DJ MAGAZINE | ISSUE 04



**ONCE UPON A NIGHT** 

### FERRY CORSTEN CONSTEN CONSTEN BACK TO THE FUTURE

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MAGAZINE

PRACTICAL APPROACH - MIXING WITH



Starting from VirtualDJ v6.1, Atomix Productions partnered with Grooveshark in order to bring you a reliable and high-quality catalog of more than 8 million songs, while still ensuring that the artists get compensated for their work.

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If you don't have Premium Membership yet, it would make the perfect Christmas gift. *Read more at www.virtualdj.com/products/membership.html* 

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# ORENOT ENILS

With the holiday season here, this might be the perfect time to reward yourself with a digital DJ solution, whether you're a beginner or an experienced DJ. Make 2011 the year you take your mixing to a new level. It's the perfect gift for "under the tree"...

#### **VIRTUALDJ HOME 7**

Provides the enjoyment of DJing at home, for DJs who don't need advanced sound configuration, MIDI control, broadcasting, or full video output. VIRTUALDJ HOME is built for the simple at-home setup where a DJ can explore the art of mixing by simply using the keyboard, mouse and built-in sound card. *(FREE)* 





#### VIRTUALDJ BROADCASTER 7

VIRTUALDJ BROADCASTER will let both beginners and veteran DJs enjoy mixing for a very affordable price. And, with its built-in radio server, all your friends will be able to listen to your mixes live, from the comfort of their homes, as you can stream your mix straight to your friends or an even bigger audience using a web radio server connection. Great solution DJs who don't require external mixers or controllers. (\$49)

#### **VIRTUALDJ PRO 7 BASIC**

VIRTUALDJ PRO 7 BASIC is the alternative for customers on a budget, designed for smaller venues. It's an excellent starting platform for when the DJ needs to use a sound configuration that requires more flexibility for connecting to an external mixer, but does not require capabilities like timecode setups, MIDI controllers or full video output. PRO BASIC is most commonly used by DJs in bars and small clubs. (\$99)





#### VIRTUALDJ PRO 7 FULL

The flagship product, VIRTUALDJ PRO 7 FULL gives full featured capabilities to accommodate any DJ's needs or desires, featuring digital vinyl (timecode) set-up, external controller support (HID/MIDI/Firewire/Serial), full-screen video output, advanced sound configuration, broadcasting, and much much more. This is the perfect choice for the working DJ who needs a professional solution. VIRTUALDJ PRO FULL gives the DJ accessibility, versatility and cutting-edge technology. (\$299)

# ... TRANSCENDING

Dutch DJ & Producer Ferry Corsten is ranked in the top 10 DJs of the world, with a track record of stunning releases and remixes for a wide range of artists, from Faithless, Nelly Furtado, Public Enemy, U2 and Tiësto to Armin Van Buuren, to mention some. He is considered one of the top names within the trance genre with almost 20 years of steady productions and huge shows all over the world in front of thousands of fans. His recent compilation Once Upon A Night - Volume 2 (Black Hole) is an impressive and eclectic collection of trance sounds.

You have an energetic sound with rich melodies in your productions. What kind of tools and software do you use to achieve your sound?

- I use Cubase in the studio and a lot of plugins. The energetic sound all comes from there, and from my head, of course. First, I need to have an idea before I can produce it.

# What are your musical and creative inspirations for your work?

- It could be anything, things I see or things I hear. On my last artist album, I made a track for my newborn daughter, Gabriella Skye, for example.

To most people, you're seen as a pioneer and an architect of the trance genre. Lately many trance producers have turned towards a more progressive house sound. Is trance dying or changing towards this?

- Right now you see that trance and house are becoming a fusion. As a producer, you need to be three steps ahead, so I am in the studio now working on my new album. This will be released in 2011 and I think some will be amazed by it.

#### When and how did you start DJing and producing your own melodies?

I finished my first track when I was 16 years old, I believe. So I have been producing music for 20 years now. As an idol and inspiration for so many DJs worldwide, do you have any advice for young DJs wanting to follow in your path? - I would say, try to be original and try to find your own unique sound and melodies. Nowadays, I get some many demos that all use the same presets! So, be original and keep on trying.

You have seen many places over the years performing as a globe-trotting DJ. What is your most funny or strange experience? I'm always amazed to see how people 'party' in different cultures [laughs]. I was playing a club in Argentina a while ago. During the break of the track, people started sitting down on the floor, one by one, until the whole club was sitting down. I found it very odd, until the beat kicked-in and everyone jumped up at the same time to dance to the music! Apparently, it was very normal to do that there [laughs]. It was the first time I'd experienced that ...

For more information, visit : www.ferrycorsten.com, www.flashoverrecordings.com www.blackholerecordings.com.



INTERVIEW

".. we really found it was time to give our early work an updated sound .."

# BACK TO FUTURE

The legendary German trance duo Cosmic Gate's productions span over a decade with remixes for major artists as well as their own releases. Being at the forefront of innovating the electronic dance scene and headlining festivals and clubs around the world, Cosmic Gate have earned a huge base of followers. Earlier this year, the duo received an award for "Best Selling Trance Artist" by Beatport as well as nomination for "Best Remixer" at the IDMAs. On January 24th, 2011, Cosmic Gate will release their much anticipated double-disc album, Back 2 The Future: The Classics 1999-2003 Remixed (Black Hole), featuring remixes by some of the globe's best remixers.

## Tell us about the process, sound and inspirations for your latest album.

- We really found it was time to give our early work an updated sound to make it sound like 2011! First, we thought about the DJs and producers we liked, contacted them, and together with these guys, we thought about who would fit which song. Then a few months later (in December), "Exploration Of Space" and "Back To Earth" with Arty's great remake made it to #1 on Beatport! The complete Back 2 the Future album will be in stores January 24th.

#### Over the past few years, it seems as though your sound has moved a little away from the harder trance to a more progressive, melodic feel. Is this the reason for making the new album with new remixes of your earlier tracks?

- It's certainly part of the reason. We got our very first idea when we made a new version of our early work

for our own DJ sets. We began to realise that the harder sound from 1999 simply was not fitting our live sets any more, either because of the recording quality or the style. When the new, remixed versions went off really well and got requested a lot from our fans, we though for the first time to make a whole project and album out of it. This goes to show that the fans have a big impact in what makes it onto an album.

