

# WORLDWIDE UNDERGROUND

Subtle Audio Vol 01 Release | Limerick and Worldwide | June 04

Connor O' Dwyer, djing under the tag Code, is the face and force behind the always electrifying Nu Killa Kru and Subtle Audio Recordings and celebrates the first full length compilation on cd and vinyl after many excellent 12" releases. LEG caught up with Connor to talk about drum n' bass and record label making a 1 page interview became 2. Read on.

## How did your interest in electronic music begin?

Well, it came from daytime radio initially, I was always into anything that had an electronic sound... around the age of 10 or 11 I was listening and liking the synthesizer led tunes by people like Snap, Technotronic and even the Pet Shop Boys, okay, so it wasn't exactly Drum & Bass, but from there, acts like the Prodigy, SL2 and the House Crew began to emerge and that was the perfect music for me. I got some tapes of early Hardcore / Jungle from a friend of a friend who's cousin lived in London, mixes by the likes of LTJ Bukem, and other pioneers of what would become Drum & Bass. I was hooked.

## What made you set up Subtle Audio?

It kind of came out of a frustration with the direction the d & b scene began to take after 2000. I got into the music because it was experimental, d&b producers weren't afraid to take risks and try something different, but it got to the stage where the music no longer seemed to be rhythmically interesting. All that was important was the perfection of the production side, improvements in production are important but I felt that they were at the expense of the musical content. I found a message board called Subvert Central where many members were veterans of the scene who wanted to take the music back to its roots. I began to think about setting up a label to try to fight the cause.

I was meeting some producers through the Nu Killa Beats Drum & Bass night in Limerick too, Breakage, Equinox, Senses & Chris Inperspective around March 03 and they all brought CD's of theirs for me.. really inspiring stuff and the fact that many of these tunes would go unreleased because they didn't fit in with the latest 'fashion' in D & B made me

all the more determined to get my own record label up and running. I began working on it late in 2003 and the first releases by Alpha Omega and Equinox / Senses came in May 2005.

## How did the Nu Killa Kru come together?

Well, like the label, the formation of the Nu Killa Kru and the organisation of the Nu Killa Beats night was a reaction to a set of circumstances. In my early days as a Dj, I used to play at the Skint night in Limerick, as did the likes of Roller T and Bee, it wasn't a Drum & Bass night but they incorporated the sound into the proceedings from time to time. Unfortunately the night closed it's doors in 1999. After that, there was nowhere for myself or the other local Drum & Bass Dj's to play.

We decided something had to be done. Myself and Bee ran a one-off night in the now defunct Strictly Zoo Bar, encouraged by how it went we went onto putting on a club night in conjunction with Dublin's Bassbin crew in Decemeber 1999. Dj Fierce was over from the UK to

play and again it went really well, much to our surprise! We decided we needed to find a regular home. That's when we spoke to the people at the Dog House, before it became Rumours, about doing a night in their basement and that was the beginning of a somewhat legendary period in Limerick clubbing. Though it only ran from 9 until 12am, before extended bar hours, we were getting a packed dancefloor at 10 in the evening on a Thursday night. I think it was the mixture of the music being new to people and the fact that nothing much was happening in Limerick at the time - with the demise of Skint and Silk @ Costello's.

The Soul Clinic club night started in Dolan's a week after Nu Killa Beats and suddenly everybody seemed to be living for Thursday night, I was running the night but getting some help with certain aspects like artwork. Everybody seemed to go missing when the postering had to be done though.....



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### **Ye have been around a long time, how has the Kru changed?**

Over the years, the original cast of myself, Bee and Roller T expanded with the likes of Deep Cut, Cain, The Evil Grin, Mecca, Lymer and Leon joining the ranks. We celebrated our 8th B-Day this year, so I think it's the longest running dance music night in Limerick at this stage. We still really enjoy playing and love our new home at the Underground, Baker Place. The next night is on Friday July 25th.

### **Is it harder to work a label from Limerick?**

I think it's pretty damn difficult to run a label, no matter where you are especially in the current climate where music sales are slipping. The fact that the label is based in Limerick is an advantage in some respects - it makes a good story for the press! It's not just another London label or whatever and so it helps to generate curiosity. But being in a place like London, I would get more Dj's bookings and could probably promote the label more effectively that way. So there would be advantages in that sense

- being in the heart of it, so to speak. I do play there from time to time though, the next gig being July 5th @ the Technicality night.

### **How would you describe the sounds & artists on Subtle Audio?**

Drum & Bass is the quick answer ! But, in truth, I think the sound of the label is quite varied. I guess the premise of the label is to release music that rewards repeated listening.

On the CD version there is a track from every artist on the back catalogue as well as some by artists making their Subtle Audio debut with lots of different styles represented. Macc, dgoHn, Equinox and Nebula are from the UK, Fanu is from Finland, Polska is from Dublin, a few American artists, like Cloak & Dagger, Sileni and Jason oS. Scotland, Holland and Canada are also represented! Equinox is pure oldskool, he's been into Jungle / Drum & Bass since day one and is one of the undisputed masters. Macc and Polska are into Jazz and bring a very organic sound to the table. Martsman and LXC bring a German precision to bear on

the "Some Minimal Business" track. Two signings on the album are from Russia - Dissident and Bop. Their tracks are like an Electronica / Drum & Bass crossover, certainly very fresh sounding to my ears.

### **Good response to the release so far?**

I've been very happy with the response, yeah! It got album of the week on DogsOnAcid.com, one of the biggest dance music forums in the world and Boomkat.com shop is stocking it which is a high compliment as they don't generally stock very much Drum & Bass music. Seen some nice blog comments about it too from the general public, which is good. It has been getting play on BBC Radio 1 and BBC 1Xtra recently and Aphex Twin played 2 releases at the Coachella festival in California in April, so it's been going pretty well.

Looking to the future for Subtle Audio ? Big plans! Hopefully three more vinyl releases by the end of the year, the first features Sub, an Austrian producer with a track called "Skadi," and I'm talking to a producer called Vaccine about doing a remix on the flip side, her style of

Dubstep is deep and atmospheric and I think she could do a really nice version. Next an English producer called Nebula, he made the tracks when he was around 20 but they sound mature, way beyond what you would expect for someone that young! I have plans for 2 more album releases by Irish producer Polska and UK duo, Macc & dgoHn.

With a roster so packed it sounds as if Connor has no time for sports but he is still to be found out front with the Nu Killa Kru in their latest welcoming home, The Underground @ Baker's, with a night coming up on Friday July 24th. Connor also has a regular Spin Southwest slot on Saturday night Sunday morning, from 12.45am until 02.45am.

**For more info log onto [subtleaudiorecordings.com](http://subtleaudiorecordings.com) or [myspace.com/audiorecordings](http://myspace.com/audiorecordings), [subvertcentral.com](http://subvertcentral.com). For info on the Nu Killa Kru log onto [myspace.com/nukillabeats](http://myspace.com/nukillabeats).**