



“I accidentally created Trip-Hop”

Endtroducing... DJ Shadow - By Callum Peterson

About the Artist

Born Josh Paul Davis in San Jose California on June 29th 1972, DJ Shadow is a creative genius and DJ Legend. He was raised in Davis, California, and has been a DJ ever since he was kid. Inspired by a Public Enemy concert, he decided to get a four track recorded and use cassette tapes to make very primitive recordings and remixes of his favourite tracks. Later on he would become a DJ for the University of California on their radio station, KDVS. Around this time he would release some early singles, gaining attention from UK base label Mo-Wax which he would later join and partner up with James Lavelle. These UK and hip hop influences plus his experience and passion for sampling would set DJ Shadow up to make one of the most influential

albums of all time.

About the Album

DJ Shadow's debut album, and his Most critically

acclaimed album; going gold in Canada and platinum in the UK, ranked as one of the best albums of all time by both Time magazine and Rolling Stone.

It is one of the first completely sampled albums ever, using an estimated 3000 samples, and perfecting the art of chopping. These samples

come from a wide and diverse range of musical sources, such as funk, alternative rock, psychedelic rock, jazz, movies, interviews, and even spoken word albums. Furthermore, these were often from forgotten and obscure records dating back to the 60's and 70's. Taken from artists long lost to time or even from highschool marching band records; Some samples are so obscure we don't know where he sampled them from to this day and new sources are found frequently. However, not all are old and unknown; some are from the 80's and 90's like a sample from Metallica and a sample from Bjork. DJ Shadow was able to get this wide variety of records because he was such an avid customer at his favourite record store, called simply "Record store" (*seen in the cover of the album*), he was allowed exclusive access to the basement of the store giving him a portal into a room with records stacked to the roof, and as rare as they come. This use of rare records was not only to avoid having to pay expensive copyright fees but to stick to his own set of internal rules, making his own unique sound and making the digging process just as important as the producing. As mentioned before, this album uses the art of chopping which is a common practice among DJ's. But consider that DJ Shadow's only pieces of equipment used in producing the album were the AKAI MPC60 12-bit sampling drum machine and a pair of turntables, no fancy computer programs, just a pile of records and a passion for scratching. This album showed the true complexity of sampling, not just mooching off of other artists but creating new





works all together. This is the album that made people realize sampling could be art.

"I am, I confess, totally confounded by it. I hear a lot of good records, but very few impossible ones... You need this record. You are incomplete without it... not so much songs as they are compositions" **Robert Christgau, Playboy**

"Endroducing is a surreal film soundtrack on which jazz, classical, and jungle fragments are artfully blended with turntable tricks and dialogue snippets... it takes hip-hop into the next dimension." **Jon Wiederhorn, Entertainment weekly**

Enough set up, time to talk about the songs that make Endroducing such a classic.

1. Best Foot Forward

A short song that serves as the perfect song that does its best to prepare you for one of the most mesmerizing use of samples put into album form. It starts with an interview clip followed by a short but groovy sample, then it gets interrupted. A collection of many different voice clips are stitched together to announce the start of the album connected by the sound of records scratching. It works as a great intro, showing the funk influence on the album but then showing the style of DJ Shadow through cuts and scratches.

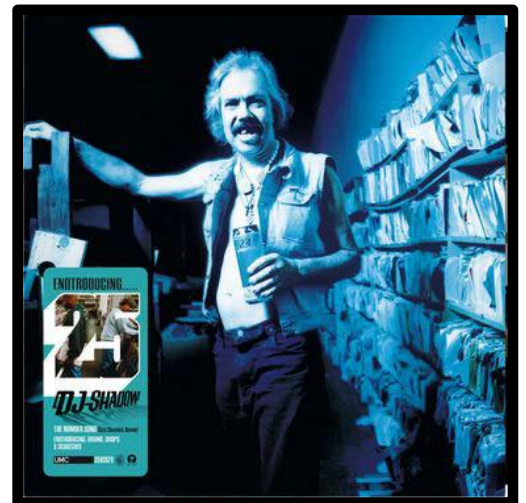
2. Building Steam With A Grain Of Salt

One of the most iconic and masterful songs on Endtroducing, oh man what a way to kick off an album. It's built off the back of a haunting piano sample and an incredibly crisp drum sample, sprinkled in there are various vocal clips and chops. It is one of my favourite on the album as it has such an irreplaceable vibe, it reminds me of a crisp cold night, you're walking around a town surrounded by nobody but yourself, and can see nothing but the street lights. Really no articulate way to describe the feeling this song captures. It transports you into another world, foreign but comfortable at the same time.



