



SONGS FOR EUROPE: BALEARIC BEATS BY COUNTRY

- Austria**
Welsz - El Vagabundo feat. Pablo J
Nearly nine minutes of what can only be described as acid-flamenco. Brilliant.
- Belgium**
In a Split Second - Flesh
A dark slice of proto-techno from the Low Countries. Can be played at a hi-NRG 45rpm or a more moody 33rpm. The latter, apparently played by accident, gave birth to its own musical genre - Belgium New Beat.
- Denmark**
Laid Back - Sunshine Reggae (Extended Version)
A favourite of Leo Mas who used to play this reggae-shanty as part of the warm-up set in Amnesia. A rattle of timbale and the pulse of steel pans create a perfect summer vibe.
- Finland**
Husky Rescue - Sound of Love
Finland's finest excel at off-centre melancholic pop - perfect for the Balearic comedown. Sound of Love features guitars, drums and a children's toy piano.
- France**
Sébastien Teller - La Ritournelle
Flows like chocolate from a fountain. The song features drumming by Tony Allen - a master drummer of afrobeat - but it is the piano solo, a haunting lilt, that seems to charm your very arms into the air.
- Germany**
Manuel Götsching - E2-E4
An minimalistic, sweeping hour-long progressive electronic track first recorded in 1984. Splendid in itself, but better when providing the backbone to another Balearic classic, Sueno Latino.
- Greece**
Annabouboula - Hamam (Swiss Mix)
A Greek trio who saw themselves as cultural anthropologists (no kidding) mixing Mediterranean mysticism with modern rhythms. No matter. Makes you long for white stucco walls and an azure sky. Simply dazzling.
- Italy**
Tullo De Piscopo - Primavera (Stop Bajon)
An Italo-disco stomper by famous jazz drummer and Apiento's all-time favourite Balearic record. Reached a lowly No.58 in the UK Singles Charts in March 1987, but grooves on in Balearic discos across Europe to this day.
- Netherlands**
Dutch Rhythm Combo - Cartagenera (Ray Mang instrumental mix)
Features a beat as beautiful as a bouquet of flowers and a melody as mellifluous as molasses, and yet remains so little known.
- Norway**
Todd Terje - Inspector Norse
Is it the lack of daylight that makes Scandinavian's create music that seems to bottle sunshine? Mixmag named this top tune of 2012. Easy to see why - it's as pleasant as a child's smile and as addictive as a game of Space Invaders.
- Portugal**
Black - Tabanka
Delighted Balearic dancefloors across Europe last summer. A delightful afro-tinged groove topped off with a saxophone riff that summons Amnesia's glory days.
- Spain**
Raul Orellana - Real Wild House (Wild Mix)
A full-on house record featuring flush of flamenco, a chattering of castanets and, er, an Iggy Pop sample. Now, you can't get more Balearic than that.
- Sweden**
Stonebridge - Jazzy John's Freestyle Dub
Nancy Noise played this at The Future in the early days of the scene. Hip hop beats and simple piano loops create a mid-tempo "chugger" that holds off the ravages of time.
- Switzerland**
Yello - La Habanera.
A bonkers story of Cuban revolutionaries and secret police informers. The music, a riot of latin drums and trumpets. A favourite of both Alfredo and Noise.
- UK**
Mandy Smith - I Just Can't Wait (The Cool and Breezy Version)
Stock, Aitken and Waterman's finest hour - don't let that put you off. The original tabloid "wild child" excelled with this forgotten gem. As smooth and groovy as Sade at her peak.

BALEARIC BEATS: BROADENING CLUBBERS' MINDS FOR 30 YEARS

SEAN DODSON on a genre that knows no borders - but is as hard to pin down as your shadow

Sometime in the late 1980s, on the Balearic island of Ibiza, a mural was painted on the open-air terrace of the nightclub Amnesia. The mural depicted a hand-painted image of the globe wreathed in a single declarative phrase rendered in several European languages, with Spanish the first among equals.

"Música sin fronteras" or "music without borders" seemed to define a style of dance music that was becoming synonymous with the island. Under the influence of an Argentinian emigré, DJ Alfredo Fiorito, or simply "Alfredo", Amnesia emerged as the club to go to for cutting-edge dance music. And so, as the island enjoys its closing parties this coming weekend, many of the clubbers will perhaps be too busy waving their hands in the air to realise that this summer marked the passing of the 30th anniversary of the style the island

pioneered - the Balearic beat.

To the uninitiated, Balearic beat, or simply "Balearic", is a style of dance music that spans a number of disparate musical genres. Slower, more melodic and a lot more eclectic than house or disco, it has for three decades provided the flip-side to the thump-thump-thump of full-on rave culture.

"Balearic came at a time when there was a big social change, with the use of ecstasy, and new styles of music and clothes," explains Nancy Noise, a DJ who played at the UK's first ever Balearic night - The Future - in London in 1988. "People talk about acid house because that became huge," she adds, "the Balearic scene was a major part of it because of the style and the attitude carried forth into that [scene] largely because of the way Amnesia was."

Noise should know. She'd been a summer resident of Ibiza when it began to kick off in 1986, a devotee of Amnesia and Alfredo's music to the point where, during the subsequent summer of '87, she spent every night there. She agrees, tacitly, with the view that what happened at Amnesia helped prepare the way for acid house and the wider dance culture that came to dominate. Last weekend's Bestival on the Isle of Wight, for example, is essentially a Balearic festival, that placed indie-faves The Cure, alongside electro-poppers Hot Chip and the tongue-in-cheek of The Cuban Brothers.

