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Exclusive: Track By Track On 'Om Records – 25 Years' Anniversary Compilation



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Renowned imprint [Om Records](#) is celebrating its anniversary today with the release of *Om Records – 25 Years*, a 26-track compilation of new tracks, unreleased material and Om classics. The label was initially started on San Francisco's Haight Street above Tweekin' Records by Chris Smith and Steve Gray. Smith says the scene at the time featured deep house, techno, acid jazz, downtempo and hip-hop all mixed together, and this inspired him to get involved in the scene and start the label. This varied array of genres not only represents Om Records' beginnings but also the music they still continue to release today.

“We always try to focus on a diverse range of incredible music,” Smith says. “We’ve done a lot of different kinds of music, and I think that’s been one of the main strengths of the label and that gave it a lot of staying power. We didn’t do just one small niche.”



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Gunnar Hissam, who does A&R for the imprint and is also the label manager, adds

that *Om Records – 25 Years* demonstrates the range of music that Om produces.

Hissam adds that compilation, which marks the 700th release by the imprint, was initially curated with 25 songs to represent 25 years of the label, but he added one more song, “Be Free Feat. Carlos Araiza” J Boogie’s Dubtronic Science, to “grow on.”

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To Smith and Hissam, being a label is about curating quality music for specific sounds and moments. *Om Records – 25 Years* does just that as it showcases the incredible history of the imprint with an eclectic and well-curated list of songs. Hissam takes listeners track by track on the compilation.



Kaskadee and Colette. Courtesy of Mark Owens and Rich Kim. MARK OWENS AND RICH KIM

1) Kaskade & Colette – When I'm With You

“What better way to kick the 25th anniversary off than reuniting two classic Om artists on one song. I reached out to Ryan [Raddon, also known as Kaskade] about being involved, and he sent me the instrumental that would become ‘When I’m With You’ and suggested we ask Colette to sing on it. I was excited for that, and so was Colette. The results are, well, just listen to the song and I dare you to not get goosebumps.”

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Body Language. Courtesy of Andrew Hefter. ANDREW HEFTER

2) Body Language – Let's Try

“Brooklyn’s Body Language is one of my all-time favorite artists, let alone Om artists. Their new album *Travel Guide* is coming out later this year, but this song ‘Let’s Try’ really hits the mark in these times. ‘Let’s find a place away from others, we should try, we should try.’”

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3) Chuck Love & Fourfeet – Let's Go Back

“Oh man! Chuck muthaf—kin Love & Fourfeet! If you know Om, you’ll remember the ‘Soul Sympony’ 12” with the Apollo on the cover. So dope. On their new song, ‘Let’s Go Back,’ I love how it starts off with the dirty growly bass line and then seamlessly blends into disco, and of course Fourfeet’s lyrics ‘Let’s go back to when we started....’”

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Mark Farina and Homero Espinosa. Courtesy of Dirk Wyse. DIRK WYSE

4) Mark Farina & Homero Espinosa – The Story

“If there was one person who I think of when I think of Om Records, it’s Mark Farina. It was the original Mushroom Jazz tour in 1996 at the Hyde Park Café in Tampa, Fla. where I met the Omies, and my 20-plus-years of service began. Shout out to Kiri Eschelle and a keg of free beer—that’s really all it took. From the obvious influence of Mushroom Jazz through the many deep house mixes and original songs, the story of Om really starts with Mr. Farina. On ‘The Story,’ he’s joined by his partner in music Homero Espinosa, and delivers a heavyweight groove right in the pocket. ‘The story didn’t end there, so we didn’t stop there....’”

5) People Under The Stairs – Turfbuilders (Demo)

“One of the greatest hip-hop duos of all time, it wouldn’t be the 25th anniversary without them. Technically, they retired with their final album *Sincerely The P*, so it was a long shot to get a new song out of Thes One and Double K. Luckily, I called Thes, and he had a handful of demos he recorded for O.S.T. and Carried Away. This was one of them. ‘I get funky like Deuteronomy.’ I love it.”

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6) Colossus – This Is How We Do

“The *West Oaktown* album continues to stand as an untouchable masterpiece of jazz funk hip-hop. Recorded for that album but unreleased until now, ‘This Is How We Do’ pairs up producer extraordinaire Charlie Tate with MC Loki to create a G Funk influenced summertime jam.”

