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Local roots rockers fight the dark side

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Twisted Scissor Sisters keep it campy

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Local songster Justin Rutledge channels Gram Parsons

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#### **Perlich's Picks**

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#### **Hot Tickets**

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Knifehandchop

Photo By Benjamin Boles

## PULSE MY WEEK IN THE CLUBS

BY BENJAMIN BOLES

### TIMELESS IDM AT THYMELESS

IDM (intelligent dance music) seems to have split into two distinct tangents in the last few years. On the one hand, some artists have dipped deeper into ambient textures and serious electro-acoustic music, but many of the younger generation have fallen for the hard-and-fast abstractions of hardcore that Squarepusher and Kid 606 pioneered. To those of us who survived the rave heyday, referencing hardcore techno and jungle while stealing fragments of corny pop doesn't seem that progressive or "intelligent," but for kids who are coming from a punk rock background, the sounds of breakneck-speed distorted drums are appealing and accessible.

Last Friday, **Altered Beats** threw a party at **Thymeless** that featured a mixture of live IDM performers as well as an appearance by **DJ Dominik** – a hardcore DJ who was quite big locally during the peak of the rave scene.

While I might not find the speedy sounds very challenging any more, it's refreshing to see the more serious side of electronic music happily admitting to its cheesy roots. **Knifehandchop** was doing a laptop DJ set when I arrived, bouncing between noisy jungle beats and some Rotterdam-inspired pounding. Not a lot of dancing going on, but this crowd doesn't dance much in general.

Dominik was up next (still wearing phat pants from back in the day), and dropped a very aggressive drum 'n' bass set, steeped in the sound's early days. He doesn't always get the respect that someone like the Kid 606-associated Knifehandchop gets, but his sound for the past 10 years is really only a small step away from what these IDM kids are doing today, only it's actually made for the dance floor.

Sure enough, the crowd started doing their spastic dancing pretty soon after he took control of the turntables.

Fun little party.

### ROBERTS'S RULES

Stopped by **Mixed Signals**, a new Sunday night at **Fez Batik** last week. Resident DJ **Andy Roberts** plays a fun mix of house, disco and classic house to the patio massive. For a Sunday night, it was a decent-sized crowd, and a fair number were dancing by the later part of the night. New York DJ **Sandy Rivera** was slated to show up as a surprise special guest but was still stuck in traffic between Montreal and Toronto as last call approached. It didn't seem to bother most people; they probably didn't know he was supposed to be there.

The crowd is part club industry types on their night off, part older scenesters and a few hardcore partiers – in many ways like Andy Roberts's old crowd when he was doing Sundays at the now-defunct Living Room.

### SPECTRAL SPECIAL



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Ann Arbor label **Ghostly International** have been winning praise for their growing catalogue of critically acclaimed but hard-to-classify releases. A year into their operation (2000), they set up the sub-label **Spectral Sound** to provide a home for the more overtly techno and quirky house records.

Here in Toronto, there's been an ongoing low-key series of events based around Spectral Sound called the **Spectral Sessions** . Last Saturday they threw a party at the **Drake Hotel Underground** , featuring **Ryan Elliot** and **Sam Valenti** .

It was a good little minimal house party, although there's something about the Drake basement that's not so conducive to DJ parties. Musically, it was a fine balance between the quirky and the funky, which kept the floor moving.

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**ALSO BY BENJAMIN BOLES:**

Scissors kick... \*    
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