

C64, A CLASSIC IN THE MAKING

WORDS BY: KATIE REDDIN-CLANCY



Chiselling and sculpting their way into our "permanent fixtures" list, C64 has captivated the breaks scene in a very innocent, forward slash lolita way. Put simply, a cracking house party grew out of the house and a year and a half later was voted 10th Best Club Night (2006 Breakspoil Awards) without a single piece of media coverage, flyer or advert. Proof that Chinese whispers works.

So what do you get for your money? DJs such as Atomic Hooligan, Soul of Man, Deekline & Wizard and Ctrl-Z are on the bill. You are entertained by a kicking 10K Mackie rig, intelligent lighting, lasers and occasionally dancers, live musicians, oh, not to mention a rare, regular family-of-friends crowd. But the bizarre thing is - there is no money - IT'S FREE! No wonder it's been described by one of its regulars as 'a true breaks oasis.'

Ah a Hum offspring I hear you cry? Well no - this wasn't a pre-organised club night by the pro's of the scene, headed by the Big Dons and supported by an established record label. But then C64 is no ordinary club night and is bound up in the very personal mission of Mark Kane and Yasmin Chadury of Higher Status Events. Mofo tried to break it down in a Topsy and Tim fashion - why is C64 addictive?

Yasmin: "What is the difference between C64 and any other club night?"
Yasmin: "We do things a bit differently. There's none of the usual promotion and no money changes hands, it's all about the celebration. Everyone donates their time and talent for free, from the generous DJs who support the free party ethos to our hardworking Higher Status Crew who rig and hump those massive speakers up 3 flights of stairs every time. C64 has developed a life force of its own and is very much the collective energy of everyone who contributes."

played a part, which is why we see C64 as a community experience to be shared and not a commercial enterprise to be exploited. It was a catharsis for us all. I saw the effect Mark had on people with his music and he saw my ability to nurture and develop people and projects, and everything just evolved from there organically. We didn't have a game plan but stayed open to whatever felt right and wherever that took us."

Mark: "In time we gave up the day jobs, jumped in at the deep end and set up Higher Status Events with associates to reach more people and fund our project."

Mofo: "So when was this?"
Mark: "I set up Higher Status in 2002, but Yas and I completely reshaped and refocused it in August 2004."

Mofo: "But you'd been doing events before hadn't you. What's this about you doing a party for Marilyn Manson?"

Mark: "Ah, well basically I ran a club back in Milton Keynes that became quite notorious due to the er, alternative, performances we had and the fact that the local council tried to shut it down and all the papers said the church had to perform an exorcism. It became quite notorious and I was invited to start one in London which grew and grew, so I was doing parties for 1000 people every month. Somehow it got to the attention of the record label launching Marilyn Manson. They asked me to put on a record launch party in the style of the club and paid me a ridiculous amount of money."

Mark: "It made me think that a production company is the way forward. So that's when the idea formed and six years later the reality happened when I found the right people to form a team with to operate at that top level doing fashion shows, movie premieres and record launches. With the events side it's great to have a budget, we get to play with amazing cutting-edge technology and can flex our creative muscles. But all the money we make we put into funding the free party, which is where our hearts are."

Yasmin: "None of this has been easy. It's taken a long time to learn to channel our differences productively and there've been countless rock bottom moments, having been let down or betrayed by friends, business partners and associates, and losing everything on more than one occasion. It's been incredibly testing but we've always kept the bigger picture in mind and that's always pulled us through."

Mofo: "I first heard about you with your Tsunami fund raising party at Sway in Holborn. Not a bad start pulling in the big guns of Finger Lickin', TCR, Fat and Botchit & Scarper. How did you do that?"

Yasmin: "Well there we were doing these private breaks

"You had vicars' daughters dancing alongside fetish lovers alongside teenagers with their parents. Every walk of life united by the sound of breakbeat." Yasmin Chadury/C64

Mark: "That's right, we just steer the thing."
Mofo: "What's your background with music Mark? You've certainly had an encyclopaedic skip through the genres; can you give us a potted history?"

