

# B(IF)FTEK

We Have The Technology

▶ International

▶ Dermot Clarke

Boffin electro duo B(if)Tek are hard at work negotiating with NASA to have their music played during the first (hu)manned mission to Mars. (No shit.) NASA are very interested, apparently.



The flight is scheduled for the year 2020. Bif's second LP, surprise, is called '2020'. Fans will be 'surprised' (or not) at the extensions, so to speak, apparent on the latest offering. Some harder beats, as well as the more familiar atmospheric lo-fi grooves... and Julee Cruise doing a Cliff Richard cover. Kate Crawford (the one without glasses) explains: "While there are quite mellow introspective pieces, we generally balance them with some quite dark and disturbing pieces, and I think '2020' has a lot of that. Even in tracks where people think are just sweetness and light like 'Wired For Sound' is actually quite a disturbing resonance. There's definitely some tracks which are about periods in time when we were

writing music where we were feeling fairly bleak about what was going on and we sort of explored that musically. Yeah, so there's definitely some of that in there as well," Kate says. Waiting for a call to come through can be hypnotising, 'specially when your treated to a bit of ragtime jazz, then the idea hits. It's too perfect, because... "beautiful. In actual fact we've had this fantasy for years to write elevator music that'd slowly warp people out. But in actual fact with elevators people just aren't in them long enough, so we gravitated to the idea of space flights, because you really need to be inside somebody's headspace for a long time to slowly weave different sorts of sounds. We've been talk-

ing to NASA for six months, so that's actually going really well."

Fuck, how old will they be then? What will they be doing in 2020 when they're playing '2020' on-board the SS Mars, me-wonders...

"Let's face it, we'll be able to re-grow all our own organs, we'll be able to take a pill, and... it's gonna be a lot easier," she adds ironically.

"In terms of multiplicities of meaning and understanding then that's certainly true. I mean, in any particular track there will be something that people might see as being a cute little sample, like 'We Think You're Dishy'. Whereas there's a lot of other stuff happening as well that might undercut that. And I think if you look at irony as being that idea of layered-ness then that certainly applies to the entire album."

A lack of communication between Murmur, Sony and the duo known as B(if)Tek resulted in a bit of a mix up, which is perfect for them. Kate's cracking up over the media sampler of new album '2020' having no visible track listing. "How evil," she says. Things are hotting up and up for B(if)Tek, who've managed to convince Sony that their beautifully obscure and dark beats are a worthy investment. Sony must be quite chuffed at the minimal budget demands placed on them as far as gear is concerned. "My absolute favourite piece of equipment," she delightedly begins, "and it generally stays at number one regardless of what's going on is the System 100. It's a machine that

Roland made in the early '70's. It's got fixed catch phase, where you can actually construct the sound from the very first wavelength. You create the wave form, and you put the wave form through a filter, and then you decide how the amplitude is actually going to affect that wave form, so you can determine how it increases in volume and how it drops in volume. So you can build the wave form from the ground up. It's just incredible."

This should put to bed any accusations of hiding in the shadow of Eno and Kraftwerk.

Kate continues: "That's actually been the machine that's pretty much defined the B(if)Tek sound from the beginning. Because it's quite an unusual machine we tend to feed a lot of sounds through it. In addition to basic synthesis, it's basically like building from the ground-up. I could take my favourite drum machine and feed it through the System 100, and I can modify it. It definitely has personality, that machine, it has sound that is evident through everything we do."

Is it the equipment that dictates the approach, or is it the attitude towards the equipment at hand?

"I actually think of it as a dialogue. One of the things that Nicole and I often joke about is that we're the mediums for the machines, and they just channel through us. They do what they want to do".

*B(if)Tek will be appearing at Viva this Friday, July 14. '2020' should be out soon through Murmur / Sony.*

## up for grabs

Thanks to Sony Music & Viva Nightclub we have five double passes to this Friday's show at Viva up for grabs. To be in the running call our competition line 3216 0631 on Thursday between 3 - 3.15pm and be ready with the answer to the following question - Which Cliff

Richard song did B(if)tek recently cover and release as a single?

Otherwise pre-order the upcoming B(if)tek album '2020' and receive a free double pass to the Viva show. (See ad on page 20 of this issue for details)

# LIMMY NEW RELEASE