

# BUILDING BLOCKS

by andrew mason

It was 1987, and I was making my regular pilgrimage to Music Factory in Times Square, searching for goodies of the audible kind. Passing the Buddha-like figure of Stanley Platzer, the store manager who seemed permanently ensconced behind a small counter near the front of the store, I eagerly flipped through the latest releases on labels like Cold Chillin', Prism, Fresh, and First Priority.

On the wall there were a few mysterious records that caught my eye. Looking over the titles, I saw things like "Apache," "Big Beat," "Honky Tonk Woman," but no artists were listed. Were these some Pickwick-style knock-offs by a no-name cover band? Why were songs by the Rolling Stones and Billy Squier, two bands that personified mainstream rock-n-roll, loitering in the prime real estate of wall space reserved for the hottest slices of the underground music then known as "new school rap"? I didn't know, and didn't give it much thought, quickly snatching up the "Pickin' Boogers" and "Juice Crew Dis" singles.

Flashback to a few years before. Late at night, high up on the radio dial, I would occasionally hear weird collages of music that seeped into my subconscious and laid the foundation that would eventually explain this phenomena to me. Cheech and Chong talkin' some bullshit, suddenly a heavy beat pounded through (that made even a playin'-the-wall herb like me want to shake my pants), repeating and stuttering back on itself, then—wait, what's that weird electronic outer space-sounding noise...into something that sounds like "White Lines," but I know that's not Melle Mel. I rummaged through a shoebox to find a tape I could record over.

Rap music had been sort of a novelty for me; I was not a b-boy from the Bronx, simply a kid into music. The popular rap hits of the early '80s were records I bought, but they didn't hold any particular prominence over the rest of the pop music of the day. But by the mid-'80s things had changed. I had always been an avid taper of radio shows, and my ear steadily gravitated towards the sounds I was hearing. When I discovered stores like Music Factory, I made them my Mecca, quickly becoming a fanatic of what were clearly the freshest sounds out there.

As sampling became more prevalent, I started to hear elements in the new jams that I recognized. I couldn't quite place most of them, but they were familiar as a Beatles melody. A friend hipped me to the fact that a funky cow-

bell riff I loved so much was in fact from a song called "Mardi Gras." I started examining those cheap-looking records that had SUPER DISCO BRAKES written in big block type across the front, and soon enough came across one with a song that fit the description. I placed the record with the off-center orange and black label on the turntable, dropped the needle on the first track, and, with that sensation that only vinyl can give, waited for the tune to kick in. Huh? The needle must've jumped, because there was my cowbell jam, but it wasn't playing right. Examining the record, I couldn't see anything wrong. I later found that every single pressing of that record had that skip in it (and still does; check out *Super Disco Brakes Vol. 1*). Thank you Paul Winley.

In spite of this technical difficulty, a flame had been sparked which only gained in intensity. I quickly graduated to the superior pressings of Street Beat Records's *Ultimate Breaks & Beats* series, then in its prime—already to fourteen volumes or so by the time I got to them. *UBB #9* with the dancing robot on the cover was my toe in the water and I was immediately hooked. This article is a study, an attempt to get at why tunes on these records have such resonance, but above all a tribute to an essential ingredient of hip-hop.

There is a logical starting point when attempting to understand this culture that has grown from the roots of hip-hop and flowered into what we call beatdigging. When a fledgling beat-maker is getting started there is essential for-knowledge. You crawl before you walk, and when it comes to this game, crawling means learning the foundation: the beats and breaks that gave birth to hip-hop. These tunes are our music theory and history, the rules you need to know before you can break them.

If all this seems abstract and removed from where we're at these days, let me take you back. A party, just getting bubbling. The room is not too big, not too small. A few groups of ladies, some fellas maintaining neutral ground. The DJ has a stack of 45s in front of him and has begun cueing up the next. The groove sends a wave of bass up from your feet, meeting the highs and mids in your chest and causing an involuntary ripple of your torso. The fellas nod. The ladies swing heads appreciatively. Alright. Suddenly a grin breaks out on one of your boys. He has heard the intro for the next song being brought in. BAM! The DJ brings the

fader over and the rest of the room shares the joy as energy starts building up in the rapidly filling room. It doesn't stop there, feet begin shuffling as drums you have heard since childhood get worked out, snapping and splintering as the DJ gets busy with two copies of the same joint. The next jam comes in and by now somebody is going for theirs, body working in time to a groove as sweet and familiar as the fragrance of spring. The next record hits the spot like a perfect pick-and-roll and you know you're in the right place. The room is full and the party is live, and it's just begun.

Beautiful, right? Don't think this is some late '70s flashback, though. This scene took place less than a month ago, late 2001, as I was finishing up this article. The DJ was Spinna, the location was a basement club in Manhattan, and nearly all the joints that got everyone so open can be found in one place: the series.

*Ultimate Breaks & Beats* is essentially a catalog of rhythm. The 150-plus songs it compiles over its twenty-five volumes demonstrate an impressive array of 4/4 drum patterns and variations that form a textbook for any rhythmist looking to generate motion, whether your kit is an Akai, Technics, or Ludwig.

