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Techno Invasion

National electronic music tour hits Austin venue

By JASON BENNYHOFF

The Battalion

Moonshine Records began in the late '80s as an experiment in the marketability of techno music. Today, it is one of the largest techno labels in the country, and it runs the only national, annual electronic music tour in the United States. Texans will get an opportunity today to witness the fourth installment of this tour in Austin.

Among those appearing on the tour are Carl Cox, John Kelley, Micro and Dieselboy. These names may not be known to the general public, but all are popular performers within their own musical genre.

Cox gained his popularity as an electronic DJ in the early '80s in Great Britain, and has been playing continually since those early days. Cox, considered by many reviewers, including Urb Magazine, to be one of the top three DJs in the world, said he has memorable experiences of playing in Texas and looks forward to this year's Moonshine tour date in Austin.

"The last time I was [in Texas], I had a great time," Cox said. "It was very hot, but people were ecstatic to see me and they walked away very happy after the show. It was a real

pleasure to see that in a land known for oil barons."

Kelley was born on a military base to a Japanese mother and American father. Kelley said he became a DJ after graduating from the University of California-Los Angeles with a bachelor's degree in biology. Kelley said he was accepted to medical school, but chose not to attend due to the responsibility of that commitment. While the United States lost a doctor, it gained a renowned DJ.

Kelley said he enjoyed his previous experiences on the Moonshine tour, but the everyday grind of touring the country tends to wear on him and the other performers.

"It is a pretty brutal schedule," Kelley said. "Traveling and playing is hard enough, but when you are doing five or six shows a week, it gets really tough on your body. It is pretty much: Get up, shower, get something to eat, go to the show, get back to the bunk and the next thing you know, it is time to do it all over again."

Kelley said most people only see the finished product of the traveling and playing, so they only see the professional side of the performers on the tour. Kelley said one aspect people miss is the relationships between the various artists and DJs on the tour bus.

"There is tension, definitely," Kelley said. "To a great extent, most people get along really well, but everyone is in the close quarters and they are working really hard, so the tolerance goes down. It is really worst for the people who are always there, like the lighting people."

For some of the Moonshine performers, this will be their first trip to Texas. But for one, it is a grand homecoming. D:Fuse is a trance DJ from Austin and a graduate of Southwest Texas State University. D:Fuse said the Moonshine tour has shown him



Carl Cox hypes up the crowd.

how truly appreciative Texas crowds are of home-grown talent.

"I never knew how people felt about me," D:Fuse said. "Playing the Moonshine date in Austin last year was so overwhelming. I cannot wait to go back. I love the fact that I am from Texas, and I love the people in Texas."

D:Fuse may be the home-town boy at this show, but he is by no means just "local talent." D:Fuse currently has four records on the market and a recent mixed CD on Moonshine Records. He said his immediate plans are to finish the Moonshine tour, and then to begin collaborating with Paul Oakenfold, a top U.K. trance DJ, on a European tour.

Last year's Moonshine tour was extremely successful, cramming in 25 shows in 32 days. The majority of those shows packed in thousands of ravers and club kids. Despite the success of the previous Moonshine tours, however, there are murmurs of discontent within the U.S. electronic scene.

Cox said the electronic music scene in America has exploded in the last two years, resulting in some disturbing commercial trends in the way raves are organized and promoted. Cox said the primary concerns of good music and safety have been superseded by the pursuit of money by many American promoters. Cox also said com-

petition among promoters has made it more difficult for performers and audience members to receive good treatment from some of them.

"Some parties are doing really well," Cox said. "But some promoters are becoming real fat cats and mixing up their priorities. I played one party in Orlando, where I was put in a small room; the booth was small — it was a back-room party. Watch out for some of these promoters; the United States could have a real good club scene if one or two promoters would collaborate. But it seems the scene here is more contrived [than in Europe]. If promoters are going to do something, they should do it correctly or do not do it at all."

Time: 9 p.m.
Location: 8908 Ramirez Lane Austin
Cost: \$25

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MSC Hallway 10 - 3

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Austin DJ D:Fuse spins some classic trance tunes for Texas ravers.

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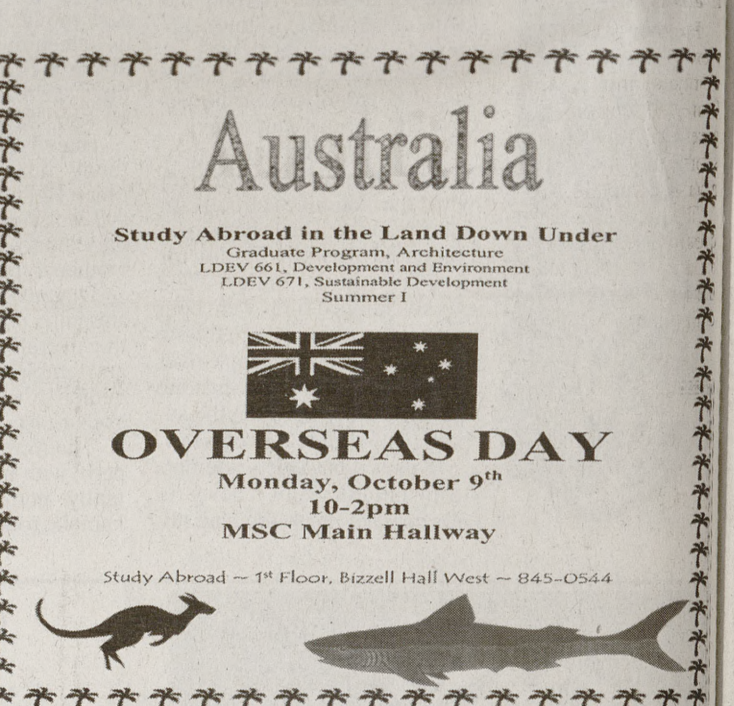
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