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Published at 1:07am

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Published on 8/5/08

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Time Out New York / Issue 674 : Aug 28-Sep 3, 2008

Fall preview '08

Clubs

Long live the King!

NYC's ruin' house-music label solidifies its reign with a 15th-anniversary celebration.

By Bruce Tantum



Set in the no-man's-land between the West Village and Canal Street, Manhattan's King Street is nothing much to look at, a modest three-and-a-bit-block stretch of asphalt lined with garage doors and sterile office buildings. But for dance-music historians, the street is the center of the universe: From 1976 until 1987, an erstwhile parking depot located at 84 King was the Paradise Garage. The fabled boîte, helmed by resident DJ Larry Levan, forged one of New York's lasting contributions to the clubbing universe: a deep, powerful and emotion-drenched R&B-based style that reverberates through the city to this day. The Garage sound developed into soulful house, and the main repository for that music is the seminal label King Street Sounds, which in early September celebrates its 15th anniversary with the release of a retrospective CD, *15 Years of Paradise*, along with a big birthday bash at Cielo on October 10. The discography of King Street and its Nite Groove imprint runs more than 500 singles deep and is stuffed with stone-cold classics; below, a few of TONY's faves.

Althea McQueen

"Changes" (1993)

It's not the inaugural King Street release—that honor goes to Loop Trick's "Beat Freak." But "Changes," the label's second single, captures its ethos perfectly, with bumping production by Blaze, intense belting from McQueen, and bittersweet yet uplifting lyrics dealing with the inevitability of life's twists and turns.



Brooklyn Friends

"Philadelphia" (1995)

Just as there are few labels more associated with New York than King Street, there aren't many DJs as intrinsically linked with local house history as David Morales. (He deejayed steadily from the mid-'80s to mid-'90s, so we'll forgive the fact that he hardly ever plays Gotham anymore.) Here, working with Peter Daou and Satoshi Tomiie on keys, Paul Shapiro on reeds and Steve Thornton on percussion, the superstar creates a loving homage to the '70s disco sound of labels like Philly International and Salsoul.



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Urban Soul

“Sex on My Mind” (1995)

The original version, from producer Roland Clark, under the name Urban Soul, is plenty good enough—but it’s all about the remix here, from acid-house progenitor DJ Pierre. Stomping, grinding and more than a little creepy (the vocal consists entirely of a male voice intoning the title over and over for the track’s 11 minutes), it marked a wild departure for the label, and a signal that King Street was willing to mess with the soulful-house template.



Kerri Chandler

“Bar A Thym” (2005)

Chandler is one of King Street’s company men; by our count he’s produced or remixed 20 tracks for the label. He’s most known for the bumping, deep style of music known sometimes as Jersey sound, and other times simply (and fittingly) as Garage. But on this track, Chandler both funkifies his sound (there are cowbells all over the place) and adds a bit of techno to the mix, signaling a new electronic direction that the label is still exploring.



Mondo Grosso

“Souffles H” (1995)

One of King Street’s biggest hits, the oddly monikered “Souffles H” (produced by Mondo Grosso/Osawa Shinichi) is a defining moment in the city’s house history. A favorite at hallowed clubs such as Sound Factory Bar, the track certainly was among the label’s first forays into jazzy house, with a massive flute hook and jumpy beat that’s imprinted on the brains of all veteran New York clubbers.



Win a Prize Package from King Street Sounds!

Legendary house-music label King Street Sounds is turning 15, and they want you to be in on the celebration. Five lucky readers will win a prize package that includes 10 free downloads at BeatPort.com, a jewel-encrusted Kings Street Records temporary tattoo, and best of all, *15 Years of Paradise*, a funktabulous retrospective CD featuring tracks hand-picked by 15 DJs, guaranteeing a dance-worthy look back at a decade-and-a-half of groove. **Enter now** and get down with your funky (hipster) self.

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