

E-Z Rollers

Rolling out the funk

<http://www.myspace.com/EZrollers>

In the world of drum and bass, the E-Z Rollers have come to be known for crafting smooth-sounding, infectious-groovy beats with a healthy dose of jazzy funk thrown in for good measure.

But the E-Z Rollers sound as it is now has been built upon years of hard work and studio collaboration with each other and other artists. And nowhere is this hard work more evident than on the group's most recent album, "Conductor."

In the early days, the group consisted of the duo of Jay Hurren and Alex Ban. They released their first 12" together as the E-Z Rollers, Rolled into One b/w Believe, on the legendary Moving Shadow record label in 1994. (Vocalist Kelly Richards joined the group a little later after meeting the duo at one of their gigs.)

Prior to this, the two had known each other and even dabbled in making music, but had not released anything. "I'd known Jay from school," Alex explains. "We were part of a crew that went to all the underground parties and the soul weekenders."

Both had also released singles with other musical projects prior to forming the E-Z Rollers. "I started making music with Danny Flytronix as Hyper-On Experience and Jay was making tunes with Richie as JMJ and Richie," Alex says. "It was just natural for me and Jay to make tunes—we had done this before in 1991."

Building on their initial success, the E-Z Rollers continued to grow as artists and released their first artist album on Moving Shadow in 1996. It was called "Dimensions of Sound," and would be the first of three albums for Moving Shadow, the other two being "Weekend World" and "Titles of the Unexpected."

"When Rob heard our first single as E-Z Rollers he straight-away asked for an album!" says Alex. "I think at that time Moving Shadow was looking for something different and always investing in new things."

After amassing an impressive catalogue of tunes on Moving Shadow, the

E-Z Rollers started their own label, Intercom Recordings, in 1998. “The idea behind Intercom was to take new talent and produce it,” Alex explains.

And although he says they enjoy the hands-on aspect of running a label and being involved in a project from start to finish, it can take up valuable time that might otherwise be spent in the studio making tunes.

But that doesn't seem to stop them. Over the past few years the E-Z Rollers have enjoyed success both in the dnb world and beyond. Their song Walk this Land made it into the UK Top-20 charts and was also featured in Guy Ritchie's hit movie Lock Stock and Two Smoking Barrels. In addition, they have successfully licensed music to TV, advertisements and video games.

Although some dnb fans might object to the music being used in ads, Alex explains the group has not experienced any backlash because of it. But he also contents that there are limits for it and that he “won't let [the EZ Rollers'] name or music be associated with cigarette advertising.”

In spite of these previous successes, the group continues to toil in the studio and bring new music to the ears of fans around the world. The group's recently-released fourth album, “Conductor,” is a showcase of these efforts.

In comparison to the group's previous albums, Alex says that in his mind Conductor has better direction behind it. “When we did ‘Titles’ there were ideas that with hindsight might not have been fully achieved,” he explains. “Conductor started with a game plan, me and Jay discussed our plans for it all the way through the project. At all times we were aware of what the other wanted from the album.”

As far as what Conductor sounds like (besides good!), it is distinctly E-Z Rollers.

“E-Z Rollers have always had a ‘sound’ and I think we've continued to develop this idea through the use of musicians and abstract concepts,” Alex says. “Most Drum and Bass nowadays is almost boiled down to its constituent grime! That's not to say there is anything wrong with that, but we offer something different.”

And this will be evident if you are fortunate enough to catch the group at one of their tour dates in support of the album. In addition to the standard DJ performances the group will be doing live PAs.

“The live thing is so immediate, so inspiring and so fresh. It would always be my preference to perform live rather than DJ and the crowds really appreciate it,” Alex explains. “I think there will be more and more call for this sort of thing in the future, and I'm just glad to be a part of it!”
Check out <http://www.myspace.com/EZrollers> for more information.
Conductor is available now at all the usual locations and on iTunes.