Mark: "Well yeah it started out back in the day of the original Goth scene, through punk then into the metal sound, which led to industrial stuff then dance elements of industrial sound, which ended up with Prodigy! I remember going to an illegal warehouse party in Milton Keynes and the Prodigy rocked up and asked if they could play (pre release of the Experience album!) Obviously, I was hooked. So then I went to hard house, hard trance, but as I've got older the tempo's slowed down and I've ended up in breaks!"

Kane had been a drummer/percussionist in a metal/industrial band, alternative club promoter, body piercer and had a successful international DJ career in industrial, hard house and trance for over 12 years, with a residency in New York and playing to crowds of up to 70,000 as one half of Kane and Abel. However he eventually gave up professional DJing altogether saying it became so far removed from what it was originally all about for him.

Mofo: "Yasmin what about your connection with the music industry?"

Yasmin: "I was classically trained in 4 instruments, toured Europe with various '80s rock/pop acts and fell into 'that whole A-list party thing'. It wasn't about the music though and I quickly got bored of all that pointless hedonism. I went the other way and worked in psychology, human rights and consciousness development for over a decade. I loved working with people's minds but always kept a foot in the creative worlds - tour managing for Perfecto, body doubling for the likes of Angelina Jolie and Aishwarya Rai and cabaret performance art. I longed to bring the two sides of my life together but couldn't find the right bridge."

Mofo: "What's your experience of the club scene?"

Yasmin: "We've both been clubbing for two decades now and witnessed the arrival of ecstasy that was such a massive

parties growing quietly for a couple of years when the tsunami happened. We'd just been shafted by our business partners and had lost everything but still had to put on 23 corporate parties that Xmas. It nearly killed us! We dropped out for 5 days but emerged afterwards to the shock that this global catastrophe had occurred. It was unreal, dislocating, we had to do something."

Mark: "Our first reaction was to put together a donation for the Tsunami Relief. But then we thought we'd try and use the company's resources to make more money. As we were really into the breaks scene and it was what I was enjoying DJing we invited the labels you mentioned to get involved in this charity event. We did all the production; soundsystem, lasers, lighting, 15 hot dancers and they supplied all the top name DJs from the labels and that's how the relationship started."

Yasmin: "I didn't want it to be just another get-tweeted club night but for people to remember what this was all about. So I asked MC Xander to hold this meditative silence and send out all the positive energy from the night. It was so powerful; people really felt something and the night raised loads. We had such good feedback and were so impressed by the willingness and support of the labels and acts that we decided to take C64 up a stage and develop it out to the wider public."

Mofo: "So why the name C64?"
Yasmin: "It was just a loving pisstake of Nottingham's brilliant breaks night Spectrum because we so weren't Spectrum! We were going to change it but now it's stuck."

Mark: "The fact that we still run it as a private party, are not tied to any record label, bound to any venue, dictated by making money or involved in all the politics, means we have a lot of freedom. We're both obsessed with quality control and plan and tweak every variable with military precision to make it work."

Yasmin: "We put a lot of thought into working out the line up."
Mark: "It's crucial to get it right as the night currently finishes at 3 am, so DJ's only really have an hour each. Obviously I have huge respect for all the artists we invite to play but I don't believe in bowing and gracing to big names either. If a big name is typically funkier and I have some tearout guys on the same night I have no problem with putting the bigger names on at the beginning."

Mofo: "Would you have any residents other than DEF inc?"
Mark: "We thought about it but I like every C64 to sound different. As our sets can go anywhere, since Larry and I have such a broad love of music, I think one sort of constant is enough."

Yasmin: "We also really want to use C64 as a platform to

"The fact that we still run it as a private party, are not tied to any record label, bound to any venue, dictated by making money or involved in all the politics, means we have a lot of freedom." Mark Kane/C64

awakening for so many of our generation. But the commercialisation of the dance industry - as with everything else in this world - has really diluted and distorted that energy. You know, marketing hype that doesn't live up to its promise, commercial interests leading to selling out, corporate monopolies, unscrupulous promoters, and mainstream blandness. We've watched these cycles over and over in other genres. They say 'that's business' but it's just wrong. We'd both worked in music before, drawn by our passion, but all that industry bullshit and politics just turned us off it completely."

