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CLUBS

Preview

Popular Science

Breakbeat Science celebrates five years of syncopating the city with a big party and a new store

By Maggie Stein

Among NYC's drum 'n' bass heads, the name Breakbeat Science has long been synonymous with first-class underground sounds. Through the Breakbeat Science collective's record shop, its roster of top-notch spinners and numerous shindigs, the crew has been waging a long, hard battle against the tyranny of house music's ever-present, four-to-the-floor thump, as well as against musical mediocrity in general. In the process, it has built a musical miniempire.

This September marks Breakbeat Science's fifth anniversary, but the gang is getting an early jump on the birthday festivities by tossing themselves a bash at P.S. 1's Warm Up soiree on Saturday 21. The lineup includes long-time Breakbeat Science mainstays DB, Dara and Reid Speed, along with two-step biggie MJ Cole and turntablist supreme Craze. This event is more than just a celebration; it also represents Breakbeat Science's desire to expose open-minded listeners to the many variations of breaks-related music outside of drum 'n' bass—two-step, nu-skool breaks, broken-beat and all related styles. The same all-breaks-encompassing manifesto also applies to Breakbeat Science's brand-new Lower East Side record shop.

DB and Dara, along with Sean "Shooter" and Paul Morris—Breakbeat Science's key figures—are all major players in the electronic-music scene. DB (the group's creative guru) left London for NYC in 1989 and was the man responsible for the seminal NASA party, considered to be one of the first events to push a hard breakbeat-techno sound outside the U.K. He's served as A&R director for sm:)e communications

(one of the first American labels to chronicle the growing drum 'n' bass scene) and later went on to cofound the F-111 imprint, among numerous other projects. Dublin native Dara is a producer and DJ in his own right; he's put out records (and performs A&R duties) for sm:)e and Moonshine Music, and is one of the main artists on the roster of Breakbeat Science's associated record labels. Sean "Shooter" is the label manager and is in charge of store operations; he, too, has released records on sm:)e and Moonshine, and has done remixes for artists ranging from Pizzicato 5 to Los



SCIENCE MAJORS From left, Dara, Paul Morris, Sean "Shooter" and DB are Breakbeat Science's core lab technicians.

Amigos Invisibles. Morris not only helps in Breakbeat Science's day-to-day operations but also runs AM Only, one of the biggest DJ-booking agencies in the country, representing artists Carl Cox, Richie Hawtin, Dieselboy and many other stars of the electronic-music world.

Breakbeat Science got its start when the crew opened a record store in late summer of '96 on 9th Street in the East Village, laying claim as the first store in North America to specialize in drum 'n' bass tunes. They recently expanded their retail operation by moving to an improved and larger space at 181 Orchard Street. DB, who conceptualized and designed the shop with architect Human, describes it as "a high-end Chelsea art gallery crossed with the end scene of *2001: A Space Odyssey*, with a little bit of *Blade Runner* thrown in." Aside from being in a much bigger space (in-store artist appearances at the old space on 9th Street were becoming dangerously overcrowded), the store's sound system has been seriously upgraded.

The store's diverse selection of stock reflects Breakbeat Science's desire to move beyond strictly drum 'n' bass. "We will be carrying more variations of breakbeat," says Sean (who, along with Dara, does the buying



LAB CLASS Probe the nature of breaks at Breakbeat Science's new Orchard Street shop.

Dara, the labels have somewhat different focuses. "The releases on Breakbeat are mostly very musical and more left-of-center," he says, while "Orgone was started as an outlet for the harder-edged, dance-floor oriented tracks we were finding." The labels' releases have served to showcase the talents of North American drum 'n' bass producers, in a genre largely dominated by U.K. artists.

This month, Breakbeat Science Recordings will deliver its first full-length album, *The Secret Art of Science*, which also serves as DB's first mix-CD release in two years. The release features a side of drum 'n' bass that's more melodic and emotional than what many people are used to hearing. Upcoming projects include a new album by Dara along with the debut album from longtime L.A. d'n'b DJ-producer Pieter K.

The Warm Up wingding at P.S. 1 (which will be packed, so get there early) is a good example of Breakbeat Science's ongoing effort to expand the minds of drum 'n' bass aficionados and to find new fans of breaks in general. MJ Cole is currently the top dog of the U.K. garage/two-step pack, and three-time DMC mixing champion Craze will mix just about anything he can get his hands on into his rapid-fire turntable assault. With its anniversary party, record labels and brand-spanking-new store, Breakbeat Science marches on.

Breakbeat Science celebrates its fifth anniversary Saturday 21 at P.S. 1's Warm Up event. See daily listings for details.