3. Number Song

There is no turning back after this song, you are immediately thrown into it. Brought in right at the start by a countdown, it starts with a sample of "Orion" by Metallica, and a very nice drum sample. Makes you uncomfortable but in a good way. After the droning of Orion has almost overstayed its welcome, the song is abruptly switched to a funky break. But then goes back to the original mix after a bit. Throughout the song are voice clips of people saying numbers and counting, this is a really neat touch. Overall it's a very good song, and shows DJ Shadow's style off very well.



4. Changeling

Another immediate classic from the album. It starts with just a simple keyboard sample all on its own, then the drums are introduced; Both are such a clean use of sampling. The song is an amazing example of building up the complexity of a song. Starting from that simple keyboard sample, followed by lots of drums and some small guitar samples mixed in with vocal chops. It leads to an immensely satisfying payoff of a guitar sample at the end, that feels like climbing to the summit of a mountain and feeling the breeze hit your face as you look at the sunset. It is one of my favourite songs on the album, so clean yet so artistic, so slow yet exciting. As most songs on this album do, it captures a very hard to describe feeling. Just another example of DJ Shadow's mastery of sampling.

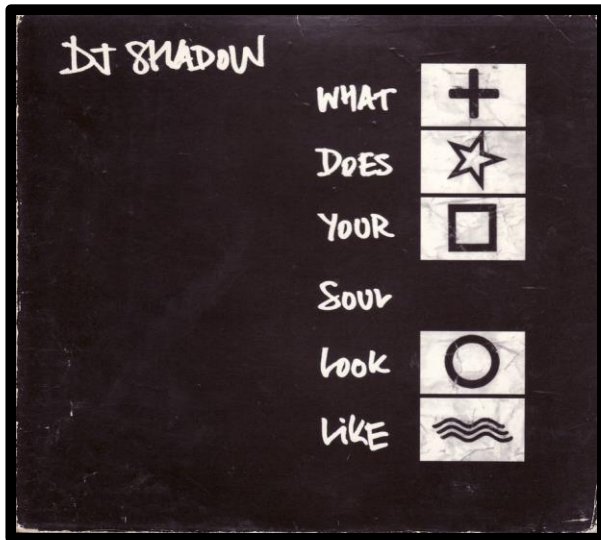


5|6. Transmission 1 / What Does Your Soul Look Like , Pt. 4

Transmission 1 is a very short fuzzy clip that makes you feel like you're listening to something found in a message from aliens. But then WDYSL Pt 4 starts, and the smoothest baseline and crispiest drums kick in, followed by a simple but effective guitar sample. You just get transfixed by the repetition yet are intrigued by the song as more samples get added, a saxophone, simple piano loops, weird noises. Eventually a voice is heard but you can't tell what it's saying used more as an instrument itself. It's such a good song for helping you focus with anything, giving you just enough interest to heavily enjoy the song, but enough repetition to get you focused. It's probably my favourite on the album, just such a good song with such a distinct sound. If I had to only recommend one song, it would be this one. It's not

too complex to be a lounge song, but not too simple to be boring, it's the perfect balance of novelty and simplicity.

7|8. Untitled / Stem/Long Stem - Medley



A simple voice clip and funky sample in the background. Then Stem Starts, it's what sounds to be a harp mixed with some bells, drums bang almost ritualistically, tensions build. Then a guitar and drums that sound like gunshots come in, it feels like a very dreamy but ghostly song. A voice clip plays and we're sent back to the beginning.

Tensions rise once again and rise further than before, eclipsing with violin samples. Then Long

Stem begins, a slight change of the first one, using an organ sample to welcome you in, and those familiar but dreamlike bells. Synth kicks in mixed with some slow violin, it is very peaceful. This is not my favourite song on the album, as I feel it goes on for too long and personally it's too slow for me. But it is still a great song.

9|10. Transmission 2 / Mutual Slump

Another almost alien-like transmission, using incredibly comforting synths and the simple plucks of a piano. A radio static comes in and a voice whispers numbers. Then BOOM, mutual slump starts, what sounds to be a voice with a filter and chopped up screams followed by a bass lick. It uses a sample of "Possibly Maybe" By Bjork as a backbone of the song, its mind numbing intriguing tone plays while an incredible example of drum sampling is used. It is a very good song, using that Bjork sample to its fullest extent, pushing it to its limits, as well as the use of break beats. It's another one of my favorites from the album

11|12. Organ Donor / Why Hip Hop Sucks in 96'

This song is almost entirely the complete repurposing of the organ used in "Tears" By Giorgio Moroder. It showcases DJ Shadow's impressive ability to take a sample and push it to its greatest limits, giving it a new life and sound. It is another one of the most recognizable songs from the album, as it's basically the one long organ solo based off of one small clip of an organ in a song, re-ordering and chopping its notes. It is very easy and enjoyable to listen to, one of my favorites from this album. It is followed by Why hip Hop Sucks in 96', a very direct showing of DJ Shadow's disappointment with hip hop's commercialization, taking it from an underground art form to a mainstream guinea pig, of course it's not that extreme but DJ Shadow is clearly opinionated on the matter. The only line being "It's the money".



