Philadelphia International: The Re-Edits

Finally we got there!

This labour of love originally commenced sometime around February 2010 and has subsequently gone through numerous different drafts and licensing hassles until we eventually managed to complete the package you’re holding right now.

Naturally I could wax lyrical about the huge legacy that Kenneth Gamble and Leon Huff created with their Philadelphia International roster but I’ll leave the vast amount of platitudes for the forthcoming 40th anniversary Tom Moulton Philadelphia International remixes 3CD package and the Ralph Tee compiled Philadelphia International 10CD box set which will similarly be celebrating the last 40 years of one of the most loved black music labels of all time.

The idea behind ‘Philadelphia International: The Re-Edits’ was really to examine the effect that the label has had upon subsequent generations of fans throughout the last 40 years. The sheer volume of credible new re-edits that have emerged throughout the last 10 years or so from the PIR stable is truly astonishing and underlines the enduring nature and international appeal of the label’s repertoire. Thus we have a truly international flavour to the project with key re-edits from New York, Chicago, San Francisco, West Palm, Miami, Brooklyn and Philadelphia in the USA, Bristol, Grove, Sunderland and Manchester in the UK, Dublin in Ireland, Glasgow In Scotland, Stuttgart in Germany, Brescia in Italy and Toronto in Canada to name a few. In fact, had we not stumbled into the inevitable licensing snafus, then at least two other continents would have been included so commiserations to Julien Love from Australia and Onur Engin from Turkey. Hopefully they’ll be cleared for Volume 2!

In the meantime we have 2 CD’s packed to the brim with some of the most tasteful and adventurous Philadelphia International re-edits that are currently circulating within the DJ community. My heartfelt thanks go out to all who have contributed to this project including the ones that would have made the cut but couldn’t for one reason or another.

One reason why there has never been a package like this before is because it’s extremely difficult to improve upon perfection anyway plus the quality control standards at Philadelphia International have always been top level and generally out of reach in order to preserve the integrity of the catalogue. However, with the advent of re-edit culture and the increasing sophistication of affordable new technology, suddenly there was no longer the need to physically access the original master tapes – a costly and expensive process at the best of times. Now a re-editor could work from the comfort of his laptop and craft a re-edit at his or her leisure. This meant that rather than working in an expensive studio and compressing all your ideas into several hours or even several days, now re-edits can be done to each re-editors individual time-scales, whether they be over a couple of weeks or even a couple of years in some cases. The result has been that now a finished re-edit can finally be presented once someone has lived with it and tweaked it for weeks, months or even years.

So, essentially, the disadvantages in not having access to the original multi-track tapes (and being able to isolate each track separately) can often be outweighed by the sheer time you can spend in getting something absolutely right without the time constraints of using an expensive studio.

So in the case of ‘Philadelphia International: The Re-Edits’ we were able to submit 2 full CD’s worth of re-edits which had been fully completed and honed to perfection by everyone. In many cases the structures of the songs had been extended quite radically, the breaks toughened up, the beats altered and, in one case, a stone-killer ballad was transformed into a House anthem.

My sincere thanks go out to Kenneth Gamble and Leon Huff, not only for their stunning musical legacy, but also for their vision in understanding that today’s audiences often require an additional slant on such evergreen classics. Thank you gentlemen.

Additional thanks to PIR’s trouble-shooter supreme Phil Astbury who dealt with all the curveballs that were thrown in his direction with the necessary aplomb. Thanks for getting us through numerous hurdles Phil.

Thanks are also due to my dear colleague, Jay Negron, who has also worked on this project pretty much since inception and, like Phil, has had to deal with a whole wealth of unforeseen problems. We got there in the end dude!

Finally thanks to all the re-editors on this album, who re-edited these tracks in their own time and for no obvious reward at the time when they originally embarked on each tune. Their driving force was passion and we hope that comes across on this project.

Ian Dewhirst – October 2011