To take it further, a case can be made that the breaks featured on Street Beat's *Ultimate Breaks & Beats* series form the basis for modern popular rhythm. This thesis does not seem so far-fetched when you trace the roots of contemporary electronic and dance styles and their indebtedness to rap music and its production techniques. It's a chronology that leads from community center parties in Harlem and the Bronx to the rise of sampling in the mid-'80s and onward to the creations of the dance music innovators who were inspired by the rhythm patterns of rap music.

Avant-garde experimentalists like Karlheinz Stockhausen, John Cage, and Steve Reich worked with primal "samples" (tape loops) in the '50s and '60s, and music professionals in the '70s used expensive machines like the Fairlight and the Mellotron to imitate various live instruments. It wasn't until the mid-'80s, however, that digital sampling equipment began to come within the reach of non-professional musicians.

As sampling became an option for more folks involved in making music, it was a natural step to take the funk-

est pieces of party classics and loop them, thereby imitating the feel of a DJ running a break with two copies of the same record. Grandmaster Flash explains the concept: "My main objective was to take small parts of records... maybe forty seconds, keeping it going for about five minutes."<sup>1</sup> In fact, this strategy was employed well before samplers came into use. Keith LeBlanc, drummer on many of the early Sugar Hill records, related this story: "Sylvia [Robinson, Sugar Hill Records president] would be at Harlem World or Disco Fever, and she'd watch who was mixing what four bars off of what record. She'd get that record, and then she'd play us those four bars and have us go in and cut it better."<sup>2</sup>

In 1985, E-mu introduced the SP12 sampling drum machine, and soon after that sampling started to pop up in rap music. Rick Rubin redid LL Cool J's "Rock the Bells" using a large chunk of Trouble Funk as its rhythmic bed (the original version of "Bells" was all drum machine), while Marley Marl hooked Biz Markie up with "The Biz Dance" (graced by drum hits chopped from Rufus Thomas's "Do the Funky Penguin") and "Make the Music with Your Mouth Biz" (Isaac Hayes in fact making much of the music with his piano via a nice sample). Ced Gee handled production for Ultramagnetic MC's and Boogie Down Productions, creating the amazing "Ego Trippin'" with little more than an SP12 and a loungey-sounding 7-inch with a dope drum break. His usage of James Brown on BDP's "South Bronx" kicked off a long (unrequited) love affair between samplers and the Godfather of Soul (Double Dee & Steinski had used liberal chunks of the Soul Brother #1 as early as 1984 on their landmark remix of "Play that Beat Mr. DJ" by G.L.O.B.E. & Whiz Kid, but the record was never officially released, and certainly never resonated the way "South Bronx" did).

So where did folks go for their source material, the sure shot beats that would resonate with such power in their listeners? Some had access to record collections of their parents and the creativity to use them, but for many, the most convenient way to obtain these essential beats was through break compilations.

Street Beat Records, the company that distributed *UBB*, was incorporated in 1986 by a car service driver and part-time DJ named Lenny Roberts, aka Breakbeat Lenny. It was not the first or only label reissuing what was called

B-Beat (Break Beat) music. There were plenty of one-off "Disco Mixer" 12-inches that edited uptempo disco breakdowns together for the club jocks, and 12-inch bootleg reedits of anthems like "Scratchin'" (extended past eight minutes) and "Apache" that had been around since the late '70s. Paul Winley's infamous *Super Disco Brakes* series was in lo-fi effect straight out of 125th Street, and the equally infamous but more mysterious *Octopus* (as the no-named series is commonly referred to) records were coming out of Florida by way of the Bronx. Much more obscure, these direct predecessors of the *UBB* series date to 1980 and are the pithecanthropus erectus to *UBB*'s homo sapien. The *Octopus* track listing is duplicated almost exactly on the first ten *Ultimate Breaks* records, raising questions about the relationship between the two.

In an article published in 1988, Lenny Roberts claimed that the *Octopus* records were put out by "some guy in the Bronx," and stressed that he (in contrast) "wrote away for all the licensing" on his comps. So where did the *Octopus* originate? I talked to a long-time employee of NYC's Downstairs Records who told me about a series of doo wop bootlegs making the rounds in the mid- to late '70s, allegedly mafia-sponsored. The compiler, apparently also an aspiring cartoonist, adorned these bootlegs with various anthropomorphic animal characters. Thus the *Octopus*—with its image cheerfully cueing up a couple of records under the words "Break Beats," a phone to one ear and headphones to the other—was likely just an attempt to diversify the market. This theory is supported by the location of the manufacturer of the *Octopus* boots: Hollywood, Florida, a well-known wiseguy ward.