Mofo: "You're a couple right, how did your paths cross?"

Mark: "I was DJing hard trance on a boat on the Thames."
Yasmin: "We really didn't like each other when we first met - it was really challenging. We're complete opposites, but we shared a similar vision and knew we had to work together though we had no idea what that was."

Mofo: "So how did the breaks parties start?"

Yasmin: "Ooh, bit of a long story but meeting each other, hearing breaks and discovering the amazing talent, passion and integrity on the scene was the catalyst that turned us both on. Back then we found little in between shabby bars with dodgy soundsystems or over-capacity superclubs rammed with attitude. The choices on offer were pretty uninspiring so we stayed in and held parties the way we wanted them. It just worked. There was a real sense of occasion, everyone contributed creatively and dressed up, and we had live musicians, a quality system and a really eclectic bunch of friends. I mean, you had vicars' daughters dancing alongside fetish lovers alongside teenagers with their parents. Every walk of life united by the sound of breakbeat. The spark was created right there and strong bonds were formed which created the basis of the C64 Family today - definitely a case of the right people in the right place at the right time. Everyone

promote new artists. We found the Bass Pilots through My Space, for example, and unbeknown to us gave them their first London gig! It's great to have this freedom but obviously the flipside is people don't necessarily know who we are or what we're doing or why. It's harder to get heard without a media presence and some people only seem to look as far as how many column inches you've generated. But the right people are crossing our paths. We have so much respect for the sound and talented artists who have waived their fees and taken time out to support the free party ethos. The Finger Lickin' and Menu Music crews in particular have given us great support and encouragement."

Mark: "We've never been interested in courting the mainstream media. Anyone can play the numbers game, say the right things and follow the formula but that can be the kiss of death sometimes. We're not prepared to compromise on quality. Mofo is the only magazine we have wanted to talk to so far."

Yasmin: "But it's all totally worth it as feedback comes in all the time from party people telling us they're 'addicted to their monthly C64 fix.' We've outgrown four venues already, loads of the DJs offer to come back and play again and I've seen many of our initiatives being adopted elsewhere. We know what we're doing because we spend loads of time getting it right for other people too. C64 is the party everyone knows us for but we've done parties and production for Finger Lickin', Sudden Def, Deepdownanddirty, The End, and Notting Hill Carnival parties, etc. not to mention all the private and corporate events that Higher Status works on."

Mofo: "How do you invite people?"

Yasmin: "It's friends of friends from the original family really. C64 has always attracted a really eclectic crowd: alternative, open-minded, free-thinkers, international visitors, older people who thought they'd given up on clubbing and total newcomers to breaks. But the original set are totally respectful of what we are trying to create, so they make sure their guests behave."

Mark: "If there's any hassle or someone can't handle their drink they are just ejected."

Yasmin: "For girls it can particularly ruin your night if someone just isn't understanding the word no and we don't want our crowd to have to endure that! So yeah, people find us through word-of-mouth and recommendations really and get sent an invitation."

Mofo: "If our reader didn't know where C64 is, how would they be invited as I know you don't want me to give away the location!"

Yasmin: "Oh, that makes us sound really elitist! It's just that things have been working for us just perfect, unfolding organically, and I don't want to change that before we move. I'd rather the right people find us."

Mofo: "Move?"

Mark: "Yeah, in October 2006 we are moving to a much bigger venue as we want to add a different room and actually not have to start setting up a venue from 7am, as by the time I get in the decks I'm pretty knackered!"

Yasmin: "C64 has become synonymous with consistent quality in both vibe and production and it's been outgrowing venues at a rate of knots. Every time its identity evolves that little bit further and we're lucky to have a really loyal following that support that and contribute to it. We're really excited about having more space to develop things creatively, showcase new forms of entertainment, bring in new sounds, anything to enhance the experience and keep things fresh. Nothing about C64 is set in stone, it's a free party and its identity and direction is shaped by our followers that support it and whatever inspires us at the time. We're not afraid to take risks, we thrive on it!"

