

DJ Bootsie – Holidays In The Shade

Hip hop protagonist Bootsie has one debut album to his name, *The Silent Partner* (2004), having previously worked with fellow Hungarian composer Younderboi and become a founding member of the inter-related contemporary electronic music, jazz and indie-rock group Zagar.

Since 2002, DJ Bootsie has also been involved in production for other rap performers whilst also film scoring; all prior to this new sophomore album *Holidays In The Shade*. The record opens very well with *Rain A Fall*, as hacking violins back Eastern European vocals that pave the way for slack trip hop beats and some marvellous syrupy double bass.

Lieutenant Chrome follows with in-your-face American-flavoured rap, but this is more DJ Shadow than Ice T, as the track melts into a heady mix of jazzy brass, beats and rhythms, interwoven by melancholy guitar strains. The dainty *Mosquito Dance* is as imaginative as its title suggest, lacing light-footed string motifs over pipes and some highly intricate electronic programming and enchanting female vocal plays. Ever present in DJ Bootsie's mix remains what can loosely be identified as a lightly rhythmic hip hop beat, with the odd scratch thrown in – yet elusively so.

Kite Over Faurndau is another amiable effort, with acoustic guitar strains wandering over soft female vocal meanderings, piano and incidental effects. DJ Bootsie's film score backing is highly evident here and impressive from a production viewpoint.

Midstream, *Holidays In The Shade* turns a little further towards the artist's hip hop/trip hop background, focused around increasingly stringent beats and more generic shades, but always retaining an atmospheric mastery that keeps the production fresh, even if the songwriting is not particularly absorbing or persuasive – a common complaint of film score composers dually operating as commercial recording artists.

For this reason, the album does eventually float from its highly promising opening, wandering into a collection of thickly atmospheric semi-instrumentals, backed by hip hop beats and jazz flourishes, but little else to recompense.

Near the end, *Kormenet/Procession* delivers an obviously more traditional-sounding evolution of musical styles, a Hungarian hip hop potpourri if you will, closing with the coherently soundtrack-oriented *Huzd*, merging vocal film samples and themes with acoustic guitars. The track later unfurls into stronger beats and underlying rhythms.

Holidays In The Shade provides a genuinely interesting twist on the hip hop/trip hop genres. It doesn't always come off, and lacks the strong riffs and melodic content that would ordinarily make that type of music appealing, but replaces them with some contemplative ideas featuring a few traditional Eastern European themes. When DJ Bootsie's not doing that, he's delving into the world of soundtrack, anchored in mild hip hop moorings - all impeccably produced.

For the genuinely open-minded, well worth a peek.