Balearic music, although rooted in Ibiza,

grew quickly into a wider-European movement. Initially seized upon by London DJs - particularly Paul Oakenfold, who played alongside Noise at Future, and Danny Rampling who launched the celebrated Shoom! Club in London - that helped nurture the "second summer of love" of 1988, although the Balearic character of the early nights was drowned out its brasher cousin - acid house.

Somehow, though, Balearic style survived, on the fringes of clubland, and now prospers again in clubs and parties across the continent.

"It's very much a European sound," says Paul Byrne, AKA Apiento, the DJ and producer behind the influential Balearic blog, TestPressing.org. "It's big in Sweden and Norway," he says. "And it's growing with a new wave of kids coming through - there's all these young Parisians getting into it - who've been listening to the original DJ mixes online and are starting to make records of their own."

Byrne argues that Balearic scene has persisted in waves. The first, where Alfredo - and DJ partner Leo Mas - assembled a record collection that was catholic in the extreme, spanning The Clash, traditional flamenco and Italian cosmic-disco. While down the dusty road from Amnesia at Kusite of Wham's Club Tropicana video - Jean-Claude Maury, added a flavour of "dark leftfield pop" to the mix, according to

Bill Brewster of DJHistory.com.

Then, a second wave of down-tempo chill-out music, exemplified by Jose Padilla's excellent Cafe Del Mar compilation series in the late 90s, caught the imagination of a younger DJs and musicians. Meanwhile in Sweden, a further generation of acts, including Studio, El Perro Del Mar, Air France and Kleerup, began making Balearic-influenced records of their own. The latter went on to have a UK No.1 with Robyn: With Every Heartbeat, a very Balearic record.

From the late noughties onwards Balearic bangers continued to pour out of Scandinavia. Norway's Todd Terje and Lindström regularly forged disco missiles that seem specifically-engineered for Mediterranean dancefloors. In Amsterdam, Red Light Records - situated in the same seedy alleys as the district from which it takes its name - started throwing parties across the city. Malmö in Sweden has an excellent Balearic scene based around the record shop Wildlife - and so on. In the UK, Manchester plays host to Aficionado. Leeds has monthly Balearic Social nights. "We play music without boundaries. If we like it we play it," says Andy Pye, the night's DJ. "And only last weekend, London hosted an all-day-all-night Balearic festival across three venues, including sets by both Alfredo and Nancy Noise.

As eclectic as a vintage market, then,

such a variety of music is hard to define. Balearic is therefore more of a style or a "vibe" than a specific genre. And at its heart lies a paradox. If music is truly without borders, then surely anything, everything could be considered "Balearic". And yet, there is also this unspoken understanding that only certain records make the cut. The recordings prized most highly by the scene's devotees are by lesser-known artists and it can seem deliberately obscure at times.

In this sense, Balearic music has a lot in common with northern soul. Although musically different, its fans have revived and re-appropriated an obscure music originally manufactured for a different audience. Like northern soul, Balearic is as hard to pin down as your shadow - but you know it when you hear it.

The first place to look, nowadays, is the internet. Influential sites such as TestPressing.org and ResidentAdvisor.net connect a once disparate scene. Meanwhile copies of old cassette tapes from the original nights - Alfredo at Amnesia in '84, Nancy Noise and Paul Oakenfold at The Future in London, Danny Rampling at Shoom! in '88 - have emerged on YouTube and Mixcloud, allowing later generations to sample the open-minded spirit of the original scene.

More recently, the sound has moved further away from Ibiza and London. Zambon and Jaromir - a pair of Polish

ex-pats living in Berlin represent the next wave of Balearic. Through the city's clubs and on a weekly show, Balearic Biggos, on the bleeding-edge Berlin Community Radio (berlincommunityradio.com/balearic-biggos), they mine their East European heritage (biggos is a popular Polish dish) to play "rare, obscure and forgotten music ... mixed with the best contemporary stuff that's not on most listeners radar". One minute it's Yugoslavian psychrock, the next, Polish jazz-funk.

"Balearic is just a vibe of music - the name came from the islands because they were playing this oddball music through the years," says Zambon.

"Generally [the music] has survived because the music is just so nice. Not hard, like techno. Even your mum might like it," he laughs. "Not everything has to be four-to-the-floor."

Balearic Biggos exemplifies the European nature of the music. A migrant Pole plays to Germans a style of music rooted in Ibiza but defined in England.

As Paul Byrne says: "Balearic is what music should do really; bring people together." In other words, Balearic is music for the ideal of Europe. It truly knows no borders.

Sean Dodson is the postgraduate leader in journalism at Leeds Beckett University and a former judge of the Orwell prize.

(1) Nancy Noise and friend, Ibiza, 1998 (2) DJ Alfredo and friend, Ibiza, 1998 (3) Clubbers dancing outdoors, Amnesia courtyard, Ibiza, 1989 (4) DJ Danny Rampling at Shoom, London, UK 1988 (5) DJ Paul Oakenfold, 1991 (6) A smiling raver at Shoom, London, 1988. (7) Clubbers at Amnesia, Ibiza 1989

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