




OPTIMUM PARTYING

CRAIG HOLLYWOOD UNCOVERS THAT IT WILL BE BEST TO TAKE A SICK DAY ON MONDAY; OPTIMO HAVE A TENDENCY TO KICK LONG AND HARD.

If you were to walk down any one of Glasgow's lanes and whisper the words 'Optimo at the Sub Club' into the ear of anyone with an adequate taste in music, the chances are that you would be met with smirk of an ominous nature. Since the year of '97, JD Twitch and JG Wilkes a.k.a Optimo have headed up one of the most notorious and influential dance nights (Optimo Espacio) that have ever been operated in the United Kingdom. Famous for their 'anything goes' music policy, encompassing everything from techno through to sleazy disco and then round to Country & Western, the event also puts claim to being a large contributor to the successes of Richie Hawtin, Datarock, Shitdisco, LCD Soundystem, The Go! Team, Peaches and even Australia's very own The Presets.

Sitting on a plane bound for NYC, which is a usual trek for these now internationally recognised DJs, we establish contact with Jodie 'JG' Wilkes, one half of an outfit who has also recently made a striking contribution to Soma Records' latest *Sub Club: 20 Years Underground* release. "We didn't want to do a retrospective mix or 'Best Of' compilation. Although the mix contains some older tracks by artists like Leather Nun, Amnesia, Front 242, it is fairly indicative of the sound and tempo we were playing at the time it was put together in '08. The whole mix is between 105 and 110 BPM, pretty low slung. It's simply an 'Optimo Mix' and we hope it gives the feeling of an hour or so at our Sunday night party."

To give you an idea of what the Optimo night generally means, a small story must be told. It is common knowledge that a large majority of the staff rooms across businesses in Scotland have gone out of their way to erect signs such as "Under No Circumstances Are Staff Members To Attend Optimo Before Work On Monday".... Jonnie bursts into laughter before going on. "I've always loved that story, the notice in the staff rooms in Marks and Spencers [UK Supermarket]."

Every now and then someone comes up and says they lost their job for showing up late on a Monday, usually with a smile on their face. That would make me think they hated their work anyhow. We do think that you have to get into to it to get out of it, rather than the other way round, though so it's a kind of a 'hell mend you' attitude."

Considering that it has now been 12 years since the first ever Optimo event, many alterations in the structure of dance culture would have taken place. Jonnie eagerly explains how the night has stood the test of time, "In terms of what we want to do with Optimo, nothing has really changed since the first party in '97. We just want to have a party where the emphasis is on fun – us having fun playing whatever music we want, endeavoring to put smiles on people's faces when we play, taking some risks. Colliding DJing with live shows, art, performance, film - and seeing what happens. We've never thought 'it has to be this, it has to be that', just that we would have fun doing it and can present the music we want to - the music we love and want to share. We are lucky that we have a really young crowd too. People move on, new kids come along, and the old ones pop back in every now and then. It's nice like that, the way the crowd changes and there's a real mix."

About to embark on a tour that will see the DJ's unique style inflicted upon Perth audiences as part of the Perth Festival's very first free After Party at the Music Box, Jonnie had a parting message for those who plan to enter the world of gig promotion. "Find the right space, get a good sound system, only play music you love, respect your crowd, work hard, have fun."

WHO: OPTIMO
WHEN & WHERE: SATURDAY 14 FEBRUARY, BECK'S MUSIC BOX PERTH ESPLANADE