



SONIC CINEMA

Laurent Garnier: Off the Record

+ Q&A with Laurent Garnier

Whenever a new musical trend emerges, it rubs up against misunderstanding and disdain from institutions and the 'mainstream' of the time. Blues, Jazz, Folk, Rock, Reggae, Soul, Funk, Punk, Disco, Hip-Hop, Electro... All of these currents had an extremely difficult birth. And yet they inform the richness of the musical landscape. Never in the history of humanity has music been as diverse. 'Overabundance of mediocrity' some will say, 'Ultra creative golden age' say others. 'All at once' will say musicologists in a few years!

Music tells the stories of our society, our common history. Blues was born in the cotton fields and Folk on the shoulders of a poetic and literary boom. Rock has allowed a generation that had only known war to feel alive again. Punk sounded out and allowed the youth of the day to call 'bullshit' on what came before.

So, what does Techno reveal about ourselves and the end of the 20th century? What will really stay in the 90s in the imagined collective? How will we speak of this period in one hundred years? One of the ways to start telling this story is, well, at the beginning. To dig up the roots. We look to the pioneers, dedicating their lives to music. We look to Laurent Garnier!

We follow Laurent behind the scenes of his 2018/2019 tour. From performing in front of 15,000 people at Sonar Festival in Barcelona to the techno mecca Bassiani in Georgia via crowded clubs in Tokyo! We share the euphoria of a DJ's life, the adrenaline of backstage and delve into the doubts and internal questions of an accomplished artist.

We flashback to the late 80s, Techno is in emergence. We travel back to the legendary dancefloor of the Hacienda in Manchester and the backstreets of Detroit alleyways. This behind-the-scenes immersion, with a guide such as Laurent gives us the opportunity to tell the true history of what was the last great musical revolution of the 20th century – embellished with exclusive and personal archive footage and interviews from those who know him best.

We get testimonies from his fellow DJ's and everyone in-between including Carl Cox, Jef Mills, Kerri Chandler, Manu le Malin, Mr. Oizo, Pedro Winter, Derrick May, Lenny Dee, former Minister of Culture Jack Lang, music producers and journalists. Archive footage, cinematic fiction, interviews and documentary intertwine to paint the picture of a fantastical time.

Now that electro has become the mainstream, we also experience recent important moments for Laurent Garnier and the techno culture, from his concert at the very renowned Salle Pleyel to his participation at the Electro exhibition at Philharmonie de Paris. Accompanied by testimonials from both old and new generation artists, musicologists and historians, we will ask the question that Laurent Garnier never stops asking himself, even though no one has yet been able to answer: Where, what and when will the next musical revolution be?

Laurent Garnier opens the doors into a rare universe. One which is very far from the clichés of the superstar DJ, where the artistic integrity and human relations are put before anything else. When not jet setting to play behind turntables around the world, we meet his family and friends, living in a small village of Luberon in France. In 25 years, he has not changed a woman, a partner or a manager. An exceptional case for the music industry. This loyalty feeds into his fans, who have followed his career for 30 years and continue to grow in number.

Laurent Garnier began his career as footman for the French ambassador in London, which is how in 1987 he found the clubs, the first raves and the record stores in England. Inspired, he went on to discover the sounds coming from the black gay clubs of Detroit and Chicago. This began his love affair with Techno and House music! He discovered that one particular song can change a life. For him it was ‘Love Can’t Turn Around’ by Farley ‘Jackmaster’ Funk. It was a true electroshock!

Music was his drug of choice, not the one we swallow but the one that swallows us whole. His passion was an addiction that under the name DJ Pedro, led him to become the resident DJ at Hacienda, the mythical club of Manchester founded by Tony Wilson, who before that, birthed the golden age of New Wave with groups like New Order.

But just as the Techno phenomenon exploded, so too did Laurents life. He had to perform his military service at the precise moment it all kicked off musically across the Channel. So he imported a music that nobody believed in to France organizing Wake Up parties at the Rex Club, founding the Fcommunication label and launching artists such as St Germain and Mr. Oizo. Long before the global success of Daft Punk and what will later be called the French Touch (an expression we owe to Eric Morand, co-founder with Garnier at Fcom), he sows the first seeds of French electro.