*Octopus* #7 and #8 became the *UBB* "mystery" LPs (SBR-507 and SBR-508), probably more available in *Octopus* form than on the rapidly discontinued *Street Beat* pressings of these two volumes (rumor has it that John Davis threatened lawsuits over the inclusion of his "I Can't Stop" on SBR-507 and that the master for SBR-508 was lost). Beyond these two and a song that appeared on some pressings of *Octopus* #4 called "Get Up" (Pookie Blow rhyiming over the "Dance to the Drummer's Beat" break), the *Octopus* survives to this day in the guise of *UBB*.

What sets *Street Beat's Ultimate Breaks* apart from all its competitors is its sheer longevity, its superior sound quality and most of all being in the right place at the right time.

The series is fascinating on several levels. For one, the fusion of styles it contains demands the listener disregard notions of genre. This is a mindset that is perhaps not as revolutionary as it once was, but at the time it was like lightning bottled, a roots tonic straight out of the witch-

doctor's apothecary. After all, play lists of these records were copped from party favorites spun by Bambaata, Herc, even David Mancuso (by way of GM Flash). *UBB* was the series that really broke the original "wall of silence" surrounding breakbeat music and set a precedent in break compilations.

I spoke to David Mancuso about how he feels seeing records he introduced at his legendary Loft parties end up on break records. Although his attitude towards unauthorized copies of tunes isn't positive ("I don't like bootlegs!"), Mancuso has always been about spreading the love when it comes to hot tracks. He was one of the founders of the first record pool (the New York Record Pool, founded in 1974), a system devised to keep influential DJs stocked with the latest, greatest tunes. In exchange for new releases, members of the pool were required to rate records according

to their personal reaction and to the floor reaction when it was played. One of the members of the record pool was Joseph Saddler, aka Grandmaster Flash. Afrika Bambaata was also in attendance at Loft parties, where records like "Woman" by Barrabas (originally picked up by Mancuso at a flea market in Amsterdam) and Lonnie Liston Smith's "Expansions" were in heavy rotation. These tunes quickly made their way uptown and from there eventually onto the *UBB* comps.

Both the *Octopus* and the *Street Beat* records share the sometimes useful, sometimes infuriating trait of looping breaks within certain songs. The idea was to make short breaks easier to catch, but in some cases this

resulted in uncomfortably stiff edits such as on Lyn Collins's "Think" or Dyke & the Blazers's "Let a Woman Be a Woman, Let a Man Be a Man." Louis Flores, credited with editing the tracks, used another interesting technique that occurs a couple times in the series: the pitch change. "UFO" by ESG was originally issued by 99 Records on a 45 rpm 12-inch. The grinding, heavy groove heard on *UBB* #9 is the result of hearing this record at the lower, wrong, turntable tempo setting (play your break record at 45 to hear it as it was originally recorded). Dexter Wansel's stately "Theme From the Planets" gets flipped by reversing this method, sending it into warp drive on 45. Even weirder is the edit on the Wintons's "Amen Brother." It sounds like Flores pitched down this crazy uptempo drum break by simply tapping the 33/45 buttons once at the beginning of the break, then again at the end to bring the song back to its intended pitch.

Flores also tacked several vocal phrases onto various cuts, these fall into the category of DJ tools. Most notable is "(Runaway) Wouldn't Change a Thing," an excerpt from a Thomas "Coke" Escovedo LP. On the original album, the last vocal shout of "Runaway" precedes the percussion



intro to "Wouldn't Change a Thing" by several seconds—typical track spacing on an album. On *UBB #13* the gap is removed, making it easier for DJs to imitate the routine Flash used when he would scratch the vocal shout over the next tune's breakbeat intro.

The series combined the obvious with the unheard-of. It doesn't take long to find such unlikely comrades as Rufus Thomas and Gary Numan (#22) or the Rolling Stones rubbing shoulders with an obscure Italian disco band (#2). Long before folks like Gilles Peterson or Keb Darge were compiling impossibly rare 7-inches for mass consumption, Street Beat ensured that thousands of DJs and aficionados had copies of obscure cuts like "Impeach the President" by the enigmatic Honey Drippers or Please's *Philipino phunk* version of "Sing a Simple Song."

Neither *Octopus* nor *UBB* listed artists for any of their songs, however. As Lenny Roberts said, the *UBB* series does include publishing information, but that's it. Whether the decision to not include artists' names was a result of publishing rights (or lack of them) or a code of honor is debatable. The legendary level of secrecy surrounding break records was tight, and to this day a big part of the competition that goes on among DJs is finding a record that your brethren are not up on. In the late '70s when the Zulu Nation and the Hercolors sound systems were battling, it was all about volume and coming up with that mystery joint that catches you out there, spins your head around, and makes you rush the decks to catch a glimpse of the label while the dancers boil in a frenzy. First-wave innovators such as Kool Herc, Bam, Jazzy Jay, and Flash made a science out of unearthing these obscure rhythmic riffs that would not only move the crowd but confound their rivals as well. Many felt that it was out of bounds for anyone to be revealing ingredients.