#### Is it fair to say the trance scene in general has changed away from the harder classic trance sound?

- Well, we think we can definitely say yes, here. Who wants to listen to the same kind of music forever and ever? That's why we think the trance scene has gone through a good and healthy development. In general, the whole music business is under constant movement anyway, and standing still is the first step backwards, in our eyes. As part of this moving scene, plus on top comes our natural development as artists and also as human beings, we think it's also normal that in 2011 we sound different than we did 12 years before!

#### You have an astonishing list of remixes over the years. What do you look for when you are <u>choosing tracks and artists</u> you want to remix?

- It simply has to fit. We need time at first, and also interest in the track we have to remix. We need an idea of which direction to go to with on our remix. Sometimes there is simply nothing that we think we can add to a track we are requested to mix, but in general, we maybe turn 10 tracks down before we remix one. Something simply has to click with the music and also fit into our schedule!

# What kind of production gear and software do you use in the production, and why?

- We started out with all analog equipment in the 90s and our studio was filled with old synths and drum computers. Over the years, we switched more and more to digital recording gear, like many other producers. For the last few years, the only thing left in our studio is a huge monitor, a good P.A., a master keyboard, and most importantly, a really fine-tuned Apple Macintosh computer filled with all of the possible plugins and other software we need for mastering and recording. That's it, actually. This equipment easily would fit in every little bedroom even, but that's how it is these days.

#### How did you start DJing in the first place and when? Any advice for young DJs wanting to follow in your path?

- We both started DJing as teenagers, first working on our mixing skills in our own basements, then starting in smaller clubs in our home cities. Over the years, the parties got bigger and the first small production started when we put our equipment together with some other guys. It was pretty much the same, like so many other guys and girls out there. We think both as DJs and producers that it's important to be standing for a certain kind of sound, to try to innovate, try to be unique. I would say, don't copy others. This, in our eyes, is the best way to be successful in the long term.

For more information, visit **www.cosmicgate.de** and **www.blackholerecordings.com**.



With VirtualDJ 7 out for some weeks now, we have gathered together what users are asking for more information about. This brief introduction to VirtualDJ 7's features aims to give you a head

#### **UNDERSTANDING 4 DECKS**

One of the main changes from a practical perspective is mixing 4 or more decks with VirtualDJ. This change is huge in terms of the practical approach, as most of us are used to 2-deck traditional DJing, and for years and years this has been the standard in software and hardware. Mixing with 4 decks is a dream come true for live mashups, remixing and creative mixing. So how do one go about using 4 decks in a practical way?

start at mixing and using multiple decks with our new flagship software.

One of the challenges for most is having a traditional 2-deck setup, and figuring out how to best mix with the new 4-deck engine in VirtualDJ. The good news is that VirtualDJ welcomes using the 2-deck setup to control all 4 decks easily. The logic to understand here is LEFT DECK and RIGHT DECK. A traditional controller has a left side and a right side: try to stop thinking of this as deck 1 and deck 2, but rather as left deck and right deck.

Now in VirtualDJ 7 any of the decks in the software can be set to be left or right. In the default 4-deck skin, deck 1 and deck 3 can be set to left deck, and deck 2 and deck 4 to right deck. To control deck 3, one simply has to choose this deck as the left deck, and the left side of your DJ setup (MIDI controller, timecode, HID controller etc). With a single click in the skin (or button if mapped), one can swap between deck 1 or deck 3 as left deck, without interrupting the song playing on the deck. The same goes for the right deck, where one can control decks 2 and 4 individually.

#### MAPPING A 2 DECK CONTROLLER TO 4 DECKS

Choosing which deck is left and which is right is easy in the 4-deck skin, simply by using your mouse to click the left deck or right deck word at each deck in the skin. But for external controller users, most will want this to be possible directly from their 2-deck controllers. Keep in mind that even if VirtualDJ does offer 4 decks, 2-deck controllers were originally made to control just that: 2 decks! default don't distinguish between left and right side in the mapper action list. Hence for example the PLAY button will simply have one entry in the list, and one script action, such as "play\_stutter", and not explicitly say in the mapper "deck 1 play\_stutter". This is done to make custom mapping faster and easier, with VirtualDJ knowing if you press play on the left side of the controller or the right side of the controller

But when you want to use a 2-deck controller in a 4-deck setup, you might want to have different actions depending on if you are pressing on the left or right side of the controller. In this example we want the left PFL (prelisten) button to swap between selecting deck 1 or deck 3 as the left deck, and the right PFL button to select between selecting deck 2 or deck 4 as the right deck. Since the action is no longer the same on both sides of the controller (like "play\_stutter"), we need to give some more information in the action script itself, telling VirtualDJ which action we intend for the left side, and which action we intend for the right side.

# ".. the trick here is to change the mapper so that you can easily swap between deck 1 or deck 3, and deck 2 or deck 4 on the controller .."

When trying to use a 2-deck controller in multi-deck setup, the first thing you need to do is to make sure it follows left/right deck. You can check this in the mapper settings in VirtualDJ. Click the button right next to the mapper drop down list, and make sure DECK ASSIGNMENT is set to left - right decks.

The trick here is to change the mapper so that you can easily swap the left side of your controller between deck 1 or deck 3, and right side of your controller to use deck 2 or deck 4. To do this, go to the mapper settings in VirtualDJ, and select a button you want for this action. Naturally the prelisten/PFL button is a popular choice for this.

We'll use the Hercules RMX as example here, but the script action (VDJverb) needed is pretty much the same on any 2-deck controller. You can of course also map these functions to the keyboard if you want to leave your controller mapper alone.