13. Midnight In A Perfect World

If you know of Endtroducing, you know about this song. It's easily the most recognizable and the most popular song from the Album and one of DJ Shadow's biggest hits, for good reason. It starts with a vocal clip getting slowed down, and then that iconic synth just eases in and relaxes your muscles, mixed with that vocal sample, oh my goodness. It really does capture the feeling it states in the title, it's a slower song, featuring vocal chops and a very iconic synth mixed with the small notes of a piano sprinkled in velocity. It's easily a top 3 from the album, as it shows as stated before

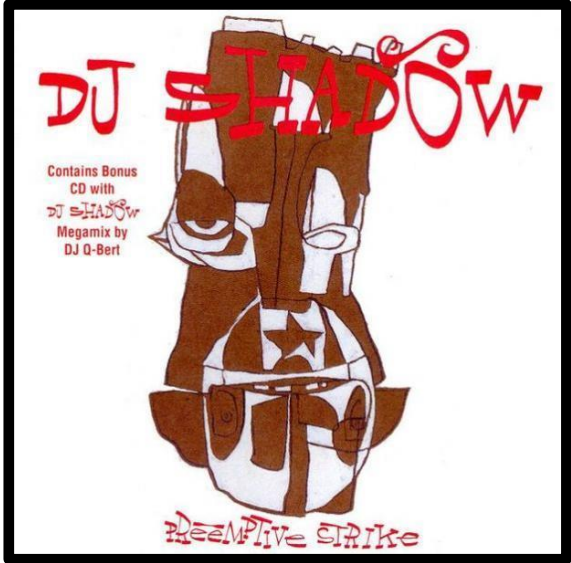


DJ Shadows' uncanny ability to capture hard to describe feelings of different worlds. This is the perfect song to listen to at night while looking at the sky, it just absolutely relaxes you and then transports you to another dimension that shows what Midnight In A Perfect World looks like.

14. Napalm Brain/Scatter Brain - Medley

Arguably the weakest from the album, too long and a little droning at points. However still a decent song, a good use of drum and guitar samples used throughout. It starts off with a clip from a movie "The Aurora Encounter ", in fact Dj Shadow asked James Lavelle to keep his vhs player at the studio so he could sample this move. It's then followed by a really good drum beat that's easy to nod your head too. Though it changes too much in the middle and the end for my tastes, and not the greatest changes either. However, it is still a solid song and worth listening to in the album.

15|16. What Does Your Soul Look Like. Pt 1 - BSR / Transmission 3



One of the most underrated songs from the album, and you may be asking "since there's a part 1 and 4 where are 2 and 3?" Well 2 and 3 do exist, just not on this album; originally all 4 parts were on the same compilation album "Preemptive Strike" and the 2 on Endtroducing are revisits of those songs. Anyways, it is a very solid song, feeling almost floaty but grounded at the same time, it does a very good job combining a saxophone and drum samples with some vocal clips, sprinkled in with other samples. It creates a similar feeling to

What Does Your Soul Look Like, Pt 4 which makes sense but still, I wasn't expecting there to be any song like Pt 4 until I heard Pt 1. It's very solid, using more complex drum samples and scratches as the song goes on. It is followed by Transmission 3, the last song of the album, it's another cryptic voice saying numbers and "this is not a dream", I think DJ Shadow must have been going for an alien theme as it sounds like aliens trying to speak to humans in their own tongue. Overall it's an interesting way to end the album.

Conclusion

Endtroducing is a must listen to album if you are a fan of hip hop, it shows early forms of sampling and how they were used to their fullest extent. It is a journey, and one worth having. One of my top 10 albums, found out about it in grade 8 through Building Steam With A Grain Of Salt and haven't stopped listening to it since. Introduced it to my friends and they love it too. It is the perfect Album for anyone who wants to hear something fresh in the hip



hop scene. It is an album everyone should try atleast once.

“I’m listening to the past, in the present, and it sounds like the future”

"I feel like 'Organ Donor' sounds nothing like 'The Number Song' which sounds nothing like 'Midnight in a Perfect World' and on and on. Making a cool varied sound... I was often depressed producing this album, my feelings of self-doubt and self-esteem come through in the music." **DJ Shadow**

“I’m really a music fanatic, more than I am a musician.”

DJ Shadow *KEYBOARD, 10.97*

(Fun Fact he has over 60,000 records in his collection)

Wanna Learn more, Check these out!

Endtroducing, the album itself LISTEN TO IT

<https://youtu.be/Y0ltqyuKSOQ?si=fuwEE27IIBbIVeTC>

<https://youtu.be/FpbWz7QvJAo?si=43n72UR8G5BxzedC>

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