*"It took a little bit of that mystery out of it, 'cause it was hard to find these records. You didn't find them every day of the week. When Lenny made them available, it was like, anybody can have them now."*

—Jazzy Jay<sup>3</sup>

But for a new generation of fans who never saw Bam rock the parks in the Bronx, these comps were gold. As Kenny "Dope" Gonzalez, told me, "I'm down with them 'cause they taught a lot of us about breaks. They were key in a lot of people's collections, even though people knock them." Renowned breakbeat aficionado DJ Spinna related, "I picked up my first *Ultimate Breaks* in '85. There used to be a store on 42nd Street where cats went to get all the bootleg breakbeat 12-inches like 'Impeach the President' and 'Funky President,' which are even harder to get than the *Octopus* joints." For many contemporary masters, *UBB* was school—or, as Q-Bert put it in his barnstorming tour through the Street Beat series, preschool (DJ Q-Bert, *Demolition Pumpkin Squeeze – A Pre School Break Mix*).

Of course fame will bring its share of biters. From the disco/electro oriented Street Beat bootlegs with pre-*UBB* catalog numbers SBR-498, SBR-499, and SBR-500 (the actual

Street Beat series started at SBR-501) to the current bootleg versions of the discontinued #7 there have been countless coattail-riding copycat compilations. The popular *Diggin'* series, now in double digits, started as a blatant *UBB* spin-off, shamelessly titling the inaugural LP *Ultimate Breaks & Beats #26*. Before you could say, "Yo, you could catch a smack for that," this blasphemy was corrected; on subsequent pressings the brash upstart reverted to its proper moniker *Diggin'* (Vol. 1).

These days the shelves of record stores are littered with similar *spot-the-sample*-type break compilations and reissues seemingly intent on turning over every last funky rock. Looking at the role these comps play now, it may be hard to understand or remember the weight *UBB* held during its prime. The pinnacle of *UBB*'s influence was probably in 1987–88, when it was not uncommon for hip-hop tracks and even LPs to be based almost wholly on tracks contained in the latest *UBB*. Many classic singles released in that time, like "My Philosophy" (BDP), "It's My Thing" (EPMD), "I Know You Got Soul" (Eric B. & Rakim) and "It Takes Two" (Rob Base & DJ E-Z Rock), fit this description. There are even stories of a certain well-known producer getting his hands on Street Beat test pressings in order to outdo the competition, but that's a story we'll have to leave for another time.

As the '80s came to a close, breakbeat culture had moved far from its roots. Innovative beat-makers began disdain-ing the now well-known breaks on *UBB* and the series lost steam. Cuts began to be included *because* they had been sampled, rather than for their established fame with the b-boys (a group rapidly being overwhelmed in number by "rap" fans who often had little connection to the culture that gave birth to the music). All the People's "Cramp Your Style," the basis for BDP's "Still #1," found its way onto #21 a year or so after BDP used it. AJ Woodson, better known as AJ Rok of JVC Force, told me, "I sampled Freda Payne's "Easiest Way to Fall" [the b-side of "Band of Gold"] off both her 45 and her album. It was added to the breakbeat album some two or three years after we used it because we used it [on "Strong Island"]." The track appeared on #23, issued towards the end of 1989.

Street Beat would only release two more LPs in the series, #24 and the final 25th "Silver Anniversary" edition appearing in 1991. Over ten years have passed, but, to this day, the records are still available, still essential, still the king. ●

Notes:

1. David Toop, *Rap Attack* (London: Pluto Press, 1984), p.63.

2. *Village Voice* (Jan. 19, 1988).

3. *Ibid.*

*When he's not playing scrabble over cocktails with Walt "Clyde" Frazier, ANDREW MASON can be found finger-painting with his daughter in their Brooklyn bungalow. As DJ MONK ONE, he spins Saturdays on Jay Smooth's "Underground Railroad Show" on WBAI 99.5 FM, NYC.*

