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MEET...

Knifehandchop

WHO IS THAT KID BEHIND THE LAPTOP?

Knifehandchop is the alter ego of 23-year-old Scarborough native and erstwhile gabber/death-metal/ragga enthusiast Billy Pollard. Don't let his age fool you -- Pollard's been releasing electronic music on London's Irritant Records and Kid606's Tigerbeat6 label for over five years now. His latest album, out now via Tigerbeat6, is a remixed compilation of previously released 7s and 12s called *Rockstopper*. On it, you'll find traces of everything from chart pop and booty to jungle and noise, all of it ballasted by a breakneck beat and a bratty, pre-adolescent playfulness. It's where Ja Rule comes to mingle with bleep and bass, and it's a lot of fun.



Tellingly, Pollard's blaring a record by Sepultura offshoot Nailbomb when we reach him at his parents' place in Scarborough. He's home to finish his proper new full-length, but he's resigned himself to the likelihood that he'll have to leave the country to tour. See, despite the fact that he's always worked out of Toronto, Pollard's cachet comes from Europe and Japan; the discrepancy between home and away is now so great that he rarely even performs here anymore. "I've played like so many empty shows here, and that doesn't happen in Europe," he says. "They seem to like electronic music more there. Here, people think electronic music went away after The Chemical Brothers."

AND SOMETIMES NOT EVEN A BOOTY JAM CAN CHEER YOU UP

Home to Cex and DJ/Rupture, Kid606's Tigerbeat6 label has evolved to become a choice resting place for art-school lappers. In addition to compiling *Rockstopper*, the label is planning to release Pollard's new full-length, *How I Left You*, in August. It's an endeavour Pollard jokingly refers to as his manic-depressive album.

"I made it during a period that I kept breaking up with my girlfriend and then getting back together thinking it's gonna work and then breaking up again," he laughs. "My emotions were really up and down at the time, so on the days I felt good, I'd rip a reggae a capella and do a soca song, and the next day something would go horribly wrong so I'd do a track with guitars and vocals. There's lots of highs and lots of lows."

THESE KNIFE HANDS MAY CHOP, BUT THEY DON'T MASH

While he may have orchestrated clandestine meetings between Eminem, Destiny's Child and Vengaboys in the past, Pollard is not fond of being slapped with the mashup artist tag. There's a difference, he maintains, between beatmatching The Doobie Brothers and Ladytron and simply trying to push things forward.

"Until people start combining things, everything just stays the same," he says. "In hip-hop right now, it doesn't seem like anyone's risking anything, and that's too bad because hip-hop was always leading."

Ask him what he likes about hip-hop and he hits back with reverence: "Timbaland. He's the best. The Neptunes used to be good before everything sounded like Latin guitar. I guess they found that ladies market and stuck with it."

New Neps aside, is there anything Pollard won't try to spin into his sets? "I really don't like trance or deep house," he says. "And, um, trip-hop sucks. But everything else is pretty cool."

MARK PYTLIK

Knifehandchop plays Altered Beats at Thymeless (355 College) July 9.

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