

VA - Frogology (Frogadelic)

Contributed by damion psyreviews

Party promotion crew takes step into recording industry for first time since 1846

I have to admit, I'm kind of surprised this doesn't happen more often than it does: a party organisation makes its business in booking acts and arranging nights, so it stands to reason that they'll "know what works". Frogology is the debut release from the people behind the Tribe of Frog parties centred around Bristol for the last nine years, and just as their gatherings are famed for being somewhat more involved affairs than a "stereo covered by a bit of camo net", so this album is a more involved affair than the "bunch of artists huddled under the guise of a label and a bit of camo net."

The vibe is tight, varied, fluid and freestyle -- and it's probably the least paranoid record to have come out of Bristol. Ever.

OOD kick off with Frogology, and it's bordering their best material yet. There's a more involved, happening vibe to this than a lot of the material on their recent album, and I put this firmly down to the fact that without the strains of an entire conceptually-linked album, they can concentrate on what they do best: gnarly, in-your-face trance with its foot firmly on the funkometer.

Flip Flop vs Tron's Material World is a cream-good example of the current tight crop of fullon music. Unbecheddared, its breakdown doesn't jump up and down going "ooh look, I'm a breakdown" and nor does the subsequent drop and chunky final run.

AMD's Roadshow is firmly geared to an endpoint. You know the sort of thing -- the track starts out hey-let's-go, like it's got its sights set on something and reckons it's going to engage you all the way there. Micro-sounds become macro-sounds and the cascading, layered effect eventually takes the lid off and things really start to cook. A breakdown, a change in funkification, a quick nod to your grandmother and off it goes, as we all join hands and celebrate the fact that 2009 sounds nothing like 2008, 2007 or 2006.

Next up, The Trick by Braincell -- an artist who a lot of people tell me I would like, but whose music for some reason is lost on me. I admire the production, I admire the individual movement in the sounds, but I fail to be moved by it. It might be that Braincell's music is all style and no substance, it might be that this isn't his best output, or it might be that I'm an old and heartless bastard with no soul.

Fearsome Engine's Frog Addict is what we call in the trade "a belter". It's got a wob-wob dubstep bass, and when you add the power of deftly-executed switches and drops, with some Cosmosis-like topend intricacy, the result is a winner. I love it. It's the only tune I've heard this year when I think, "jeebus, I want to marry this AND set it as my ringtone."

Rastaliens rarely put a foot wrong, and the collaboration with Virtual Light pretty much stays on track. It's a little too stop-start for me but the sounds that are whirling around are top-dollar. Something puts me in mind of Alien Project's Midnight Sun, back when alien Project was still good. Except this has a more engaging drop and doesn't have a future music career that makes you weep silently in a cupboard.

Archaic's Soothsayer ramps things up to a darker, more frenzied pace. It's alright, nothing earth-shattering -- it relies n awful lot on a uniform acidic flecking, and without this it's not got a great deal to write to its mum about. I suspect it's placed here to set the tone for EVP's TOF-U, a more involved angry stomp of the kind one gets when one ingests seven or more minutes of EVP.

We need a belter, and Subliminal System's Malevolent Intent delivers. It's hefty, it's involved, it's probably what we might call a night-time trac, but the level of quality and movement adds a dimension that's wholly wonderful.

It all comes together on Scorb's It's About Time (Frog Remix), a sheer delight of a tune. It combines Scorb's earlier gnarly sound with his more recent melodic flirtations, and fuck does it hang together well. The final run sums up what a good stomp is all about -- airy, happy, epic, momentous. Top, top work.

All in all, this is a very solid release indeed. It's rare to hear a compilation that's so well-conceived; there's nary a duff moment here, and the way that a bunch of very varied tracks hang together and flow quite as well as they do mean it's an ideal album for its niche. Aside from selling to muted punters on their way out of a club and back to their underground hovels, Frogadelic is recommended listening for anyone with an interest in dynamic, tight, and non-shit psytrance.

Preview the album over at <http://www.frogadelic.co.uk/>