To make custom mapping of a 2-deck controller easier and more user friendly, VirtualDJ mappers by

This is done with the action "device\_side". By default the Hercules RMX PFL button is mapped to "select". Now we want the left PFL button to toggle between decks 1 and 3, and the right PFL button to toggle between decks 2 and 4. To achieve this we change the action at the left PFL button in the mapper from "select" to this: device\_side 'left' ? deck 1 leftdeck ? deck 2 leftdeck & deck 2 select : deck 1 leftdeck & deck 1 select

We can make the script more advanced by tweaking it more:

select ? device\_side 'left' ? deck 1 leftdeck ? on & deck 3 leftdeck & deck 3 select : on & deck 1 leftdeck & deck 1 select : deck 2 rightdeck ? on & deck 4 rightdeck & deck 4 select : on & deck 2 rightdeck & deck 2 select : select

Pressing the PFL button will then select the deck for headphone pre-listen, otherwise it will toggle between controlling decks 1 & 3 on the left side or decks 2 & 4 on the right. If you are using a controller such as a Hercules DJ Console that has a single SCRATCH button to toggle vinyl (Scratch) mode on/off, then you will find that this only works for the first 2 decks. Simply change the mapping for the button as follows to make it work for all 4 decks:

#### deck 1 vinyl\_mode on ? deck 1 vinyl\_mode off & deck 2 vinyl\_mode off & deck 3 vinyl\_mode off & deck 4 vinyl\_mode off : deck 1 vinyl\_mode on & deck 2 vinyl\_mode on & deck 3 vinyl\_mode on & deck 4 vinyl\_mode on

For a timecode vinyl user, that is, a very traditional 2 side setup, one can add this function to any MIDI button or keyboard key, to toggle which deck one controls with the timecode signal on the right side (do same for the left side with decks 1 and deck 3):

#### MASTER & SLAVE

Another concept that is important to understand when mixing with multiple decks is that only one deck is the master deck at any one time. The master deck is the one which all other decks sync to, if you press sync etc. The master deck is indicated by the word "master" over the sync button in the default skins.

VirtualDJ will try to automatically set the most logical deck as master, but at times you may want to override this and manually set the deck you want to have as master, and thus sync the others to. This is done easily by clicking the "master" word at the deck you want to be master.

You can of course map this function to a MIDI controller or keyboard for easier operations.

## ".. understanding the left, right and master logic is essential for successful mixing with multiple decks .."

deck 2 timecode\_active on ? deck 2 timecode\_ active off & deck 4 timecode\_active on & deck 4 rightdeck & deck 4 select : deck 4 timecode\_active on ? deck 4 timecode\_active off & deck 2 timecode\_active on & deck 2 rightdeck & deck 2 select

By simply changing one or two entries in the mapper, your 2-deck controller changes to a fully working 4-deck controller, taking full advantage of the new 4-deck engine, and making multi-deck mixing, remixing and mashing up a breeze.

#### For more information on scripts and scripts examples for your mappings, read this : http://www.virtualdj.com/wiki/VDJscript.html

If you have problems figuring out how to change your 2-deck controller to controlling all 4 decks in VirtualDJ, simply write a post on forum, and we'll gladly help you achieve your goal.

#### CROSSFADING MULTIPLE DECKS

The crossfader in DJ software or hardware fades between two sides. In a multi-deck setup, what's on left side and right side of the crossfader is indicated next to the crossfader (in the default skin). By default, deck 1 and deck 3 are on the left side, and deck 2 and deck 4 are on the right side. But in a mix or mash-up, you can override this and choose which exact decks you want to fade between, simply by clicking the deck indicator next to each side of the crossfader, thus selecting which decks are an the right side and left side of the crossfader. This operation only affects the crossfader, and doesn't set any decks as left or right at the controller.

Alternatively letting the crossfader remain central and only use the volume sliders can be a logical method in the beginning, where you manually adjust the volume for each deck independently. This might be easier in practical terms for the new-to-4-deck DJ.

#### VIDEO TO LEFT, RIGHT & OVER

Same logic goes for the video crossfader. By default, VirtualDJ automatically selects the most natural video deck, and you can choose to link the video crossfader to the audio crossfader.

But for the more creative mixer, you can independently and individually set which deck you want at the left side of the video crossfader and which at the right side. Doing this manually does not affect which decks are at the left and right of the audio crossfader. Hence you can fade between video decks, independently of the audio deck mixing. At the video panel in the default skins, you can select which decks you want to be at the left and right sides of the video fader

You can also manually set one of the deck's video to be the master output independently of the mixing. This is done with the action overvideo, which will send this deck's video source to video master out.

#### **REMIXING LIVE SOURCES ON THE FLY**

One of the exciting new things in VirtualDJ 7 is the possibility of mixing and remixing live sources. This could be you recording a voice sample on the microphone to a deck and scratching it back, or mixing beats to a live musician. The possibilities are endless.

You can apply effects to the live source, you can beatmix to its live BPM reading and you can record it to deck for reuse. This is done simply by choosing line-in from your soundcard of choice in the soundcard settings, and is activated in the default skins by pressing the AUX or REC button at the selected deck of choice. By treating line-in as a music source to decks in VirtualDJ, your live mash-up and remix possibilities are endless. Unleash your creativity.

You can also use the mic input in a more direct way in a voiceover fashion, by choosing simple mic input, but using mic as line-in gives you more possibilities, such as recording your voice on the fly and scratching back, or applying effects to your voice sound.

#### CONNECT WITH OTHER SOFTWARE

But the creativity doesn't stop there. VirtualDJ 7 is ReWire compatible, and this means you can also set other music software as "line ins" and mix to beats or music created in these programs, such as for example Abelton Live, FL Studio or Reason. Select one of these programs as line-in source in VirtualDJ, and the master out from the selected software will play out at the deck of choice in VirtualDJ. You can apply effects, beatmix to its live BPM reading and much more.

The play/pause/pitch etc. controls of the deck will control the ReWire application, so that you can choose to work either from the VirtualDJ screen or from the ReWire application.

#### **BROADCAST & RECORD YOUR MIXES**

While recording or broadcasting your mix is the same as before, using line-in as source for your recording or broadcast has changed slightly in version 7. This is due to line-in being a deck feature now in version 7, giving these sources advanced creative possibilities. But using line-in as source for recording or broadcast is still possible of course.

To do this, you need to choose ADVANCED soundcard configuration in VirtualDJ sound setup, and there manually enter your outputs (master or decks, headphones etc), then enter an entry called RECORD LOOPBACK for your line-in to record.

This setup is typically used by DJs who have setups with analogue mixers, where the VirtualDJ software crossfader is not mapped to any mixer, and the mixing is done in analogue hardware externally.

We hope this has given you a good introduction to how to mix practically with multiple decks, and wish you...

#### Happy mixing!



# ADVANCED SOUND

Some of the true power of VirtualDJ 7 lies within the use of Advanced Sound Configuration. Here one can unleash the power of connecting other software by ReWire, hot record any live sources to decks, and mix and remix live sources as one would MP3s. This new sound option also gives the user the possibility of tailoring and custom setting the use of one or more soundcards. The aim here is to give you a brief introduction to the powers within.

