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**ANDY VAZ: DAYS OF YORE**

Having just embarked on the new label venture Yore in collaboration with Persistencebit's Alessandro Vaccaro, Background head Andy Vaz spared some time to discuss the new imprint's philosophy and its inaugurating releases by Todd Sines, Rick Wade, and Terrence Dixon.

What prompted you and Alessandro Vaccaro to create the Yore label?

For ten years, I've run Background, A Touch of Class, and sound_variation all by myself, so meeting Alessandro turned out to be a lucky coincidence. After starting out as an artist on Vazbit, I gradually became more and more involved in running the label with Alessandro and, as partners, we discovered we had a great way of working together and sharing responsibilities. So things both logistically and personally developed and we decided to start a label together. Having someone else involved also gives me more of an opportunity to focus on my own music. As a result, more recordings of my own work have been issued during the past year than ever before.

How does Yore differ from the other labels with which you're affiliated: Background, A Touch of Class, and Persistencebit? Are there particular things that identify a given recording as a Yore recording in particular?

Well, it's a complex thing and a very simple thing all at once. Background has been around for a decade now. Though the label has evolved and gone through different stages, its minimalist foundation has remained throughout. Background has provided a cultural conduit for minimal electronic music and the geographical range that exists within the genre. I've tried with the label to honour techno's vision of futurism and advancement, its commitment to pushing the music forward. The label has featured Portable's South African-influenced, 'tribal' techno, Dave Miller's Australian take on the genre, material by Canadians Jeff Milligan, Akufen, and Frivolous, and Mexican-styled minimalism by Antiguo Automata Mexicano. Even with the emergence of subgenres like clicks and cuts and microhouse, Background has remained faithful to its minimalism essence.

Minimalism and repetition are not just genres or styles but foundations for both techno and house. From very early house (Trax, Adonis, Mr. Fingers) to early Detroit techno (even before *Minimal Nation* which basically demonstrated it in a more precise and radical form and which gave minimal techno its name), these two factors have been central to the 4/4 sound. That's not a new thing; it's *always* been that way.

Yore offers an alternative to the fashionable minimal sound that has exploded around the world but which, in my view, lacks the personality and depth this music needs, arguably more now than ever before. Don't get the wrong idea; I think there's a lot of great music being produced, and there are all kinds of new people and new labels, and there'll always be innovators producing exciting music. Still, there has never been as much soulless minimal techno as there is now, simply because it's trendy and heavily-hyped. People that never cared about minimal techno (and therefore lack a deeper understanding of it) make it; following the trend offers a road to success for them, but so much of it sounds alike; you can hear the same VST plugins used in exactly the same way, and the music that results bores me to death.

Our approach with Yore is to look into the future by going back in time. Now seems to be the perfect time to bring back old school, really minimal sounding house and techno. This move doesn't conflict with Background's ideals, by the way. All of the artists on Yore have had material issued on Background and A Touch of Class. The essence of those records is that they've never gone out of style and don't sound dated. In his sets, for instance, Jeff Milligan still plays the Todd Sines' track from 1997's Background 000 release!

That's where Yore comes in. To be precise, I'd prefer to speak of 'timeless' music, rather than 'old school.' A Rick Wade record, for example, is not old school per se; a Rick Wade record sounds like

PERSON
 Questions in Dialect
 Samarkande/Obliv. Ens.
 Sonje
 Soporos
 VeeBeeO
 Vestigial
 Rick Wade
 .xtrak

a Rick Wade record because that's how it's supposed to sound, that's his style. Period. The same thing applies to Terrence Dixon or anyone else who'll appear on Yore in the future. It's more about a clearly-defined personal signature than wanting to push an old sound per se. What counts for me is that talented people are able to let their hearts speak, and are able to put their souls into music that doesn't sound all the same.

You've got Todd Sines (under the .xtrak guise), Rick Wade, and Terrence Dixon lined up as the initiating artists for the first four EPs. Can you tell us a bit about each artist and the particular style each is bringing to Yore?

Well, sure. Todd is known for what we call Bleep. Bleeps & clonks, Chicago-styled beats with Todd Terry-like snares and bleepy funk. He is undoubtedly a master of this domain. Terrence's sound is raw, uncompromising, and radical. Nobody sounds like him. That's his biggest advantage; his music is unique and raw to the max. Compared to his 1995 classic minimal techno release *Minimalism* on Detroit 's Utensil, Rob Hood's *Minimal Nation* sounds like an entire orchestra. Terrence's full-length album *Train of Thought*, our label's third release, will be a very clear statement of what Yore stands for. Same goes for Rick; he sounds totally like himself and no one else. He's been producing house music for a long time and has developed a uniquely warm, chord-driven trademark sound. You can drop a needle onto any of his records and you can tell it's him immediately. To me that's a good thing.

Is it true that you're planning on issuing a Yore release every four weeks? Why such an intense release schedule?

Yes, that's right. The reasons are simple. Yore is defined as a dance floor label, both House and Techno. We want to give DJs music that they can play *and* enjoy outside of the club context. The schedule also offers a quicker cycle and a steady output. We think that giving DJs one more outstanding record to play every month won't be too much.

Are these releases exclusively in a 12-inch vinyl format?

For the moment, yes, but maybe not in the future. We'll have to see. However, the label's focus will stay on vinyl for sure.

Judging by the quality of his Yore release and his recent Background disc (*Minimalism III*, *textura*'s number 2 pick for 2006's Top 10 EPs), Terrence Dixon's work strikes me as criminally under-recognized. Am I correct in thinking he hasn't received his due?

Well, the thing with Terrence is—let me put it this way. He's a real Detroit cat, living a real Detroit life to say the least. He follows his own concept of space and time and he always seems to be involved in other things besides music. He is very strict about his music and how and when to present it. He is also all about personal relationships. If he's not totally behind you as a person and vice-versa, he is not going to put out his music with you. So I'm happy that I'm able to release his work. He has always played a role within my record label operations and has been a personal inspiration. I do agree with what you said about his outstanding talent. It's undeniable.

Given that you must commit time and energy to getting Yore up and running, does doing so mean that Background and A Touch of Class are presently 'on hold' or are there developments in those areas too?

Yes and no. Background is indeed on hold for a while, but not forever (with the right material on hands it will automatically return with a release), while A Touch of Class soon will issue the long-awaited Paul Hammond aka Further Details debut full-length album, which has been in the works for a while and is now ready to be released.

What about your own music? The outpouring of releases during that past year or two suggests that your own style is in a constant state of evolution. How does it strike you?

I guess it's simply a result of not wanting to repeat myself. Music has to evolve for it to remain personally interesting and everything I've done recently still carries my personal signature. You can still hear me in the music, whether it's following a more experimental approach or whether it's heading more towards the dance floor. Also, the sound_variation series has come to an end with its tenth release, so one chapter has closed and another has opened. I'm also playing a lot of live shows at the moment and am really enjoying finding the groove at the moment. So, naturally, you'll hear that in my recent records as well.

Website: Yore

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