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NITE: Bastinado takes on electronic music's future

Duo only ones in America using new instrument

By Michael Witthaus

"WE BELIEVE PERFORMING INVOLVES A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF RISK FROM A MUSICAL AND TECHNOLOGY STANDPOINT."

**Bastinado and Shala Groove:
a yoga dance experience**

When: Saturday, July 14, at 8 p.m.
Where: Portsmouth Yoga Shala, 909 Islington St., Portsmouth
Tickets: \$30 in advance, \$35 at the door
More info: www.bastinadomusic.com and www.shalagroove.com

Electronic dance music duo Bastinado is a blend of the beautiful ancient and the ineffable future. As Joseph Carringer coaxes haunting tones from an aboriginal didgeridoo, Josh Harris creates sonic worlds through the manipulation of translucent objects on a glowing glass-surfaced device called a Reactable.

It's truly unique: There are fewer than 50 of them worldwide, and Bastinado is the only American group performing with a Reactable. But what is it exactly? "It's a circular three-dimensional light table that allows you to live compose electronic or regular music on the fly," Carringer says. "It's a musical erector set."

What sets the Reactable apart from other EDM toolkits, such as Ableton Live and

Reason, is that it's truly a musical instrument. Everything one expects from live performance — improvisation, finesse and occasionally even failure — is on display.

That's a central part of what first drew them to the Reactable, says Harris: "We believe performing involves a certain amount of risk from a musical and technology standpoint."

Carringer laughs in agreement. "That's part of the rush that you get with any instrument you're playing, whether it's the Reactable, didgeridoo, guitar or saxophone," he says. "You're out there as a performer. That's where you find the pocket and feel the groove."

Such an impulse is uncommon for the genre. Recently, superstar DJ Deadmau5 riled a lot of fans by admitting that most of his stage show was assembled ahead of time and stored on a laptop. "I can tweak *live* and whatnot," he wrote in a blog post titled *we all hit play*, "but [that] doesn't give me a lot of 'lookit me I'm Jimi Hendrix check out this solo' stuff."

Not so for Bastinado. "People really want to see performances," says Carringer. "The Reactable is essentially the grand piano of electronic music that *requires* playing and arranging in real time."

"I can understand where people will want to get on stage and make sure the show is 100 percent reliable all the time, but I didn't grow up thinking that way," Harris adds. "We're always trying to walk that line where we're a band that leans toward doing what a DJ does."

Bastinado — in Latin, the name means "beat with a stick" — began performing more than four years ago. Early on, Harris used a laptop; Carringer played an array of didgeridoos, a few fed through an effects processor. But the results were

never fully satisfying.

In January 2011, a DJ friend told Carringer about the Reactable and emailed him a link to a video of the device. He thought it was a cruel joke and began writing an angry reply. But after doing research, he ended up writing a different email — to Harris, urging him to adopt the Reactable in Bastinado's act.

Carringer acts as a bridge between the engineering expertise that built the Reactable and the artistic instincts bringing its potential to full flower. Early on, the experienced Web developer began tweaking code, to the chagrin of the Spanish development team. "I discovered things that they didn't know it could do," he says. He learned it was possible to access an unlimited number of songs and mix continuously on the fly. "The interesting thing about it is we had a hunch it worked that way, but didn't know for sure," Harris says. "We hedged our bets."

Harris' musical touch really makes the Reactable sing, says Carringer. "When he gave me the first tracks to load into this..." He goes silent for a moment, then continues. "I can do anything with this, but it's amazing to watch someone who understands composition at a level beyond where I'm at."

The duo has appeared in listening rooms like Stone Church in Newmarket, as well as museums and nightclubs. They have a gig July 27 in New York at Brooklyn's Galapagos Art Space. Carringer is looking for a way to teach the Reactable in local schools.

The latest venture finds Bastinado providing the musical mood for a series of yoga classes beginning July 14 at Yoga Shala. "EDM in yoga is a West Coast and New York City thing," Carringer says. "I've been waiting for the right moment to bring it to the seacoast."



MUSIC & NIGHTLIFE

- **Blue Ocean Music Hall**
4 Oceanfront North, Salisbury Beach, Mass., 978-462-5888, www.blueoceanhall.com
- **Cochecho Arts Festival**
Rotary Arts Pavillion, Henry Law Park, Dover, 603-742-2218, www.dovernh.org
- **Firehouse Center for the Arts**
Market Square, Newburyport, Mass., 978-46-7336, www.firehouse.org
- **Hampton Beach Casino Ballroom**

- 169 Ocean Blvd., Hampton, 603-929-4100, www.casinoballroom.com
- **Jonathan's Ogunquit**
92 Bourne Lane, Ogunquit, Maine, 207-646-4777, www.jonathansrestaurant.com
- **Kelley's Row**
421 Central Ave., Dover, NH, 603-750-7081, www.kelleysrow.com
- **Maudslay Arts Center**
95 Curzon Mill Road, Newburyport, Mass., 978-499-0050, www.maudslayartscenter.org

- **Meadowbrook U.S. Cellular Pavilion**
72 Meadowbrook Lane, Gilford, 603-293-4700, www.meadowbrook.net
- **The Music Hall**
28 Chestnut St., Portsmouth, 603-436-2400, themusicall.org
- **Prescott Park Arts Festival**
105 Marcy St., Portsmouth, 603-436-2848, prescottpark.org
- **Sheraton Harborside**
250 Market St., Portsmouth, NH 603-431-2300, www.sheraton-portsmouth.com

- **The Stone Church**
5 Granite St., Newmarket, 603-292-3546

CONCERTS

- **Dave Mason** Thurs., July 12, at 8 p.m., Blue Ocean
- **3rd Annual Buffett Beach Blast** Fri., July 13, at 8 p.m. (tailgate at 4 p.m.), Blue Ocean
- **The Wailers** Fri., July 13, at 8 p.m., Casino Ballroom
- **The Sweetback Sisters** Fri., July 13, at 7 & 9 p.m., Music Hall Loft

- **Donavon Frankenreiter** Sat., July 14, at 8 p.m., Blue Ocean
- **Grace Kelly Jazz** Sat., July 14, at 7 p.m., Maudslay
- **Vaud & The Villains** Sat., July 14, at 8 p.m., Music Hall
- **Bush** Sun., July 15, at 8 p.m., Casino Ballroom
- **Walker Creek Band** Sun., July 15, at 2 p.m., Maudslay
- **Mickey Hart Band** Wed., July 18, at 8 p.m., Blue Ocean
- **Santana** Wed., July 18, at 8:30 p.m., Meadowbrook
- **Peter Dinklage** Wed., July 18, at 7 p.m., Prescott Park

- **The Fab Four: The Ultimate Beatles Tribute** Thurs., July 19, at 8 p.m., Casino Ballroom
- **The Stompers** Fri., July 20, at 8 p.m., Blue Ocean
- **Suzy Bogguss** Fri., July 20, at 8 p.m., Jonathan's
- **The Don Campbell Band** Sat., July 21, at 7 p.m., Maudslay
- **KC & The Sunshine Band** Sun., July 22, at 8 p.m., Casino Ballroom
- **'60s Invasion** Sun., July 22, at 2 p.m., Maudslay

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