

Yabba-Dabba-Doo, Here's B(if)Tek!

With Kate Crawford living in Sydney and Nicole Skeltys in Melbourne, the musical process is unusual to say the least for ex-Canberra duo B(if)tek. But being self-proclaimed "geek-girls", writing a song together simply means zapping it over the Internet to each other so they can both have a fiddle with it!

B(if)tek first came to being earlier this decade when the duo became frustrated at the capital's lack of activity and hence started throwing their own parties through Clan Analogue. They also started writing music and in 1996 independently released an album, "Sub Vocal Theme Park", which was also licensed to Europe, and was the first album to be available on-line here in Australia.

Kate explains: "It was very much a way of saying 'when you don't actually have a really big dance scene making you sound like something, you can sound like whatever you like'. I think that's how B(if)tek got a unique sound; we were coming from Canberra where there was so little happening that you had to make it happen.

"I think what we found when we released 'Sub Vocal Theme Park' is that a lot of people came up to us and said 'My God, I haven't heard anything like it'. Initially it kind of perturbed us, we thought 'What are we doing?!', but I think we've really settled into it and realised that's our strength: a really unique sound" she admits. "Regardless of what the musical fashion is - we've gone through all the fashions from trip hop to drum & bass and speed garage - we've really managed to stay apart from all of them and say 'No, we've got our own territory, we've got our own sound, and we're *not* letting these other fashionable genres take over in any way."

That unique sound is evident on new single "Bedrock", B(if)tek's first single on Festival's new dance label F1. The single, which is to be included on the forthcoming follow-up album, holds something of a record in this country: inclusion on at least four compilations! It is set to do the same overseas soon with a number of European and American labels showing considerable interest.

The "Bedrock" that appears on compilations like "Cognition" and "Elements" is wildly different to the one you can hear today on single though. "The original "Bedrock" is about 8 minutes long, so it's been cut considerably and tidied up a bit" explains Kate. "You can



still tell it's B(if)tek, but obviously over the last 4 years we've become a lot more refined in terms of our production techniques, and I think you can tell just on the "Bedrock" single the production's gone up by a factor of ten."

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Kate cites everyone from 1940s jazz artists to Parliament to Ken Ishii as influences, laughing that "we listen to so many different genres from so many different decades that our inspiration is incredibly hard to track down! "Obviously there's a big dancehall sound from the 1940s on "Bedrock" pipes Kate, "and in

fact there's quite a lot of sampling from jazz era - there's a really great Ella Fitzgerald sample on there too. I think much of what we do as B(if)tek is going back through er because I think so many people just tell us to listen to the latest club sound and say, 'we've got to sound like that!', rather than going, 'Hang on, there's this huge music tradition, why don't we start listening a little bit broadly than we currently do?'"

B(if)tek will be back on the road again in October headlining the Clan Analogue tour. "What we are planning to do is give people a sample of what the new album is going to sound like, as well as a tour of the golden oldies!"

B(if)tek's current single "Bedrock" is available through Festival.