# Ultimate Breaks & Beats Complete Discography

SONG	ARTIST	YEAR LABEL	AS LISTED ON <i>UBB</i> /NOTES
SBR-501 (1986)			
* Mary, Mary.....	The Monkees.....	1967... Colgems/RCA	
* Black Grass.....	Wilbur "Bad" Bascomb.....	1972... Paramount	
* Amen, Brother.....	The Winstons.....	1969... Merromedia.....	Opening drum break is pitched down (switches from 45 to 33 rpm); the rest of the song is at normal pitch.
* Daisy Lady.....	7th Wonder.....	1979... Parachute	
* Indiscreet.....	D.C. LaRue.....	1976... Pyramid.....	Only 4:53 of the 12-inch version are used.
* Do the Funky Penguin.....	Rufus Thomas.....	1972... Stax	
SBR-502 (1986)			
* Get Me Back on Time, Engine No. 9.....	Wilson Pickett.....	1970... Atlantic.....	Listed as "Get Me Back on Time."
* Catch a Groove.....	Juice.....	1976... Greedy.....	12-inch version
* Honky Tonk Women.....	The Rolling Stones.....	1967... London	
* You'll Like It Too.....	Funkadelic.....	1981... LAX	
* The Boogie Back.....	Roy Ayers Ubiquity.....	1974... Polydor	
* Chella Ila.....	Orchestra Internationale.....	1974... Fiesta.....	Commonly referred to as "Disco Italiano," the title of the Orchestra Internationale LP.
SBR-503 (1986)			
Got to Be Real.....	Cheryl Lynn.....	1978... Columbia	
Apache.....	Incredible Bongo Band.....	1973... MGM/Pride	
Dance to the Drummer's Beat.....	Herman Kelly & Life.....	1978... Electric Cat	
* Bongo Rock.....	Incredible Bongo Band.....	1973... MGM/Pride	
Give It to You.....	UPP.....	1975... Epic	
* Pussy Footer.....	Jackie Robinson.....	1977... Direction	
SBR-504 (1986)			
* Different Strokes.....	Syl Johnson.....	1967... Twinight	
* I Know You Got Soul.....	Bobby Byrd.....	1971... King	
* I Think I'd Do It.....	Z.Z. Hill.....	1972... Mankind	
Sing Sing.....	Gaz.....	1978... Salsoul	
Breakthrough.....	Isaac Hayes.....	1974... Enterprise	
Funky Music Is the Thing, Pt. 2.....	Dynamic Corvettes.....	1975... Abet.....	Part 2 of the 45 version.
SBR-505 (1986)			
* Shifting Gears.....	Johnny Hammond.....	1975... Milestone	
* Hit or Miss.....	Bo Diddley.....	1974... Chess.....	Listed as "Hit and Miss."
Soul, Soul, Soul.....	The Wild Magnolias.....	1974... Polydor	
* Synthetic Substitution.....	Melvin Bliss.....	1973... Sunburst.....	Listed as "Substitution."
Get Up and Dance.....	Freedom.....	1979... Malaco.....	12-inch version
Heaven and Hell.....	20th Century Steel Band.....	1975... Island	
* Shack Up (part II).....	Banbarra.....	1975... United Artists.....	"Listed as "Shack Up."
SBR-506 (1986)			
* Sing a Simple Song.....	Please.....	1975... Philips	
* Cold Sweat.....	James Brown.....	1967... King	
* Theme from 2001.....	Cecil Holmes Soulful Sounds.....	1973... Buddha.....	Listed as "Black Motion Picture Experience," actually the title of the Cecil Holmes Soulful Sounds LP.
* Son of Scorpio.....	Dennis Coffey.....	1973... Sussex	
* Scratchin'.....	Magic Disco Machine.....	1975... Motown	
Down on the Avenue.....	Fat Larry's Band.....	1976... WMOT	
I Like Funky Music.....	Uncle Louie.....	1979... Marlin.....	12-inch version
SBR-507 (1986)			
Give It Up or Turnit a Loose.....	James Brown.....	1969... King.....	The "live" version from the <i>Sex Machine</i> LP.
Streer-Talk (Madam Rapper) Instrumental.....	The Funky Constellation.....	1979... Frozen Butterfly	
Let's Dance.....	Pleasure.....	1976... Fantasy	
I Can't Stop.....	John Davis.....	1976... Sam.....	12-inch version
* Planetary Citizen.....	Mahavishnu Orchestra/John McLaughlin.....	1976... Milestone	
Good Ole Music.....	Funkadelic.....	1970... Invictus	
You Are What You Are.....	William Ray.....	1977... Magic Touch	
SBR-508 (1986)			
The Mexican.....	Babe Ruth.....	1973... Harvest.....	Re-released on SBR-513
Frisco Disco.....	Eastside Connection.....	1978... Rampart.....	Re-released on SBR-513
Flip.....	Jesse Green.....	1977... Epic.....	12-inch version
Bring It Here.....	Wild Sugar.....	1980... TSOB.....	Re-released on SBR-519
Hand Clapping Song.....	The Meters.....	1970... Josie.....	Re-released on SBR-513
Midnight Theme.....	Manzel.....	1979... Fraternity	
Two Pigs and a Hog.....	Cooley High Soundtrack.....	1975... Motown	
It's My Thing.....	Marva Whitney.....	1969... King.....	Re-released on SBR-518
SBR-509 (1986)			
Easter Parade.....	Ingrid.....	1982	
* UFO.....	ESG.....	1981... 99.....	Originally pressed on a 45 rpm ep, this version is pitched down (to 33 rpm).
Big Beat.....	Billy Squier.....	1980... Capitol	
Cavern.....	Liquid Liquid.....	1983... 99	
* Long Red.....	Mountain.....	1972... Windfall.....	From the Mountain <i>Live</i> LP; the studio version has no drum break.

