

Music Update

Music trends of 2012 – especially ‘trap and soul’ – remained steady in 2013

The rise of trap music, the return of blue-eyed soul and the new Top 40

808s rumble, thugs get rowdy, and roofs get raised.

Trap music is about to hit critical mass. Without a doubt the most talked-about genre of last year, trap, with its bombastic basslines and skittering percussion, has since ear-wormed its way into every nook and cranny of electronic music—whether it’s at the hands of hip-hop proponents like Lex Luger, or club-bier progenitors like Baauer and TNGHT, even the most mainstream dance tracks were given the trap treatment in 2013.

So what’s it all about?

Trap began as an offshoot of Dirty South-style hip-hop, deriving its name from the crack houses known as “traps” popularized by syrup-sippin’, Cadillac-cruisin’ artists like UGK (often cited as the forefather of the style), and Atlanta veteran T.I. (who titled his 2003 album *Trap Muzik*). Characterized by a hard-line attitude, triple-time hi-hats, loud kicks, snares, brass, and, of course, the familiar boom of the legendary 808 Roland drum machine, trap has more recently become identified with a more intense brand of hip-hop; rappers such as Young Jeezy, Gucci Mane and Waka Flocka Flame have taken drug and thug bravado to almost cartoonish levels – attracting, much like metal and brostep, those drawn to overblown, over-simplified machismo and violence.

Today, as trap skews more heavily towards the mainstream – and a dance floor near you – we thought some introductions might be in order...

Baauer

Two words pretty much summed up trap in 2012: “Harlem Shake.” Baauer’s use of groundbreaking trap beats overlapped with chopped lyrics and bold melody lines became the biggest video meme of the year, indelibly putting trap on the map.

RL Grime

As the remixer formerly known as Clockwork, RL Grime has had his fair share of remix success (Kaskadee, Avicci, Sebastian Ingrosso, and more). But it was his game-changing remix of Kanye West’s “Mercy” – one of the most frequently heard tracks of 2012 – that had even House DJs dropping trap. Why? Because it slaps.

Flosstradamus

Already well established in the EDM scene, Flosstradamus brought big



Lady Antebellum

noise to the newly born EDM/trap scene in 2012. Their remix of Major Lazer’s “Original Don” remains monumental, and their Trap-A-Holics sample, “Damn Son Where’d Ya Find This,” was THE track of the summer festival season.

James Blake

James Blake is not the first artist to marry confessional singer-songwriter sensibility to the more formulaic extravagances of electronica; he is, however, close to unique in his ability to straddle those two musical worlds in a manner simultaneously organic, inventive and not even remotely contrived.

Blake’s second album, *Overgrown*, found the 24-year-old former dubstep DJ/producer pouring his troubled psyche over a blend of dub-heavy beats, R&B and gospel, as best evidenced by the album’s stand-out single, “Retrograde.” Self-described as a song about falling in love, it balances the solemn soul of Bill Withers with periodic bursts of exuberant passion, as Blake captures the precise moment of Cupid’s arrow impact via a visceral whoop of “Suddenly, I’m hit!”

Will Blake proved to pack the commercial punch of fellow blue-eyed soulsters Timberlake or Thicke? Artists such as Brian Eno, RZA and Kanye West, all of whom have worked or are in the works with Blake-related projects certainly think so. For now, Blake continues to walk the line between the sultry bedroom vibe of R&B’s resurgent Quiet Storm movement and the minimal mystique of a British “bedroom” artist on a path all his own.

Lady Antebellum

If there is a more unlikely success story than Lady Antebellum’s, we sure can’t find it. Springboarding off their 1.6 million selling 2008 debut album, which generated three big country hits, including

the No. 1 single *I Run To You*, co-lead singers Charles Kelley and Hillary Scott put their patented low-key formula to work again for last year’s megahit *Need You Now*, the title track of their second album.

Need You Now is a rarity: a country hit that has leapt across genres, borders, oceans, and, nudged along by the pulsing four-four beats of DJ/remixers, penetrated the traditionally country-free sanctum of the nightclub. It spent five weeks at the top of Billboard’s country-singles chart and reached No. 2 on the Hot 100, one spot behind Rihanna’s *Rude Boy*. The song topped Billboard’s Adult Contem-

porary chart for 10 weeks and shattered the record for the most weekly plays in the 14-year history of Adult Top 40/Adult Pop Songs countdown. It was a No. 1 hit in Mexico, New Zealand, Switzerland, and Brazil and cracked the Top 5 in more than 20 countries, including France, Spain, Portugal, Sweden, Finland, Norway, and Israel.

Not bad for a group that strives to be as anonymous as possible. In fact, it’s hard to pin Lady A down at all. They’re not quite country, pop, or rock. They’re neither soft nor hard. They stride the middle ground like they own it—because they do.

Promo Only Top 20

for October, 2013

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|-----|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. | Berzerk | Eminem |
| 2. | Work B***h | Britney Spears |
| 3. | Heart Attack | Enrique Iglesias |
| 4. | Stay The Night | Zedd |
| 5. | Timber | Pitbull f./Ke\$ha |
| 6. | Pompeii | Bastille |
| 7. | Thinking About You | Calvin Harris |
| 8. | TKO | Justin Timberlake |
| 9. | The Fox | Ylvis |
| 10. | Elastic Heart | Sia f./The Weeknd & Diplo |
| 11. | Miss Jackson | Panic! At The Disco |
| 12. | Classic | MKTO |
| 13. | Hands Up | Blackout |
| 14. | Best Day Of My Life | American Authors |
| 15. | We Remain | Christina Aguilera |
| 16. | Animals | Martin Garrix |
| 17. | Love More | Chris Brown |
| 18. | 3000 Miles | Emblem3 |
| 19. | Heartbreaker Machine | Bex |
| 20. | Take Me Home | Cash Cash |

Chart compiled from national airplay charts and Promo Only feedback

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