEK Festival, given retrospective treatment by long-time MUTEK reviewer and participant tobias c. van Veen, who discusses the “body listening” of minimal techno and experimental electronica within the culture of the event. Complementing Alwakeel’s feature article, van Veen queries the boundaries and definitions of the key terms forming the acronym EDMC and contributes to our understanding of the porous boundaries between techno and psychedelia.

Intervening in the “hardcore continuum” controversy initiated by Simon Reynolds, Jeremy Gilbert and Mark Fisher offer pieces based on their presentations at a seminar by that name held on 29 April 2009 at the University of East London. Included in this section is my own report on the 2008 Burning Man Festival in Nevada’s Black Rock Desert, and an exploration of the “inverted sublimity” of dark psychedelic (or “darkpsy”) music and culture by Botond Vitos. *Dancecult* aims to publish further interventions on these and other topics in future editions.



*Beat Generation 2008 at Vaillant Palace, Genova. Photo by Alex Canazei: [www.alexcanazei.com](http://www.alexcanazei.com)*

Finally, *Dancecult's* first Reviews section offers reviews on one documentary film and five books. The film is *This is Techno!* (reviewed by Hillegonda C. Rietveld), and the books are Tobias Rapp's *Lost and Sound: Berlin, Techno, und der Easyjetset* (reviewed by Sean Nye), Arun Saldanha's *Psychedelic White: Goa Trance and the Viscosity of Race* (reviewed by Anthony D'Andrea), Anthony D'Andrea's *Global Nomads: Techno and New Age as Transnational Countercultures* (reviewed by Charles de Ledesma), Andrew Whelan's *Breakcore: Identity and Interaction on Peer-to-Peer* (reviewed by Emily D. Ferrigno) and Dina Perrone's *The High-Life: Club Kids, Harm and Drug Policy* (reviewed by Lucy Gibson).

It is my hope that this rich diversity of content stimulates debate and motivates inquiry, pushing the boundaries of research and writing. And, as the biannual scholarly mothership of EDMC, *Dancecult* – which by the way, encourages the inclusion of audio and visual material (ensuring that submissions follow [our guidelines](#)) – has been mobilised to accommodate such innovation and scholarship.

## **GRAHAM ST JOHN**

Executive Editor of *Dancecult*

14 September 2009