

- [Blog](#)
- [About us](#)
- [Contact us](#)
- [RSS](#)



Search

Join our mailing list

[music](#) | [features](#) | [feature](#)

Flashcore

Earth, Atomizer, Let's Go!

Jon Weinel submerges himself in the experimental hardcore of La Peste and the Hangars Liquides imprint.

By Jon Weinel

Freshly Spannered on

21 May 2007



Left bored and angry from the confiscation of his stroboscopic car headlights by local authorities, Jon Weinel dons his magick-techno space-cape and jumps inside the speaker box for some nano-hardcore divination. After a period of time immeasurable by mans' law Mr Weinel emerges from the haze naked, armed with the knowledge to commune with dogs by uttering sine wave bass frequencies beneath a fat-face peyote moon. He talks of the mystical secrets imparted to him by the guru-like La Peste, of a far out form of psychedelic avant-garde hardcore techno known as FLASHCORE.

Introduction:

'Flashcore' is a term coined by Laurent Mialon otherwise known as [La Peste](#) (The Plague). Flashcore describes an avant-garde form of electronic music which exists aesthetically somewhere between speedcore techno, industrial noise and electroacoustic soundscapes. Laurent's record label [Hangars Liquides](#), has been releasing music commercially since 1998, and is the main stable behind what most people know as flashcore. Other significant artists include [Undacova/Atomhead](#), [Neurocore](#), [Sedarka](#) and [Kaebin Yield](#).

The term is a loose one; the artists creating these kinds of sounds all have different ideas about what the music is, and many would not use the term flashcore to describe what they do at all. An unflinching approach of experimentation and high level of technicality unites this hardcore techno-rooted music and makes it exciting to listen to. Unlike the majority of electronic dance music, there is no tangible set of rules regarding

tempo or rhythmic structure; in fact the music is generally considered undanceable. Flashcore's main appeal comes from its often blistering and psychedelic sonic assault on the senses, achieved by virtue of accelerated, decomposed and disintegrated hardcore techno forms and industrial noise, channelled using an acousmatic approach inspired by artists such as [Xenakis](#). The Hangars Liquides website until recently (it is currently being refreshed) featured a short piece of writing by Laurent, in which he attempts to explain what he is trying to achieve with flashcore music:

[Audio Clip 1](#)

**La Peste. *Alors le doute s'immiscea*, 2005
Untitled EP. Hangars Liquides, 12", HL026**

“What we call flashcore is what we're on actually...

Computers' increasing speed leads to more and more powerful audio software. This has forced some musicians to put their music into question — while other composers (the mainstream ones) use those sharper tools only to re-create the same patterns since years.

It's time to actually rethink music as something that clearly goes beyond the idea of harmony and rhythm.

We are actually much more interested in any action on air molecules that widens the field of consciousness than into music thought as an end in itself.

What is truly interesting with the new generation of softwares is the possibility to shorten the time it takes for mental images to come and to invert new forms of mental representations. For instance, real-time morphing tools can open new ways of exploring the intricacies of our faculty to associate some ideas with others, as well as granular synthesis has allowed time to be thought as nothing more than a subjective possibility — nothing more than the length we wish it to last.

Flashcore is the spatial and temporal conception of air landscapes of which 'sonic atoms' (=the smallest particle of sound which is thought as an entity in itself) are being controlled with the exclusive aim of making us explore our minds and perceive any kind of transcendence. As for atomic energy or drug action, we are reaching a point where it's possible to provoke nano-audio-explosions with quite some big results for the minds.

Our cells are not aware of the unity of our own consciousness. But they're acting 'as if' for the sake of what we think is ourselves — our unique 'beyond everything' ego — and are not so much disturbed by the possible nonsense of the task. Are we, humans, aware of any similar transcendence? Is there any superior concept for which we would work?

If so, I would believe that thing is only a part of something above, and so on, drawing kind of fractalian structure which is absolutely not conceivable by our limited minds. I feel it as a personal emergency to fly over there. And flashcore could help, for sure. The ecstatic pleasure we feel receiving the message from the air molecules is a step towards such meta understanding.

What's the meaning of beauty?"¹

In this article I will take a look at flashcore with respect to this manifesto, the Hangars Liquides label, and some key releases by La Peste, Atomhead, and Neurocore.

A brief overview of speedcore:

Flashcore takes some of its primary cues from speedcore techno. To understand where flashcore is coming from, let's take a brief look at speedcore. Speedcore describes techno music in which the bpm and tempos are characteristically much faster than the normal 140 bpm and 170 bpm brackets which standard mainstream forms of techno, trance and drum & bass inhabit. Speedcore doesn't have a narrow standard tempo bracket in the way that these forms of electronic music mentioned do, but does have the common feature that the tempo is usually fast: 240bpm or higher is common. A subgenre exists called 'extratone', which refers to music in which the tempo is at least 1000 bpm. In general, the most common rhythmic structure is the '4x4' beat, in

which four consecutive kick drum sounds fall evenly on each beat of a 4/4 time signature. However there are exceptions to this; certainly in passages or bridge sections speedcore may use rhythms reminiscent of drum & bass, for example.

