

## Various – Pulsar (Oxygen)

Contributed by damion psyreviews

Underhyped release delivers the goods

Aside from all the overhyped top-drawer releases, there are releases known as sleepers. Somewhere in between is Pulsar, an album that might have slipped under your radar but which really deserved to be one of the key players in your soundtrack for summer.

The vibe is of a carefree summer kickdown; there's glassy production that has its colour turned up by Schwa's competent mastering, there are glimpses of brilliance, and at least two stellar standouts.

Sonify's Oxygenate is decent, and rolls along nicely, although its reliance on a ticklish high-end line at the end is quite unwelcome: when you've got a track that builds energy as nonchalantly and as confidently as this one does, a high-end line at the end is the last thing you need.

M-Theory's Soundproof is glorious: sounding a little like Datalinks-era Logic Bomb, the energy here is second to none and the way in which ideas and melodies suggest themselves unfurlingly is nothing short of delightful.

Setherian's Angra is a filler, a very compelling reason to skip to the next track, Suntime & Antigravity's Astraight oMM. It's a cracker: years ago I'd be reviewing something and tracks would stick out a mile as soon as they started as being one of those "winners" you just know is going to be decent. Which is exactly what's going on here. A steady, confident groove works its unstressed way up to a midrun that has one of those melodic, kaleidoscopic runs that reminds you why you love everything about this music (even if you pretend not to.) It's full on done well.

Aphid Moon's Oceanic shows a more thoughtful approach than was evident on his Hells-Bells album from a few years back. It's moody, almost angry in its vibe and only when it picks up sparkle and finesse for a wonderful, slightly-atonal final run do we get something that's really worth celebrating about.

Plasmotek's Obsession is all about its wonky and eminently danceable backend, all of which is eclipsed by the sheer bliss of Hydraglyph's Psyops. This is how it should be done: the production is clear and perfect, the escalation is unforced, the flow is just what you want to keep you bolted to the dancefloor. There are a few too many samples and at least one breakdown too many, but when it works, it works.

Rumble Pack's Timecode is very inyaface, just as you'd expect from those boys. It's intelligent in its thunkage however, and underscores the suggestion that as an act they're able to keep the kids happy as well as give us old farts something to get into.

Finally Frekulizer closes the album with Are We There, very in keeping with his particular sound. It's a better than a lot of his output, which I tend to find a little linear – and while there are some noticeable cypaste presets here, the soul and the glide just about carry it off.

It's not perfect, but Pulsar sits confidently amid the plethora of releases vying for your attention. To sum it up, I'd say that it's a slice of the better, more satisfying side of the European outdoor sound.