#### **MASTER, DECK & HEADPHONES**

If you are mixing on an external MIDI controller with one set of speakers connected, you would choose Master and Headphones as outputs. If you are connecting the sound from each deck in VirtualDJ to separate outputs from your soundcard (typically when mixing on an external analogue mixer), you would set deck outputs individually. Headphones output is only needed if you are cuing with headphones directly on your soundcard or controller, typical for most MIDI controllers. For an external analogue audio mixer, you would cue up at the mixer, and not your soundcard, hence not set up headphone out at the configuration. To use this option you need a soundcard with at least 2 stereo outputs (or use 2 soundcards).

#### **MIC INPUT & LINE-IN**

These are the basic inputs. Use this to input any live source you want to use in VirtualDJ. If you choose mic as the input, VirtualDJ's default skins will automatically the show mic on/off button and mic volume control. This way you can control the talk-over within the software. Choosing mic or any other live source (CD player, turntable, live instrument etc) as line-in gives even more possibilities. With the live source as line-in, VirtualDJ will automatically show AUX and REC in the default skin. With AUX you can play the live source directly to a deck in VirtualDJ and apply effects, beatmix to the source etc. With REC you can hot record the live source, and play it back after, or scratch back the recorded sample, regardless of whether the input is from microphone, analogue music (CD/vinyl) or other live source.

#### **REWIRE - ADVANCED LINE-IN**

VirtualDJ 7 can act as a host (master) for ReWire applications, for example Ableton Live. This way the master sound out of your music production software can be played directly to a deck in VirtualDJ as if it were a music file or live source. It's important to remember that you need to start VirtualDJ first, and set it up to be the master, before you start the application that you want to be slave (Ableton, FL Studio, Reason etc). To set up VirtualDJ as master, choose line-in in advanced sound, then choose the ReWire slave application as source. When you start your ReWire application, it should automatically go into slave mode. If not, check the audio preferences in the software. When played through VirtualDJ as a slave application, you can apply effects, pitch, sync and beatmix to the visual waveform inside VirtualDJ.

#### RECORD LOOPBACK (for recording or broadcasting mic or line in)

By default VirtualDJ uses the internal sound of the software's master output to record or broadcast. But VirtualDJ also has the ability to record from external sound inputs using line-in directly to your recording or broadcast. This is typically needed when using an external analogue mixer that has no MIDI capabilities (aka don't move the crossfader in software, but rather in hardware). To route an external signal to VirtualDJ's internal recording, you need to set up an entry called Record Loopback, and choose line-in as the live source you want to record or broadcast.

# 4 DECK CONTROLLERS – WHAT MORE CAN YOU WANT?

With VirtualDJ 7 introducing 4 decks, one of the hot-to-get things for users will be 4-deck controllers. These controllers can help make your 4-deck remixing and live mashing up a breeze. We have taken a closer look at 3 of the most interesting 4-deck controllers on the market today.



#### **HERCULES DJ CONSOLE 4-MX**

DJ Console 4-Mx is an innovative and precise controller featuring large jog wheels (each equipped with touch sensor), a built-in audio interface tailored for DJing for easy connection with existing analog gear, and intuitive control over 2 and 4 virtual decks. DJ Console 4-Mx has an intuitive and sturdy steel and aluminium body with a wide variety of controls including 89 controls in 2-deck mode and 150 controls in 4-deck mode. Providing a portable solution for mobile and radio Pro DJs on the go, this unit should be another success for the Hercules brand. 4-Mx features mic in, headphones out, touch sensitive jogwheels and all the buttons and control any mobile or club DJ would want. Comes with VirtualDJ 7 LE and custom skin.





#### **AMERICAN AUDIO VMS-4**



The VMS4 is a 4-channel controller that fuses both MIDI and analog audio control into one unit. The VMS4 comes with a free VirtualDJ 6 LE and is premapped to work out of the box. The VMS4 is great controller both for the demanding mobile or club professional. It features touch-sensitive jog wheels, a full-function mouse pad, MIDI assignable touch strips and high-quality channel and crossfaders, balanced XLR outputs, gain, EQ for each channel, crossfader assign and curve, and 2 mic inputs with EQ control, headphone out and all you'd want as a DJ. Being both a MIDI controller and a real analog hardware mixer, this might be a favourite for the professional mobile or club DJ.



#### DENON DN-MC6000



A 4-channel/8-source standalone digital DJ mixer with MIDI interface with an astounding amount of features, all that any mobile or club DJ could dream of. Also acts as an audio interface (2-in/2-out soundcard) and comes bundled with Virtual DJ 7 LE (in North/South America and Canada), pre-mapped to VirtualDJ to work plug-and-play and comes with its own custom skin. The unit includes a selectable video/audio control crossfader feature. Each side of the unit can control up to 2 decks with visible deck color change for intuitive, straightforward operation. Also notable is the fact that the DN-MC6000 is a real mixer, able to process audio inputs for external devices without a connection to a computer, as a dedicated mixer unit would. It's also rack-mount compatible with the included kit.

#### FEATURE



### 7 EASY STEPS TO GET FROM FIRST MP3 TO PLAYING A DJ SET

It's a common question we get asked. Typically a new digital DJ will spend weeks researching their equipment, before finally making a purchase. They Tweet about how excited they are and how they can't wait for their kit to arrive. And then finally, they've got it! After a couple of days we'll get an email that goes something like this:

"Well, I've got the gear! I've installed the software. I have got a few MP3s from my mate and I can get two tunes running together. What should I do now? Am I missing something? I feel like there's so much more to learn!"

In the "old days" of vinyl, a DJ would spend weeks and weeks learning to beatmatch manually. Or at least, that's what we thought we were doing. But really, learning to beatmatch was the bit that let us take the time to start to recognise everything else you needed to know too.

So assuming you've got your controller, headphones, main speakers, soundcard (if you need one) and software all set up and ready to go, let's look at what to do in that first few weeks to help you graduate smoothly from rookie to proficient digital DJ.

#### 1. SET YOURSELF A GOAL

New bands do this all the time. You're sat around the rehearsal room, aimlessly jamming, and then suddenly someone says, "Come on, let's book a gig! That'll force us to really start doing something!" Nothing makes you turn up for band practice and learn your part better than knowing that if you don't, you'll be messing up in front of a real live audience 6 weeks from now.

