

DJ TIMES

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TECHNO & BEYOND:
CRAIG'S SESSIONS
OFFERS CLASSICS &
EXCLUSIVES.

To legions of forward-thinking DJs, Carl Craig retains a level of devotion that few EDM producers enjoy. The reason is simple: In 17 years of work, Craig has refused to stay in the same musical place. His original productions and remixes always reflect fully realized ideas and his DJ sets are never mailed-in affairs. He's made a career out of keeping his audience on its toes.

And now we have *Sessions* (!K7), a double-disc collection that presents Craig the producer (under guises like Paperclip People, Innerzone Orchestra and Tres Demented) and the noted remixer (for Junior Boys, X-Press 2, Faze Action). So, just as *Sessions* looks back at Craig's impressive career and offers a peek at his present-day work, we asked the legendary Detroit electronic-music icon to tie it all together for us.

Over the years, Craig—who is known for techno, but whose productions explore various realms—has experimented with many different pieces of outboard gear and software. Starting with what he could afford and/or borrow, for example, his whooping Paperclip People track, "Oscillator," was done with Roland SH-101 and S-10 synthesizers, for which Craig had to cut the bit rate in order to get enough sample time for four different samples. His flagship Innerzone Orchestra track, "Bug in The Bass Bin" was put together on an old Electro-Voice console which he bought for \$500—back when he thought that was a lot of money for such a piece.

"I've been through everything," says Craig from his Planet E offices in Detroit, slightly jetlagged



CARL CRAIG: A LOOK BACK & FORWARD

from a three-week European tour. "I've never been the guy where when something came out I had to run and buy it. I've tried to stay away from trends and find things I could hold on to for a long time. With gear, it's really important to find things you feel really comfortable with that you can love."

Part of Craig's reticence towards the warp-speed progress of technology is its seemingly limitless capabilities. This is not to say that Craig doesn't take advantage of progress. Logic Pro 8 has made his life easier with its one-screen interface. While iZ Technology's Radar is still his recorder of choice, Craig says that the combination of that with Logic has made editing and arranging a lot simpler. Plus Logic's soft synths have proved themselves invaluable with lead lines and strings, which he keeps in their digital realm—Craig says that Logic's phasing, panning and spreading abilities are best utilized within the machine. On the other hand, he fattens up his kicks and adds layers by running them through outboard pieces.

"I also use Ableton where you can sample or resample, and make it do all this weird stuff," he says. "For days you can screw around on one cursor, gating an effect, trying all these very calculated concepts. When you gated an effect the old way, you would do something musically and then put a gate on it. If you want the gate

to open rhythmically, you put a hi-hat trigger on there. You use the sound in order to make that gate open up. It would be responsive to what the gate would do. You could do that in the computer as well, with sidechaining. But I think it's a lot more organic to do it the old way. It wasn't limitless."

Craig's appreciation of limitations carries through to his identifying basslines. For those heard on "Sandstorms," he followed a simple sequence. Using an Alesis Andromeda synth, he found a pattern he liked, looped it, then made a kick sound in Logic (using and tweaking one of its synths), and finally messed with the parameters during the mixing stage. For his remix of X-Press 2's "Kill 100," Craig used the vocal line as his guide and came up with an arpeggiated bassline in Ableton Live. Using a 909, he created Tyree Cooper-esque drums to broaden the mix.

In the DJ booth, Craig has joined the modern world completely, as he's a huge supporter of Serato. "I like the idea of everything being in the computer when I DJ," he says. "When I don't like something I can take that file, edit it and play it again. I don't have to worry about creating it on vinyl. I don't have to worry about burning CDs. To me, it's like, 'I did this track two hours before I'm playing—let me test it out. The sound doesn't sound right. I need to fix it when I get back to the studio.' Or there's something that's missing, maybe I can add something to it. That's great to me."

— Lily Moayeri