

# FUNKARMA



Vell Vagranz  
(2008 / n5MD)

"Vell Vagranz" is Don and Roel Funcken's first full CD of original material under the Funckarma alias since 2006's "Bion Glent" (Sublight). This new album shows Funckarma at their most diverse by folding in other electronic music sub-genres into their already potent mix. Ambient, Drum and Bass, Dubstep, Hip Hop, Downtempo, and even some Post-Industrial motifs are all drawn into the Funckarma vortex to be reformed into the alien sonic shroud that embodies their trademark zig-zag suture stitched beats, frenetic basswork and lush emotional gauze. Plus with some help from Seaming, Kettle, Spyweirdos, Landau, and phinx find Funckarma at their most synergistic since 2001's "Solid State" (Dub). "Vell Vagranz" is proof that Funckarma are one of those rare and seasoned artists who can make any style sound like their own unique and personal creation even when trying something out of their creative character.



Bion Glent  
(2006 / Sublight)

The many faces of Don and Roel Funcken's fraternity of funk began with just one in 1999, with the release of Funckarma's debut EP titled, simply, "Part 1". Since then, this dutch duo (hailing from the home of the world's International Court of Justice, The Hague) has donned more than a dozen aliases, collaborated with everyone from VJs to MCs, and remixed some of the biggest names in post-techno, all while carving out a unique niche for their original nom de vinyle within the crowded world of hyper-kinetic, sparsely textured, and minor-melodied experimental IDM.



Refurbished One  
(2005 / n5MD)  
+  
Refurbished Two  
(2007 / n5MD)

But we're getting ahead of ourselves. Before the boys started dropping discs on Rotterdam's Djak-Up-Bitch (a not-so-subtle stab at the city's decidedly more mainstream dance label, Djax-Up-Beats), both had been dubbing, splicing and mixing since the age of 12 (with Roel taking home a trophy as the youngest winner of the DMC at 13), earning degrees in visual/spatial sound interactions (Roel in "sonology" and Don in broadcasting), and honing their skills in the Dutch club scene for over a decade. Spinning everything from old school hip hop to early drum 'n bass, the brothers' dancefloor dealings would certainly leave their mark, but it was in the chill room where they first heard the likes of Autechre, FSOL, and The Orb, whose avant-garde "armchair techno" would have a profound effect on the evolution of the Funcken sound.



Elaztiq Bourbon 5  
(2006 / Sending Orbs)

While the frenetic beat collages and menacingly playful melodies of "Part 1" owe an obvious debt to Autechre and Funkstörung (who, incidentally, contributed a remix to this EP), the brothers' precisely chaotic cuts and hauntingly melancholy tone in tracks like "Biohazard" and "Kretna", begin to hint at the emergence of a new and distinct direction. Parts 2 & 3 would follow shortly after, along with a selective compilation, entitled "Parts", late the following year. 2000 also saw the birth of the Funcken's first alter ego, Quench, with the release of "A Journey Into the Electronix", displaying an even grittier, less compromising sound and, along with "Part 3", hints of the dub hop vibe that would come to dominate their later releases.



Solid State  
(2001 / Dub)

In 2001, the brothers kicked their already hectic production schedule into high gear, releasing their first full-length of all new material, "Solid State", and birthing three more dissociative personalities into the ether: Cenik (experimental/dark ambient), Cane (a leftfield acid-tech bid for the dancefloor), and Tronikgatan (electro-tech for the early oughts).



Parts  
(2000 / Dub)

Refusing to slow down, the brothers would go on to release five EPs between 2002 and 2005: "Bourbon Sounds", "Elaztiq", "DemSongzByWe", "Smizm", and "Part 5". While each disc embodied its own consistent character, these releases represented a desire to reign in and cement the Funckarma project's signature aesthetic (i.e. intricately disjointed beats accompanied by lush, and often melancholy, ambient swells), while relegating their "style exploration" to other monikers (e.g., the minimal, and surprisingly danceable, Mystery Artist handle, established in 2005).

During this stretch the brothers would also release their first remix compilation, "Refurbished One", featuring Speedy J, Funkstörung, Mr. Projectile, and Plaid among others, deliver their first full length in five years (2006's "Bion Glent" on Sublight) and stumble on the beginning of their collaborative career while soliciting remix tracks from NY MCs Nongenetic, Breaff, and Dream. The resulting group was dubbed Shadow Huntaz and, to date, has produced two full lengths on Manchester's Skam Records (2003's "Corrupt Data" and 2005's "Valley Of The Shadow") and three instrumental comps credited to the Funckens.

Once outside the box, it seems the Funckens had a little trouble going back. Within three years, they'd formed alliances across the artistic map, expanding their creative network to include Scone with fellow Dutch producer Reimer Eising (aka Kettel), Legiac with film composer Cor Bolten, Automotive, featuring Funcken electronics with live jazz accompaniment, and Dif:use, a live, multimedia gesamtkunstwerk with Bolten, Eising, Alden Tyrell and VJ Michel de Klein.

During the past couple of years, this synergetic trend has only increased, with follow-ups from Dif:use, a solo record for SH's Nongenetic, and a "Refurbished" sequel, as well as a new willingness to open up the Funckarma identity to outside collaboration and sonic experimentation. The punishing sub-bass and echo-chamber nightmares of "Dubstoned EP1" (Highpoint Lowlife) represent the brother's unique take on (and almost compulsory answer to) the current dubstep craze, while "Vell Vagranz" (n5MD), Funckarma's third full length and most stylistically diverse record to date (including not one, but three (!) tracks with prominent vocals), boasts contributions from Seaming, Kettle, Spyweirdos, Landau and phinx.

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