7) King Kooba – Want Your Love (The Jazzual Suspects Remix)

“It’s the Charlie Tate double feature. Taken from the forthcoming full-length album from King Kooba, featuring the vocal stylings of Flash Gordon, ‘Want Your Love’ is that classic soul groove with the keys, beats [and] horns you come to love from all The Jazzual Suspects production.”

8) J Boogie’s Dubtronic Science – Be Free Feat. Carlos Araiza

“Mr. Justin Boland AKA J Boogie continues to make music for the heads 25 years later. Featured on more Om Lounges than we can count on top of the obvious Mushroom Jazz compilations, let’s not forget all three full-length J Boogie’s Dubtronic Science has released so much damn good music it’s not even fair. ‘Be Free’ featuring the flute talents of Mr. Carlos Araiza is classic stuff.”



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Shiny Objects (AKA Chris Smith). Courtesy of Kresecent Carasso. KRESECENT CARASSO

9) Shiny Objects – Believe In Somebody Feat. Jesse Rennix

“Hot damn, could this album get any better? Along comes Om founder Christopher James Smith, AKA Shiny Objects, and the maestro behind so many funky Om projects, including Afro-Mystik and DJ Fluid. Joined with vocalist Jesse Rennix, Chris brings a heavy smoked out groove for the deep house heads.”



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Rithma. Courtesy of Rithma. RITHMA

10) Rithma – Spin Cycle

“The Wonder Ace returns. Out of hiatus he comes, the wonderkid, the man (now) the myth. God it feels good to hear new Rithma stuff doesn’t it? I’ve got so much love for this man and this song hit me instantly as the one we needed. ‘I remember the old days, before any of this happened....’ Indeed, he does.”

11) Blackbird Blackbird – Vector

“Originally recorded for the *Tangerine Sky* album but never released, Mikey Maramag’s ‘Blackbird Blackbird’ returns with a haunting broken beat number that starts to slow things down to wrap up the first half of the album on the downtempo chill out tip.”

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Reptile Room. Courtesy of Cindy Harter Sims. CINDY HARTER SIMS

12) Reptile Room – Sunlite

“What more can I say about this talented trio from Atlanta? So talented. I love this one because of the optimism, especially in trying times. Boom bap beats, bass and Sami Michelsen’s heavenly voice—they’ve got so many big things ahead for them, so honored to put out their music on Om.”



Rocket Empire. Courtesy of Rachel West. RACHEL WEST.

13) Rocket Empire – On A Bridge

“Wrapping up the first half with a statement piece from Rocket Empire. Portland’s downtempo chill out kings have a new album *Caves* coming this fall, and this is one of the standouts and fits perfectly with the vibe of celebrating 25 big ones. ‘Got a long way to go.’ Yes, we do.”

— *Intermission* — “Stretch, get a drink, take a walk [and] we’ll see you when you get back.”

14) People Under The Stairs – Acid Raindrops

“Oh damn it. Really? Now we take off into the retrospective portion of the album. It’s a mother so get ready. This song means so much to me for many reasons. It was on one of the first albums I worked as Om’s publicist back in 2000. I remember talking with the music editor of *High Times* (who passed on covering this song, can you believe it?). He asked me ‘Do they smoke

weed?’ ha ha ha. So funny now...dude, 20 years later this is a bonafide weed smoking classic.” *Originally released on "O.S.T" in 2002*

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15) Mark Farina & Sean Hayes – Dream Machine

“Rumor has it that this one was recorded in a closet at Mark [Farina]’s house when Sean [Hayes] was his next-door neighbor. I’ll go with that. What a tune. I love how it flows from ‘Acid Raindrops’ right into ‘Dream Machine.’ They really go together and represent an era for me that I love going back to as much as possible.” *Originally released on ‘Air Farina’ in 2003*



Kaskade. Courtesy of Mark Owens. MARK OWENS

16) Kaskade – It’s You, It’s Me

“This came out when Ryan [Raddon, also known as Kaskade] and I were working together every day over at the old Om office in the post tool building at Van Ness and Duboce. What a group we were back then. We

would go out for sandwiches at Ted's Market or burritos in the mission every day, and just laugh and clown out on how crazy it was living in San Francisco with so much great music. This track was a milestone for Om. I remember going to Winter Music Conference before it came out, and every single place I went I heard this track. There were moments like this or like when I walked into a record store with Blue Boy – 'Remember Me' singles, and people just grabbed them from me, put them on the turntable and bought them like hot cakes. This is one of those songs." *Originally released on 'It's You, It's Me' in 2003*