So decide on a DJing goal, and make it a few weeks away. It doesn't have to be a gig. It could just be that you have a house party, or decide you're going to record your first mixtape. The point is to decide you're going to do something, settle the date, and tell people. Bang - instant focus.

#### 2. START COLLECTING MUSIC JUST FOR DJING

DJing with tunes you had lying around already, or your friend's "dance" MP3s, is a no-go. Music, not kit, is the start and end of DJing. You need to start collecting your DJ set.

You're not going to be going to a record shop every Saturday, so you've got to work out how to replicate the experience. So set time aside for formal tune discovery and buying.

Set a music-buying regime - decide what online stores you're going to use, what blogs you'll keep up with, and so on. And do it - ever week. Treat it like going to a record shop, and don't miss it. Formal tune-finding time is essential for all DJs.

Once you've got your DJ tunes, separate them and have them available in one place in your DJ software. And use those tunes, and only those, to DJ with. They're your set. They're the tunes you're going to want to know how to mix. They're what you want people to remember you for.

And doing this will make you think hard about that set. Have I got enough "bangers" in there? Have I gone "off on one" a bit? Will I bore people with this stuff? Is it suitable for where I want to play? Is the sound quality of those MP3s good enough? Are the BPMs close enough? And so on. Congratulations - now you're starting to think about music the way real DJs do. And it all comes from formally starting your DJ record collection. Another step along the road from rookie.

#### 3. LEARN THE 1,2,3 (4) OF DJING

If you're not counting, you're not doing it right. All DJs are constantly counting in their heads when they're DJing, if not out at least subconsciously.

When you learn to meditate, they tell you to concentrate on your breathing - doing so brings you back to the present. Similar thing with DJing. You need to concentrate on constantly counting the beats. If you lose count, you can lose where you are in a track and sometimes this is fatal for your mix.

All music is in bars - count 4 kick drums in a house track, and that's a bar (same principle goes for 99% of the music you'll ever want to DJ with, in any genre). Count 8 bars, ie 8 sets of 4, and that's your standard

## ".. you're starting to think about music the way real DJs do .."

"chunk" of music. You'll notice things happen at each transition of these 8-blocks - basslines come in, drums notch up or down, vocals start, breaks arrive or finish, and so on. That's why it's so important to count so you know when they're coming.

A good way to do it is to count "1,2,3,4. then "2,2,3,4. then "3,2,3,4. all the way up to "8,2,3,4., then back to the beginning. Most of the time, you'll be starting the next record (which you've got cued up at a "1" moment) when you return to the beginning of this cycle.

For now, just start counting as I've suggested and notice how the music is constructed around these mathematical building blocks. Beatmatching is easy with modern DJ kit because you have a sync button, but timing still needs to be learned.

(TIP - Read Issue 3 of Pitched for a full guide to counting beats and mixing in right time and structure.)

#### 4. READ THE MANUAL CAREFULLY

Back in the vinyl days, learning to use 2 record decks and a mixer was hard enough. All those fiddly controls on the turntable for tracking, balance and so on! Buttons and knobs on the mixer!

Well, I've got news for you - nowadays you've got 10 controls to our every one back then. Your DJ kit can do all kinds of things. But, I bet you're deliberately shying away from some of them right now.

It's time to dig the manual out, get stuck into those settings and features, and switch on the "auto help" to start learning. Of course some features will mean nothing to you at this stage. But the sooner you are at least aware of what you don't know or fully understand, the sooner you'll start joining the dots and working out what your kit is capable of.

Hot cues, looping, effects, samplers - all can and will help your DJing as you get more proficient. Just having the name of a feature in your head means you're subconsciously thinking about it, even as you're studiously avoiding using it as you feel you're not "good enough" yet. So work through that features list. You'll be using them all the sooner for the effort.

#### 5. STUDY A HERO

You need to know where you're going, and your heroes will help you to get there. Nowadays, thanks to Mixcrate, SoundCloud, YouTube and so on, you can get audio and even video of great DJs. Many of them actually show you their tricks.

But you don't need to learn formal "tricks" off people that's good but it's not really what you should be looking for at first. Just studying their mixes, now that you're looking at it from a DJ's point of view, is enough. You need to know where you're going, and your heroes will help you to get there.

Have you ever bought a Lonely Planet or Rough Guide to a city or country before going on holiday there? You read it and try and picture it all in your head, and plan the best you can, but it all seems so new, and so strange.

When you come back from your (hopefully excellent!)

holiday there, you may pick up the same guide a few weeks later. How different it all looks now! How much more real, how much easier it is to fill out the words and maps, put real experiences and places where once there was just your imagination!

It's exactly the same with studying your heroes by listening to their mixes or watching them in the clubs now that you're a DJ, it is all going to be rewarding for you in a way it isn't for people who don't DJ - people just like you, a few weeks ago.

#### 6. FIND A "STUDY BUDDY" OR TWO

Having someone else involved in your learning is a great help. Once you learn something, you've got someone to show it to immediately. You've got someone to tell you if it sounded good or not. Someone to highfive with when you get it right, to encourage you when you can't.

If that person is learning too, you get a boost by having

# ".. practise often and you'll soon start to see results .."

an instant teacher there if they "get" a skill before you, and vice versa. But even if you just have music-loving mates, or a girlfriend or boyfriend who's happy to sit there with you while you're doing it, having someone to talk it through with helps to cement learning. Somehow, it makes everything more real.

Get used to messing up in front of people early - it will give you the nerves to play in front of proper audiences later. Plus, DJs play in front of audiences. It's what we do. At least this way you're used to playing to one other person!

It's a bit like practising a new language - people are scared to speak out loud in case they sound stupid. But you have to - and it's the same with DJing. Get used to messing up in front of people early - it will give you the nerves to play in front of proper audiences later.

#### 7. PRACTISE, PRACTISE, PRACTISE!

You think: "I'm not made for this, I'll never get it." You think: "If I just put it away and go and watch TV, I can get back to it tomorrow."

There's always an easy escape. But you're only scared of it because you really want to do it! You simply have to practise.

Practice should be regular. Better to do it for a short period of time every day than once a week for a whole day. The reason is that you're thinking about in in-between times. You're working at it even when you're not. But it has to be fresh in your memory.

Studies have shown that if you do something every day for 3 weeks, it becomes a habit. You actually feel more natural doing it than not doing it! So that's your goal. Try and set aside a little time every day, preferably at around the same time, and just do it.