Mofo: "What about if people emailed you to ask more about C64, would that tick your box of hunting you down Yas?"

Yasmin: "You're a good mediator! OK cool, it's info@higherstatusliveevents.com. The October launch in the new venue is going to rock as well, so the more people up for it the better!"

Mark: "We've got a really phat line up planned!"

Mofo: "Tasty. I know when Menu hosted the one in May we had a riot so should be a gooden."

Yasmin: "You know it!"

Mofo: "But isn't there a major juxtaposition between organising C64 and your corporate dos?"

Yasmin: "Yeah! We have a lot of subversive fun with the corporate side. Having the legitimacy of a company you can enter the system like a Trojan horse! Like the time we went out raving all weekend, donned our pinstripes and had a meeting with high-profile MPs at the House of Commons whilst tripping. It was eye-opener to say the least!"

Mofo: "The House of Commons! Give us an example of your other clients?"

Mark: "The Bank of America, Barclays Capital, Canary Wharf Group, Clifford Chance, HSBC, Jones Lang LaSalle, KPMG, London City Airport, the Mayor of Tower Hamlets, Reuters, there's too many to remember!"

Yasmin: "Accessing these different levels of society with a corporate cloak means we're able to introduce masses of new and diverse people to the breakbeat community. We'll do whatever it takes."

Mofo: "How do you do that?!"

Mark: "You wouldn't believe how many people come up to me when I'm sound checking with a breaks CD and say, "Wow what's this?" and I give them a DEF inc. CD or something."

Yasmin: "Or it's our 'Seek and Rescue' mission on the actual night of the corporate do. Sometimes when I see people standing on the sidelines looking despairingly at their mainstream colleagues, I've told a few about C64. Sure enough they've been up there at the front loving it at the next one!"

Mofo: "You both ooze positiveness and this feeling of doing everything for the right reasons."

Yasmin: "Well it's not changing the world but we're making a difference within our own small sphere of influence. A lot of club nights compete with who's got the biggest this or best that, but we've gone the other way and have taken it right down to the basics. C64 has always been about the transformative power of music, liberation through celebration and the development of a community."

Mark: "Everyone who plays a part in C64 is contributing to the breaks scene without financial gain, media spin, kissing ass or exploiting others. Just sheer hard work, goodwill and a sharing of skills. It *is* possible. There's loads of great outfits doing great work out there, this is our personal contribution to it all. We're always up for collaborating with like-minded individuals to make things better."

Yasmin: "Working like this has been really testing but it's pushing forwards our personal growth. To have come even this far from some very dark places and setbacks has been incredibly liberating and rewarding. I've finally found a way to fuse all my skills together in the way I'd been looking for. Being around such talent has inspired Kane to take up DJing professionally again, less than a year ago. He has now been taken on by Fat, is recording with Botchit and touring the world with Larry as DEF inc. It's been one mad journey. We are very grateful for the unexpected lease of life and direction we've found amongst this amazing scene and we'll do all we can to support it."



MOFO COLLECTIVE ISSUE 13



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The cover for Mofo 13 was designed by Jem Panufnik. I'm sure most readers of Mofo will be more than familiar with his work as he is responsible for all the amazing Finger Lickin' artwork. We are delighted with this cover as we have always wanted a '50s sci-fi robot on the front cover of Mofo. You will also find this excellent robot graphic on the next Finger Lickin' Thang 4 release.

The concept we are adopting for the cover of Mofo is to give artists a blank canvas to express themselves. Let's face it, that's far more interesting than having a DJ on the cover. The artwork doesn't have to be breakbeat related or be commissioned by anyone in the breakbeat scene but we do want the Mofo logo incorporated in the design. If you are an artist, illustrator, graffiti or aerosol artist, graphic designer and wish to create a Mofo cover please contact jimmy@mofomag.com



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