SBR-510 (1986)			
Funky President.....	James Brown .....	1974 ... Polydor	
* Theme from the Planets .....	Dexter Wansel.....	1976 ... Philadelphia Int'l.....	Track has been pitched up (from 33 to 45 rpm).
Theme from S.W.A.T. ....	Rhythm Heritage.....	1978 ... ABC	
* It's Great To Be Here .....	The Jackson Five.....	1971 ... Motown	
Ain't We Funkin' Now .....	The Brothers Johnson .....	1978 ... A & M .....	12-inch version
* Shangri La.....	La Pregunta.....	1978 ... GNP Crescendo .....	12-inch 33 rpm version (12-inch 45 rpm version has a saxophone solo over the drum break).
* Last Night Changed It All.....	Esther Williams .....	1976 ... Friends & Co.....	12-inch version; 7-inch version is identical but does not have the telephone ring on the intro.
SBR-511 (1986)			
* Impeach the President .....	Honey Drippers .....	1973 ... Alaga	
* God Make Me Funky.....	Headhunters.....	1975 ... Arista .....	Listed as "God Make Me Funny," uses 3:00 of the LP version.
Gotta Get Out of Here .....	Lucy Hawkins.....	1978 ... SAM	
* Action .....	Orange Krush.....	1982 ... Mercury	
Kool Is Back.....	Funk Inc.....	1971 ... Prestige	
* Love's Theme.....	Fausto Papetti .....	1975 ... Durium	
SBR-512 (1986)			
* Granny's Funky Rolls Royce .....	Junie.....	1975 ... Westbound .....	Uses only the vocal intro from the 3:41 original.
* Funky Drummer .....	James Brown .....	1970 ... Polydor	
The Champ.....	Mohawks.....	1968 ... Pama	
* Walk This Way.....	Aerosmith.....	1975 ... Columbia	
Johnny the Fox .....	Thin Lizzy.....	1978 ... Vertigo	
* Ashley's Roachclip.....	Soul Searchers .....	1974 ... Sussex	
* Gangster Boogie.....	Chicago Gangsters.....	1975 ... Gold Mind	
Groove to Get Down .....	T-Connection .....	1977 ... TK	
SBR-513 (1987)			
The Mexican.....	Babe Ruth .....	1973 ... Harvest	
* Keep Your Distance.....	Babe Ruth .....	1976 ... Capitol	
* I Wouldn't Change a Thing .....	Coke Escovedo.....	1976 ... Mercury.....	Listed as "(Runaway) Wouldn't Change a Thing)," the final seconds of Escovedo's "Runaway" has been tacked on as the intro.
Frisco Disco.....	Eastside Connection .....	1978 ... Rampart	
Phenomena Theme .....	In Search Of Orchestra.....	1977 ... AVI	
Hand Clapping Song.....	The Meters .....	1970 ... Josie	
SBR-514 (1987)			
* Sister Sanctified .....	Stanley Turrentine .....	1972 ... CTI	
Willie Chase .....	J.J. Johnson .....	1974 ... MCA	
Uphill Peace of Mind .....	Kid Dynamite.....	1976 ... Cream	
Jam on the Groove.....	Ralph MacDonald .....	1976 ... Marlin	
Knock Him Our Sugar Ray.....	Experience Unlimited.....	1980 ... Vermack	
Blow Your Head.....	Fred Wesley & the J.B.s .....	1974 ... People	
SBR-515 (1987)			
Change (Makes You Want To Hustle) .....	Donald Byrd .....	1975 ... Blue Note	
Brother Green (the Disco King).....	Roy Ayers .....	1975 ... Polydor	
* Mr. Magic.....	Grover Washington Jr.....	1975 ... CTI.....	4:30 of the 9:11 LP version is used.
Main Theme from Star Wars .....	David Matthews.....	1977 ... CTI	
* Jack and Diane.....	John Cougar.....	1982 ... Epic	
* Bouncy Lady.....	Pleasure .....	1975 ... Fantasy	
Rock Music.....	Jefferson Starship.....	1979 ... Grunt	
SBR-516 (1987)			
The Assembly Line .....	Commodores.....	1974 ... Motown	
I Walk on Gilded Splinters.....	Johnny Jenkins.....	1974 ... Capricorn	
* Gimme What You Got .....	Le Pamplemousse.....	1976 ... AVI .....	12-inch "Long" version
"T" Plays It Cool .....	Marvin Gaye.....	1972 ... Tamla	
* Think (About It).....	Lyn Collins .....	1972 ... People	
* Space Dust.....	Galactic Force Band.....	1978 ... Springboard	
* Take the Money and Run .....	Steve Miller Band .....	1976 ... Capitol	
SBR-517 (1987)			
Listen to Me.....	Baby Huey.....	1970 ... Curtom	
* The Lovemaniacs (Sex) .....	Boobie Knight & the Universal Lady.....	1974 ... Dakar	
Yes We Can Can .....	Pointet Sisters.....	1973 ... Blue Thumb	
One Man Band (Plays All Alone).....	Monk Higgins.....	1974 ... Buddha	
N.T.....	Kool & The Gang.....	1971 ... De-Lite .....	The final 3:19 of the 6:29 LP version is used (aka "N.T. Pt. 2" off the 45 version).
* Let a Woman Be a Woman, Let a Man Be a Man .....	Dyke & the Blazers.....	1969 ... Original Sound	
Whiskey and Wine.....	Bram Tchaikovsky .....	1979 ... Radarscope.....	Off the "Girl of My Dreams" single.
* Feel Good [edit].....	Fancy.....	1974 ... Big Tree .....	Listed as "L.L. Bonus Beats," it is actually a loop of Fancy's "Feel Good" beat on 45 rpm.
SBR-518 (1988)			
Let's Have Some Fun .....	Bar-Kays.....	1977 ... Mercury	
Conga.....	Lafayette Afro Rock Band.....	1976 ... Makossa	
Yellow Sunshine.....	Yellow Sunshine.....	1973 ... Philly International	