Even if you're doing nothing special. Even if you're just sat there thinking: "What am I meant to I be doing here?" It's putting the time aside that's the important thing. The rest will come - especially if you've taken on board these pointers.

#### FINALLY...

Remember that DJing is simply about a passion for playing music you deeply love to people, trusting you're a good enough DJ to get them to agree with you! Keep your mind always on the music and how you're expecting people to react to it, and on using the tools you have to help you get there, and you'll be on a road that can give you many years of joy.

And if there's one thing that's true about DJing, it's that however long you've been doing it for, there's always something new to learn.

NEXT PAGE : GET YOUR FIRST GIG...





# HEY, I'M READY FFE FORBE

## **7 EASY STEPS TOWARDS YOUR FIRST DJ BOOKING**

Djing on your local pub or bar scene is a great way to hone your skills. Whether it's your first gig ever, a first booking in a new town, your first event for a while, or just a first play in a new venue that you've decided is for you: Getting that "first gig" is an art form in itself. And for today's digital DJ, it definitely doesn't involve sending out mix CDs or getting yourself an agent!

We're not talking about playing in a big club with established DJ bookings and thousands through the doors; we're talking about the kind of venue where you turn up, controller over shoulder, plug in and provide a DJ set - no fuss. The kind of place that functions fine without a DJ too. Places like your favourite music bar, beach bar, lounge bar, student venue or live music haunt. So here's how to land that elusive first gig and start DJing out regularly:

1. GET TO KNOW THE VENUE AND THE STAFF

Might sound obvious, but if you don't go somewhere a lot first, how do you know if it's right for your music? Go there on a mission, though - not just to drink!

Ask yourself: When do they have DJs on? Do they employ DJs like me? (Your level of experience, your type of music, your age, your look, even.) Tip the bar staff well when you drink there. Talk to them. Find out what the place has planned, and how well their nights are going. Find out the name of the owner.

Next, and all in good time, "bump into" the owner. Tell him what you think about his other DJs. Not as in: "He's rubbish, I could do better," but: "Hey, great DJ tonight. You must be pleased!" He may just tell you something back, something that might be useful. ("Yeah, it's been OK, but he's always late," or: "His music is a bit hard for this place, the students don't really get it," or: "I only book her because she's my wife's niece!")

#### 3. SELL THEM A BRAND, NOT JUST A DJ

Having a great DJ name is not enough. The more you've thought about what you want to do, the more likely you are to sell it to someone else. So instead of saying "Erm, can I DJ here? I'm DJ Whatever", you can say "I'm DJ Whatever from -".

For instance, I have an event I put on in my town called "Sunset Rocks". It is a party that starts in daylight and ends when the night is well and truly on us (I live by the sea and the sunsets are great round here). That's my brand. The name tells you more about the night than my DJ name would, and shows I've thought about it.

#### 4. GET PUBLICITY IN PLACE BEFORE YOU APPROACH THE MANAGER FORMALLY

Make a Facebook Page - that's a no-brainer. Get everyone you know to Like it. Next, bribe a designer friend (everyone's got a designer friend) to design you a simple poster with some kind of logo; your name; your Facebook page address; and a gap for you to attach the date, time and place of your gig to it. (That

### ".. having a great DJ name is not enough .."

This will help you to hone your pitch to him for later on, and put your face in his mind. Don't ask for the gig yet! You're on a research mission at the moment. So the more you can find out, the better.

#### 2. THROW A PARTY THERE IF YOU CAN

If it's the kind of place that you can hire out, this can be a great way to prove your worth with no risk to the bar owner. Find a reason: your birthday, your friend's birthday, a leaving party, an end-of-term party, a Christmas party for your company - anything at all. Club together and pay the rental fee (or tell him you'll guarantee X people if you can have the back room, terrace or whatever for free) - then do it.

Of course, you will DJ. He gets to see your crowd, and hear your music. You're now in a much stronger position to get a regular gig. It will make you think like a promoter, too. This is definitely a good thing. Venue owners prefer promoters to DJs. way you can get a job lot printed off at the local print shop and just add the dates and times in the future.)

You can show your poster to the bar or club owner when you ask for the gig, and also show him the gap where you are going to put his venue details. Again, it will show effort and willing on your part. It also insinuates you've done this in other places. (If he asks and you haven't, say something like: "I've been doing exclusive invite-only parties till now -")

Get your designer friend to design a simple business card with your cell number, email, Facebook page, name and branding on it too, and get some printed at the same time as your posters. You'll need those later..

... more next page

Text: Phil Morse, www.digitaldjtips.com

#### 5. ASK FOR THE BOOKING

With a DJ mix posted online on somewhere like Soundcloud (just to say you've got one; 9 time out of 10 the venue owner won't even listen to it, and they will also lie and tell you they have - trust me), posters in your hand, a busy Facebook page, and the knowledge you need about the venue, you now just need to identify your night and ask for the gig.

You'll have already sounded out the bar staff and hopefully know that you've got a reasonable chance, but be prepared to be flexible: Be ready to change your tack and offer your services for a different night of the week, or around sports events, or between live acts if they have them, and so on.

The trick here is to get your foot in the door. Two things can happen: You get a gig, or you get knocked back. If you get knocked back, you politely leave your business card and return to stage 1. Keep going to the place; keep enjoying their nights; keep showing your face.

It often takes time, but if you've done the above well, your chances of success are high, and will get higher as you "rinse and repeat".

#### 6. TALK MONEY

So you've been offered a slot. It's OK to say you'll do it for free the first night to show what you can do; indeed, it's advisable sometimes.

Just make it clear that you'll expect payment if you're asked back again. You're a professional and deserve payment, even if it's only bar staff wages to start with. Try and tie the manager to a "the busier it gets, the more money I get"-type deal. It's not so hard to do: use a line like: "I'd love to do it for free this week to show you my crowd and my music, let's talk more afterwards," and then afterwards you'll say: "Great! It takes a few weeks to build my type of night, and I'll happily play for [name your lowest figure] while we're doing that; let's talk again in 6 weeks about raising payment to nearer my normal fee when we've established the night."