Twelve years after his debut, in 1998, he received the first Victoire de la Musique for a Dance Music Album. Institutions can hardly understand the magnitude of the phenomenon. It’s not just free party, drugs and rebellion... it’s all about music. A tidal wave was coming and Laurent was riding the crest of the wave.

Fast forward to 2017 and 30 years after its debut, the phenomenon is global, electronic music is everywhere. Cinema, fashion, advertising and even other musical styles such as Hip-Hop or Rock appropriate it. As with every other phenomenon that becomes global, the business takes back its rights on the creation. Electro is mainstream, money is being made, radios make it a product, the DJ becomes a ‘superstar’ and many of these are careers that last just 2 minutes and 30 seconds.

But Laurent Garnier, without having made any artistic compromise is still there! From Tokyo to Los Angeles, he continues to be invited to the greatest clubs in the world. Respected equally by both the young generations and the underground artists as well as by the institutions and the press. He remains an ambassador at the forefront of electronic music.

A true music enthusiast, well beyond techno, (he owns more than 55 000 vinyls and spends at least three hours a day listening to new sounds) he continues his work as a pioneer through his radio broadcasts and his involvement in the Yeah Festival.

Constantly evolving as an artist he has woven electro into the classical music of Salle Pleyel and composed a ballet for Preljocaj in collaboration with the dancers of the Bolshoi. He collaborates with many artists coming from universes as diverse as Abd Al Malik or The Liminanas.

In 2017, he celebrated his 30th career birthday at the Rex Club and the same month received the ‘Knight of the Legion of Honor’ from Jack Lang.

Production notes

LAURENT GARNIER: OFF THE RECORD

Director: Gabin Rivoire
Executive Producer: Sebastien Raybaud
Producer: Julien Loeffler
Co-Producers: Stephane Rigotti, Christian Loiseau, Alexandrine Duez
Associate Producers: Thierry Detaille, Fabrice Smadja, James Kermack, Emilie Robert
Location Manager: Benjamin Wautier
Directors of Photography: Gabin Rivoire, David Job
B Camera Operators: Valentin Feraud, Antoine Feraud, Fabien Pouillault
Aerial Shots: Bob Foresta, Christophe Appel, Jeremie Gabriel
Editor: Antoine Gazaniol
Assistant Editors: Valentin Feraud, Antoine Feraud, Laurie Di Marino, Marin Dessalle
Post Production: Serge Nagels, Celine Grudniewski, Young Kyun-Gans
Color Grading: Mathieu Cauville
Archive Digitisation: Mathieu Brandao, Sonia Darbois, Arthur Galiano, Aude Jarry
Motion Design: Victor Rahman
Make-up: Mathieu De Mayer
Original Music: Laurent Garnier
Music Supervision: Laurent Garnier
Sound: David Job, Bob Foresta, Gabin Rivoire, Olivier Ronval
Sound Editing: Guillaume Marique
Sound Mixing: Mathieu Cox
Translation: Frédéric Génicot, Elliot Rivoire

With

Laurent Garnier
Kerri Chandler
Derrick May
DJPierre
Richie Hawtin
Seth Troxler
Didier Varrod
Jean Yves Leloup
Abd Al Malik
Carl Cox
Jeff Mills
The Black Madonna
Peggy Gou

Miss Kittin
Matthieu Chedid
Georgia Taglietti
Eric Morand
Pedro Winter
Jacques S3A
Rosh
Dani Jacobs
Paul Cons
Dave Haslam
Lenny Dee
Nina Kraviz
Helena Hauff
Charlotte De Witte
DJ Deep
Peter Decuypere
Christian Paulet
Chez Damier
Ellen Alien
Mad Mike
Kenny Larkin
Kevin Saunderson
Carl Craig
Modeselektor
Stefen Charles
Franck De Wulf
Manu Le Malin
Marcel Dettmann
Jack Lang
Scan X
Vincent Carry
Quentin Dupieux
Sven Vath
Paul Van Dyk
Thomas Roussel
Arnaud Contreras

UK-France 2021
93 mins

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