\* Song has been edited/manipulated

* It's Just Begun.....	Jimmy Castor Bunch .....	1972 ... RCA.....	Louis Flores edits the intro to "Trog- lodyte" ("What we gonna do right here is go back...") onto the begin- ning of "Just Begun."
It's My Thing.....	Marva Whitney.....	1969 ... King	
I Believe in Music.....	Kay Gees.....	1976 ... Gang	
Ride Sally Ride.....	Dennis Coffey.....	1972 ... Sussex	
SBR-519 (1988)			
Rock Creek Park.....	Blackbyrds.....	1975 ... Fantasy	
I Get Lifted.....	K.C. & the Sunshine Band.....	1975 ... TK	
Cookies.....	Brother Soul.....	1975 ... Leo Mini	
Misdemeanor.....	Foster Sylvers.....	1973 ... MGM/Pride	
Bring It Here.....	Wild Sugar.....	1981 ... TSOB	
* Chicken Yellow.....	Miami.....	1974 ... Drive	
Put the Music Where Your Mouth Is.....	Olympic Runners.....	1974 ... London	
* Sport.....	Lightnin' Rod.....	1973 .. United Artists	
SBR-520 (1988)			
* Lonesome Cowboy.....	Roy Ayers.....	1976 ... Polydor	
Chinese Chicken.....	Duke Williams.....	1973 ... Capricorn	
* I'm Gonna Get You.....	Joe Quartermain.....	1974 ... GSF	
* Reach Out of the Darkness.....	Friend & Lover.....	1973 ... Verve Forecast	
House of Rising Funk.....	Chubukos.....	1973 ... Mainstream.....	Issued as a 45 under the Chubukos name, they were called Afrique on LP.
Hook and Sling (Part 1).....	Eddie Bo.....	1969 ... Scram	
* Kissing My Love.....	Bill Withers.....	1973 ... Sussex	
SBR-521 (1989)			
Free Your Mind.....	The Politicians.....	1972 ... Hot Wax	
* Papa Was Too.....	Joe Tex.....	1966 ... Dial	
Hector.....	The Village Callers.....	1968 ... Rampart	
Devil with the Bust.....	Sound Experience.....	1974 ... Philly Groove	
Soul Pride.....	James Brown.....	1969 ... King	
* Cramp Your Style.....	All the People.....	1972 ... Blue Candle	
Shaft in Africa (Addis).....	Johnny Pate.....	1973 ... ABC.....	Listed as "Shaft in Africa."
* I'm Gonna Love You Just a Little Bit More Baby.....	Barry White.....	1973 ... 20th Century	
* Dizzy [edit].....	Tommy Roe.....	1969 ... ABC.....	Listed as "L.L. Bonus Beats #2," it is an edit/loop of the drum break from Tommy Roe's "Dizzy."
SBR-522 (1989)			
Woman.....	Barrabas.....	1972 ... RCA	
Corazon.....	Creative Source.....	1974 ... Sussex	
Save the World.....	Southside Movement.....	1974 ... Wand	
* The Grunt (part 1).....	J.B.s.....	1970 ... People	
* Do the Funky Penguin (part 2).....	Rufus Thomas.....	1972 ... Stax	
* Dynamite (the Bomb).....	Shotgun.....	1977 ... ABC	
* Films.....	Gary Numan.....	1979 ... Atco	
SBR-523 (1989)			
* The Breakdown (part 2).....	Rufus Thomas.....	1971 ... Stax	
Country Cooking.....	Jim Dandy.....	1975 ... Chrysalis	
Joyous.....	Pleasure.....	1977 ... Fantasy	
* Get Out of My Life Woman.....	Solomon Burke.....	1968 ... Atlantic	
You Don't Know How Much I Love You.....	Alphonse Mouzon.....	1974 ... Blue Note	
Oh Honey.....	Delegation.....	1977 ... Shady Brook	
* The Easiest Way To Fall.....	Freda Payne.....	1970 ... Invictus	
SBR-524 (1990)			
Tramp.....	Lowell Fulson.....	1966 ... Kent	
(You) Got What I Need.....	Freddie Scott.....	1968 ... Shout	
You Can't Love Me if You Don't Respect Me.....	Lyn Collins.....	1975 ... Polydor	
Blind Alley.....	The Emotions.....	1972 ... Volt	
Expansions.....	Lonnie Liston Smith.....	1975 ... Flying Dutchman.....	Listed as "Expansions - Part I," this is 3:07 of the 6:04 LP track (part 1 of the 45).
* Hard to Handle.....	Otis Redding.....	1968 ... Atco	
You and Love Are the Same.....	The Grassroots.....	1969 ... Atco	
Sneakin' in the Back.....	Tom Scott.....	1974 ... Ode	
SBR-525 (1991)			
I've Been Watchin' You.....	Southside Movement.....	1973 ... Scepter	
Pot Belly.....	Lou Donaldson.....	1970 ... Blue Note	
Mambo #5.....	Samba Soul.....	1977 ... RCA.....	12-inch version
* Don't Change Your Love.....	Five Stairsteps.....	1968 ... Curtom	
Take Off Your Make Up.....	Lamont Dozier.....	1973 ... ABC	
Love & Affection.....	Ike White.....	1976 ... LA	
* The Payback.....	James Brown.....	1973 ... Polydor	