You'll have noticed you're talking like a professional here. You're not saying "my music is the best!" or "I'll blow you away!" (the manager or owner doesn't care; he cares about an easy life and a profit). You're saying: "There's not much risk in it for you, and I've done

#### this before."

Even if you haven't done it before - ever - you must put across this level of confidence. Coming across as not knowing what you're doing (even if you don't) will always work against you. There's a bit of bluff here, but really you're doing him a favour (as you're a great DJ), so don't feel bad about it.

#### 7. PREPARE FOR THE GIG

Put your posters up in the venue (on the back of every toilet cubicle door is a belter - it's a captive audience and by the bar, in the entrance hall and so on). Do this a couple of weeks before so the regular crowd get to see your brand, maybe hear your mix online via visiting your Facebook page, and so on.

Depending on what's at stake and how aggressively you want to market yourself, put posters up elsewhere too. I don't really do this when I'm playing a bar that has its own crowd anyway, but it's up to you. I prefer to build the crowd "organically", and let's face it, your poster - while it may be nice - won't mean much to the general public. I'd say use a Facebook Event and Twitter, word of mouth and so on to get your crowd down instead.

Check out the technical set-up with the bar owner make sure you can plug your digital DJ kit in OK and ensure there is a table for you and so on, especially if it's somewhere that doesn't normally have a DJ (such is the joy of digital DJ controllers - pop them in your backpack and as long as the venue can plug you in, you can play just about anywhere).

For the first night, you really want to pull in favours with your friends to get a crowd down. Get everyone you know down there. Don't take "no" for an answer. If they won't come for the whole night, get them to commit to an hour! And make sure they bring their friends, too. Then it's a case of getting your tunes together (need some inspiration for this?

Sign up for the Digital DJ Tips email newsletter "The Guest List" for weekly music resource emails, practising your set, and getting down there - nice and early, ready to play.

#### NEXT - HOW TO PLAY YOUR FIRST GIG ...



## **7 EASY STEPS TOWARDS A SUCCESSFUL FIRST GIG**

Your first digital DJ set in public is going to be nerve-racking. Like a good theme park ride, you'll probably hate it - till the moment it stops and you scream "again"! Here are 7 tips to help make sure you do a good job, and hopefully even manage to enjoy it (a bit) -

#### **1. KNOW YOUR TUNES**

This is the most important tip of all. So you're playing a 2-hour set - that's probably 25-30 tunes. I'd say have 50-60 tunes prepared that you know inside out. You should be happy mixing all of these, and ought to have thought hard about why they're in your virtual crate.

What tunes are "big" in the venue? What tunes are big right now? What other tunes complement them? What tunes are important to you, are part of your style? What mixes have you discovered that you love?

You need a blend of new, old, known, unknown, predictable and surprising. Choosing double the tunes you'll need means you can go underground or chart, upfront or classic, safe or risky, as the crowd takes you. But make sure you know them well - that's the most important thing.

And DO take the time to prepare them - don't just turn up with 60GB of tunes unsorted on a hard drive and think you'll be OK. You won't!

#### 2. KNOW YOUR KIT

It's important that you're happy with your DJ equipment, especially because as a digital DJ it's more than likely you'll be taking your own kit with you to play on. You need to know how to set it all up, pack it away again, get everything working quickly.

You need to know what to do if you have a crash (hint: take an iPod and be ready to plug it in with a mix prepared), and how to boot up quickly and cleanly (eg knock out wireless / Bluetooth, don't let memory or processor-hungry apps load in your PC, disable screensavers...)

It will help if you've played with your gear in parties. If not, just take it to someone else's house and set it all up there, while catching up with them. This will prepare you for being in a venue where people may be trying to talk to you, you're unfamiliar with the surrounding, you're in "public" mode - and even for when someone says "you're on in 5!" and you've not even unpacked. (But still, get there early and set up in good time.)

#### 3. HAVE A PLAN

I had a set list written out and hidden in my record box the first time I DJed in public, I was that nervous - with every single mix planned! I wouldn't say go that far, but a bit of planning is a good thing.

You already know what time you're starting and finishing. How many people will be there? When does the venue tend to get busy? When do people start to dance? You can't make people dance too early, so have a plan - a warm-up, a transitional stage, a peak-time stage. If you're only booked for warm-up, play warm-up; if you're coming on after a chart DJ but you're more upfront, have some chart crossover material to lead into your set. If you're between two DJs who play different styles, how will you bridge them?

The point is, have a plan; think about what you're going to play. Half an hour of this, then half an hour of that, then half an hour of something else - that's all you need. Just the process of planning a DJ set makes you a better DJ, especially when afterwards you compare how it went with what you were thinking.

#### 4. KEEP IT SIMPLE

Your first DJ set is no time for tricks and showing off. Just plan to play records simply and competently one after the other. Make your mixes functional; you'll probably be trembling too much to "large" it on the decks anyway!

Keep your mixing simple and make enough time to enjoy watching the dancefloor.

One of the biggest things you should take from your first few DJ sets is how the crowd behaves, but if you're too busy trying to plan and pull off DJ tricks, you won't be watching them enough. So keep it simple, take in the atmosphere and learn by looking around you - the tricks can come when you've mastered the basics. You're far less likely to mess up this way.

On a related note, don't have more than a drink or two to steady your nerves - caution goes out of the window when you're half-drunk, and you don't want to go down that road on your first (or four-hundredth) DJ set.

#### 5. LOOK LIKE YOU'RE ENJOYING YOURSELF

This is where many rookie DJs (and a few professionals) let themselves down. Nobody wants to see a DJ with his head in his laptop 90% of the time, agonising over every mix. You have to have time to join in, even if it's just a little dance and a smile, shaking hands, chatting to those near to you. Even if you feel rough, you're so nervous you could be sick, nobody's dancing, the venue owner has told you to turn it down, you keep getting inappropriate tune requests, it looks like a fight is about to kick of in the corner, and your girlfriend just had a go at you for not giving her enough attention: smile!

It's your enthusiasm often as not that gets the dancefloor going. It's your love of the music that encourages other people to hear the good in it. It's your lead that starts everyone having fun. Looking happy on the outside when all manner of "performance anguish" is going on in your head and heart is difficult, but you must master this one. How can you expect others to have a good time if you're obviously not?

### ".. it's your enthusiasm often as not that gets the dancefloor going .."

6. RELAX – MOST PEOPLE AREN'T EVEN LISTENING!

A wise old DJ friend of mine once said: "Most people aren't really listening," and he was quite right.

