

## DJ HIDDEN – DIRECTIVE

What maybe not all know is that **Noël Wessels**, better known as **Dj Hidden**, one of the main characters of the evolution of electronic music that with Directive makes his fourth album for the brave **Nicolas Chevreux's Ad Noiseam** (but it's his fifth album with this monicker) has been, since the far 1996, one of the leading acts of the Dutch hardcore techno as the half of **The Outside Agency** (and there are several cases in the history of hardcore of deejays and producers who have varied their musical research on different electronic areas).

Who have followed the path of this acrobatic musician know how His music has always searched the innovation of the musical languages characterized by rather strict rhythmic and musical rules, such as, for example, drum 'n bass or, nowadays, dubstep. Darkstep and drumstep are only some of the music genres listenable on the work of Dj Hidden, but his sound is definitely various and undefinable, and this extreme stylistic variety can be found, more than in the past, in Directive.

After a definitely cinematographic and complex album as **Enclosed**, complexity that made it difficult to be easily assimilated by the listener, Directive divides the audience that was waiting for a "part two", making a multifaceted album, made of songs each of whose is very different from each other, not linked between them: Directive is an album made of twelve photos that show the rails upon which electronic music, that more danceable, could move to in the future, according to the well-known Dutch musician.

What Directive inherits from the previous album is, without any doubt, that particular production influenced by industrial music, that could be translated in the percussive sound of the drum machine, that recalls that produced by the hitting of metallic objects, the same sound that we find in all the works that he has produced, such as the very good **16pad noise terrorists's Zeit**, released one year ago by **Hands Productions**. Apart from this, a typical Dj Hidden's trait is his particular way of building sonic assaults merging the speed incisiveness of hardcore techno beats with the ductility of the drum 'n bass and dubstep rhythmic (considering all their evolutions and variations), as well as the always present excellent taste for the melodic elements, that are also present in his compositions.

The songs more linkable to the previous Enclosed are the faster songs: *In my blood* and *Street control*, as well as the very good featuring with **MC Coppa**, *The hour*, this one considered as an interesting photo of the evolution in the balance between vocalism and drum 'n bass-like rhythmic, a balance that belongs to the genre since its early days.

The best thing of Dj Hidden's work has to be found in the creation of songs that, if we think at the previous work, don't have problems to be easily kept in mind, although their constructions are never common: the backbeats are particularly frequent, the perfect balance between melody and rhythmic is always present and never bothering. The variety of styles is astonishing: the listener can find the tarantulated and very fast rhythm of the remix of *You're not real*, a psychotic crazy rework of one of his old songs, to the catchiness, close to the trend, of the *mid tempo*-electro of *Poltergeist*, in the meanwhile moving through the final *Anathema*, a very good song that shows

*dub*-whatever taste, extra fine breakbeat, retro melodies, various *scratches* and very clean hardcore techno beats, a sort of engaging sum of Dj Hidden's entire work.

In the middle there are the fast hardcore techno episodes, sometimes merged with mid tempo openings, from the sunny (above all thanks to the unsettling melody that runs on the background) *Once upon a time in Porto*, but also the wise mix of the fragmented drum 'n bass and the acoustic guitar of *In formation*, the classic drum 'n bass run, of course interpreted with the eyes of Dj Hidden, *Arctic* (this featuring Landscapers), the very beautiful mid tempo of *Polar perspective*, upon which there's a very good piano construction, the engaging *Canadian dropzone*, that start soft to transform itself towards a climax characterized by a very high danceable soul, and *Crowd mover*, one of the best examples of triple A *dubstep*.

A very good score for Dj Hidden's Directive, a very particular work constantly able to astonish the more crafty and musically opened listener. Dj Hidden here demonstrates to have reached a great maturity as far as his songwriting is concerned, as well as a very particular versatility definitely not common in the electronic landscape. Directive is one of the most interesting albums in the electronic field, considering those released during the last months.

Score: 8, 5

Label: Ad Noiseam

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