# AN APPRECIATION

I'd like to return to the classics. Perhaps the most famous classic in all the world of music, maybe the ultimate break of all: "Impeach the President." The original 45 rpm single was issued in 1973 by a small label called Alaga, based in Jamaica, Queens. The band is listed as "The Honey Drippers," with writing credits going to Johnson-Hammond, production by Roy C.

The lyrics of the song refer to the debate over Richard Nixon's impeachment. Whether the lyrics defend or denigrate the impeachment movement is unclear. About one thing, however, there can be no doubt: the popping soul-funk of the Honey Drippers band.

The Honey Drippers were a quartet comprised of a sax, guitar, bass, and drums, fronted by a man who modestly referred to himself as "cool, tall, good lookin'": Roy C. Hammond. Drummer Morris has the first four measures of the tune to himself, and makes the most of it with a beat that is one of the most recognizable and well-used breaks of all-time. As the crisp beat crackles like an electrical storm, we get a little rap from the bandleader. "Ladies and Jennamin," Roy begins, "we got the Honey Drippers in the house tonight. They just got back from Washington D.C. And I think they got something they want to say." Fred, the 6'1" bassist, doesn't disappoint with his contribution—a bouncy groove meshing with a guitar chop that prefigures developments in reggae. Roy breaks down the situation: "Some people say that he's guilty, some people say 'I don't know.'" The titular chorus storms through, leaving Roy to scold an impeachment-happy Honey Dripper with "Shut up, fool!" before he gets back into his rap. Reminding us that "behind the walls of the White House there's a lot of things we don't know about," he continues to drop political science over the effortlessly high-stepping funk.

It's a brilliant, simple, and masterful tune. Not a note out of place, and a groove your granny could get down too, even if she ain't a funky one. A novelty tune, sure, but one that had surprising resonance twenty-six years later, both lyrically and musically.

The flip side is entitled "Roy C's Theme," another likeable groove. This time Roy introduces the band, throwing us a few crumbs regarding the identities of the band members and



York City." The fate of the Honey Drippers band is obscure, (they never released an LP and had only one other 45; we don't even know their full names), but we do know that Roy C. Hammond graduated to the big leagues and had a successful career, mainly on the Mercury label, singing smooth R&B ballads.

This beat, like many of the *Ultimate* breaks, has been used so many times it would be virtually impossible to list them all here. Hip-hop anthem "The Bridge" (Bridge, 1986) was based on a souped-up version of this rhythm, with Marley reworking Roy C's vocal intro ("Ladies and Gentlemen, you got MC Shan and Marley Marl in the house tonight..."). Like many others, Marley also isolated the kick and snare hits and programmed beats using them (see Biz Markie's "Make the Music..."). Another one of my favorites is Sammy B's live dissection of the bass/guitar groove for the Jungle Brothers's "Braggin' & Boastin'" (Warlock, 1987).



EPMD has returned to this motherlode plenty of times; for example, layering the beat with BT Express to make "So Whatcha Sayin'?" (Fresh, 1989). Erick and Parrish also benefited from DJ Scratch doing his thing with Roy's vocal intro on their "Got to Give the People" (Def Jam, 1991). It sounds like Ced Gee used a sampled snare hit from "Impeach" for early BDP tracks as well. Another of the distinctive elements of this drum break is the beautifully clear open hi-hat sound, a tone that's distinguishable in the thickest multi-tracked collages.

"Impeach the President" is such an obscure and sought-after record that it has even been bootlegged as a 7-inch, complete with a replica yellow and red Alaga label. This track also has the dubious distinction of being owned by Tuff City, acquired in owner Aaron Fuchs's buying spree of classic break records. A regretful Roy C. has unsuccessfully attempted to regain his signed-away publishing rights, and Tuff City refuses to comment on his relationship with the label. Through Tuff City's involvement, this obscure 45-only release was reissued as a nationally distributed 12-inch single, complete with "Bonus Beats"—for the crossfader impaired, I suppose. Strangely enough, the first glimpse I ever had of the original Alaga label was back in 1989 on the cover of the 45 Kingdom LP by Mark the 45 King—a record published by...Tuff City. ●



- Andrew Mason