Put yourself in the shoes of the average person on a night out. You go out for an evening: You are trying to get laid, get drunk, just happy you're not at work, catching up with friends, in the venue solely because it's a trendy place to be seen in, worrying that your bum looks big in this skirt, upset that your best friend hasn't come, really pleased someone you didn't think you'd see is here, bitchin' because someone never buys an drink for you - and all this time there may or may not be a DJ playing!

You see? Most people simply don't listen to the music all night long - even when dancing to it, half the time. If someone hears 2 records they love, they'll go home happy. If they don't go home happy, it probably won't have been your fault anyway (see the list above). Point is, pick your tunes well, and relax! People really aren't here for you. Even your friends will be hardpushed to name many of your tunes after a DJ set. everyone home happy. But - here's a big DJ secret. If you can save just one record that as many people as possible in the crowd adore, and play it right at the very end, you'll send

them all home with that tune ringing ground in their

ears. And when they wake up, hungover and with hazy heads, they'll probably only remember that one tune from the night before - and hopefully your smiling face as you jumped about behind the decks while you were playing it to them. Job done!

Now go and ask the manager for a re-booking. And good luck...

Music might be your life - but most of the crowd have got more important things on their minds.

#### 7. END ON A GREAT RECORD

So if most people aren't listening most of the time, your aim is to make sure everyone in the club hears just 2 or 3 records they really love. The trick here is to make those "I love this one" tunes different for everyone, so there's always someone "bigging up" your music at any given time. Save your best tune to last and send everyone home happy.

#### **REMOTE APP**

#### INTERVIEW





#### What is the ADJA?

It is the largest association for professional mobile DJs in the USA, club DJs and karaoke hosts. We represent DJs and mobile entertainers in various associations and groups, as well as with a number of online resources for consumers trying to find entertainment. We work closely with The Knot, Wedding Wire and other resources assisting brides.

#### How long has the ADJA been around?

The American Disc Jockey Association has been in existence approximately 20 years, it has changed and evolved over the years to meet the demands of a growing entertainment industry.

# Where can we find out more information on the the requirements to join or is everyone welcome?

Everyone is welcome to join the American Disc Jockey Association, provided they are willing to abide by our code of conduct and the terms of service. These can be found on our website at ADJA.org. We welcome all mobile entertainers to be a part of this great trade association, the only registered trade association in the mobile disc jockey industry.

# Once we become members are there any benefits of being a member such as discounts on gear or insurance?

Yes, we have literally hundreds and hundreds of discounts and benefit programs. We also provide discounts on liability insurance, property insurance, a full suite of medical and dental insurance programs. We have programs on rental cars, hotels, printing, intelligent tools for your website, tuxedos and many many more items available to you. Nobody provides more discounts benefits and education to its membership than the American Disc Jockey Association.

#### What are local chapters and how do I find them?

We have dozens of local chapters all across the nation. You can easily locate the one closest to you by going to ADJA.org and clicking on the link that says local chapters. This will provide a complete roster of all of the chapters as well as their websites. No organization has more local chapters, serving the needs of working DJs than the American Disc Jockey Association. We'll encourage all DJs to join and become part of this growing body of professional entertainers.

# How can the ADJA help me become better at what I do?

The ADJA has the largest educational offerings of any trade association or organization in the mobile entertainer industry. Nobody provides more webinars, podcasts and conferences, than we do. We have held over 40 webinars to conferences, as well as providing top-quality speakers to several of the other national conferences. We also have podcasts, as well as educational videos that are available to members.



With our new application for iPad and iPhones you can remote control VirtualDJ from your device. Mix, scratch, apply effects, load new songs - all away from your computer.

Interact with your friends, or your party, be at the centre of the party, and mix from distance. Or start songs from distance at a mobile gig. Instant fun and endless possibilities.

The apps can be customised with skins, and by downloading skins you can make the app look and feel exactly how you want.

Read more here : http://www.virtualdj.com/products/iremote.html

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# **GEARED LIP** NEWS FROM THE INDUSTRY

#### NUMARK MIXTRACK PRO Mixtrack with soundcard

MIXTRACK PRO is a complete DJ system that works with the music on your Mac or PC, with classic 2-turntables-and-a-mixer setup that connects to your computer so you can scratch, mix, loop, and much more. It has all the inputs and outputs you'll need for your headphones, speakers, and a mic. It's portable, so you'll always be ready to DJ anywhere. It features 2 large, touch-sensitive turntable for accurate scratching, and built in soundcard for standalone use or for plugging in to the sound system at the club. Comes with VirtualDJ LE.





#### NUMARK iDJ3 Mixtrack gone iPod?

iDJ3 is a complete DJ system that works with VirtualDJ on your Mac or PC - with a dock for iPod or iPhone, making it possible record your mix directly to your device. iDJ3 gives you the classic 2-turntables-and-a-mixer setup. You can scratch, mix, loop, and much, much more. iDJ3 also has all the inputs and outputs you'll need for your headphones, speakers, and a mic. Plus, iDJ3 is portable, so you can grab it and go, ready to DJ anywhere. Comes with VirtualDJ LE.

VESTAX TYPHOON All in one scratch control

(ASIO driver for Windows).

Typhoon is an all-in-one bundle, offering total control to mix, scratch, and play music as a DJ would, right at your fingertips. With the included VirtualDJ 7 LE, it transforms your computer into a full-blown DJ system. It features 2 high resolution touch-sensitive jogwheels, built in soundcard, mic in and headphones out. Operates with Mac and Windows systems



#### NUMARK RUMOR

#### 4 deck controller to come

It's official. Numark are to release a new 4 deck controller. According to a Skratchworx demo try, the unit is on familiar territory. Think NS7 (minus 7" motorised platters) but in the vein of other competitive units, Scratchworx say. The layout will be considerably less busy than similar units. Release is not know yet, but might be early 2011





#### VESTAX PAD-ONE Triggers at your fingertip

The Vestax PAD-One is a MIDI pad controller, compatible with MIDI software like VirtualDJ. It can also be used to control any kind of MIDI device, including synthesizers, samplers, drum machines, and electronic drums. The aluminium chassis offers long life durability. The PAD-One can individually assign pads on the fly. Compact, solid and reliable, the PAD-One is a neat item for your DJ arsenal.





PITCHED FREE DIGITAL MAGAZINE FOR ALL VIRTUALDJ MEMBERS (C) Atomix Productions