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17) Marques Wyatt – For Those Who Like To Get Down (DEEP Sunday Retro Vibe Mix)

"My lord, what a funky tune this is. Seriously? Who makes music like this? Marques Wyatt Does! The deep maestro delivered a knock out that still crushes to this day." *Originally released on 'For Those Who Like To Get Down' in 2002*



Groove Armada. Courtesy of David Titlow. DAVID TITLOW

18) Groove Armada – Love Lights The Underground

“Taken from the *Groove Armada* EP of the same name, this track really just fits the vibe I was going with here. Just deep funky ass house music. Who can dispute the pedigree of the mighty GA? Nobody! Some of the greatest to ever do it, and genuinely lovely human beings to boot. They’ve always had our backs, and we’ve got so much love for Tom [Findlay] and Andy [Cato].” **BETA**

Originally released on ‘Love Lights The Underground’ in 2014



Colette. Courtesy of Tom Casey. TOM CASEY

19) Colette – Feelin’ Hypnotized (Kaskade Mix)

“Chicago’s Super Jane was the first all-female DJ collective in America. Think about that for a minute. That’s just badass! Colette’s first album, *Hypnotized*, joined a long list of female artists on the label—including Terra Deva, Eighty Mile Beach and Soulstice Samantha James—and it’s also from an era when Colette and Kaskade did multiple national tours together. So it made sense that the two of them would re-join together for the second half of the album.” *Originally released on ‘Hypnotized’ in 2005*

20) Body Language - Social Studies (Plastic Plates Remix)

“Originally released on limited edition 10” vinyl, now highly collectible. Got one? What an amazing remix. If this one doesn’t get you up and dancing, you might want to check your temperature. So fun, and definitely represents the new wave of artists in the 2010 out of the Myspace era. That’s where we found them actually. Thanks, Tom.” *Originally released on ‘Social Studies’ in 2011*

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TWINKIDS. Courtesy of Iván Darío. IVÁN DARÍO

21) TWINKIDS – Overdressed

“Two kids from Japan and Florida put together a masterpiece with ‘Overdressed.’ This was the first song I heard from TWINKIDS, and I wanted to sign them instantly. You know those songs that give you goosebumps? This is one of them. Expect big things from these two in the years to come.” *Originally released on ‘Boys Love’ in 2017*

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J Boogie's Dubtronic Science. Courtesy of Jeff Straw. JEFF STRAW

22) J Boogie’s Dubtronic Science & People Under The Stairs – Movin’ To My Beat

“Like chocolate and peanut butter, it just doesn’t get any better than People Under The Stairs and J Boogie on a track together. ‘Om put the label on it, that’s all you need to know.’ Ha ha! Yeah, Double!” *Originally released on ‘J Boogie’s Dubtronic Science’ in 2003*

23) MING & FS – Hell’s Kitchen

“When this came out there were no badder mufu—as on the planet than MING & FS. If you ever caught them do their four turntables show, then you are one of the lucky ones. I cannot emphasize it enough how badass their

show was. This was the era of junglist hip-hop and turntablism smashing into each other and their 'junkyard' style was 100% unique and completely changed the game. So many modern day breaks and dubstep/jungle artists owe so much to these cats.” *Originally released on 'Hell's Kitchen' in 1999*

24) Colossus – Thrupenny Bits (The Jazzual Suspects Remix)

“An unreleased new remix of the West Oaktown collab with Roots Manuva AKA Hylton Smythe. The Jazzuals make their second appearance for a Charlie Tate double whammy. Imagine that! Here's a hint: this one's quite funky.” *Original version released on 'West Oaktown' in 2005*

25) King Kooba – Fooling Myself (Easy Access Orchestra)

“Originally released on *Om Lounge 4*. Remember that one? It's a good one, pick it up if you don't have it. One hundred percent vibe throughout and still sounds fresh so many moons later.” *Originally released on 'Nufoundfunk' in 2000*

26) Soulstice – Fall Into You – 2001

“The closer. Wrapping up 25 years. So many songs in the catalog, what to close with? It was always going to be Soulstice. They were the first artist on Om where we all just said, 'yes, they're it.' It took quite a wild ride for this album to finally come out, years in the making literally, but it was so worth the wait. I remember Gabriel Rene and Andy Caldwell playing a demo of their stuff on a dat player in Miami in 1996. Holy sh-t, they were dope.” *Originally released on 'Illusion' in 2001*

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