Beyond these common factors, the different strands of electronic and dance music which have evolved into what is called speedcore have left the genre name burdened by musical forms which in many cases have strong aesthetic opposition to each other.

[Audio Clip 2](#)

Element Abuse. *Nothing To Fear Nothing To Doubt*, 2005
***Insomnia EP. Anti Narcose, 12"*, NARC01**

[Audio Clip 3](#)

Komprex vs. Frazzbass. *Terror Worldwide*, 2005
***Spaghetti Cunts EP. Special Forces, 12"*, SPF011**

A comparison of the Komprex clip with the Element Abuse one reveals distinct differences which are representative of the different strands of speedcore. Komprex has more overtly aggressive and extreme 'terror' sounds, achieved by using harsh distorted sounds and vocals. Element Abuse uses noise and ambient sounds to create an industrial soundscape.

In an interview La Peste was asked if he felt affiliated with the "European hardcore scene". His answer reveals the generally accepted divides within catch-all terms such as hardcore:

"I feel European, from a socio-historical-psychological standpoint, but that's all, I have nothing to do with the "European Hardcore scene". What does this mean? I don't know. Two weeks ago I was told that sometimes in the UK, Hardcore refers to something I'd personally call fast dance. In France, what they call Hardcore has become a big fluffy cheesy gabberised shit, with pseudo dark (very funny, in my opinion) anthems. 10 years ago I remembered moments during parties where people were wondering what the fuck was happening to them, because of the audio waves reaching their virgin souls, it was then used to say: "that's hardcore". Now this word is overused, as is breakcore btw, it refers to anything that is supposed to be harder than something else (?). This is well too vague for describing things."²

In order to explain these different styles, let's examine a very brief history of speedcore techno.

Precursors to the music are the work of industrial bands such as [Coil](#), [Einstürzende Neubauten](#) and [Throbbing Gristle](#). Later on, in 1992 [Euromasters](#) increase the tempo of the '4x4' kick drum patterns of techno, adding distortion. In 1994, [D.O.A.](#) (Disiplines Of Annihilation) in New York use a similar approach, adding vocals. The most common interpretation is that after this speedcore forms two different strains: one centred around the aesthetics of the Dutch gabber scene, and the other developing from the more experimental works of the [Spiral Tribe](#) collective. Although inevitably there may have been some influence between the two strains, essentially the music which developed from the 'terror' gabber and Rotterdam scene in the Netherlands can be considered separately from the Spiral Tribe influenced strain. Spiral Tribe led to the advent of Stormcore and [Explore Toi](#). Labels such as [Bloody Fist](#) in Australia and [Digital Hardcore](#) in Berlin produced variations on the sound, often crossing it with breakbeats. Artists such as [Patric Cantani](#), [Micropoint](#), [Laurent Ho](#), [DJ Freak](#), [Brandon Spivey](#), [Noizecreator](#), and the sisters Stella and Poka Michelson (aka [Mouse](#) and [No Name](#) respectively) continued to push experimental and psychedelic speedcore sounds. It is the work of artists such as these and others which forms the precursor to flashcore.

[Audio Clip 4](#)

No Name. *Spirit*, 2006
***The Last. Homicide, 12"*, Homicide The Last**

Hangars Liquides:

Hangars Liquides begins in 1998 essentially as an experimental speedcore label. Examining the works from

1998-2001 reveals that the 4x4 speedcore kick drums remain a dominant feature in many tracks, which is sometimes combined with abstract noise to create soundscapes.

[Audio Clip 5](#)

Korrigan, J. *Bottlegrin*, 1998

***Antisocial Korporation. Hangars Liquides, 12"*, HL006**

However, even in the earlier releases on Hangars Liquides, we can begin to see the beginnings of flashcore, as the standard '4x4' kick drums and breakdown structure starts to decompose, especially in the work of La Peste. Additionally, note that the sounds are becoming more abstract and acousmatic; the usual kick, snare and high-hat set is being replaced by short noise sounds.

[Audio Clip 6](#)

La Peste. 1998

***Untitled EP. Hangars Liquides, 12"*, HL003**

By around HL 021 (La Peste, 2001, *Untitled*, Hangars Liquides, 12" HL021), the flashcore sound has started to become the focus of the label. Key Hangars Liquides flashcore releases to date include:

- Neurocore, 2004, *Untitled*, Hangars Liquides, 12" HL018
- La Peste, 2004, *WTC.XTC*, Hangars Liquides, CD+DVD HL023
- La Peste, 2005, *Untitled*, Hangars Liquides, 12" HL026
- Atomhead, 2006, *Spiral Field Velocity 2.0*, Hangars Liquides, 12" HL028
- La Peste, 2006, *Untitled*, Hangars Liquides, 12" HL024

Laurent has described HL024 as the most flashcore record he has produced to date. The record consists mainly of electroacoustic ambient noise, with scarcely any discernable rhythmic elements or 4x4 patterns. UndaCova's album *Intrusion* (2006, Dyslexic Response, CD), and Neurocore *The Starship Travellers EP* (2006, Underground Perversions, 12") should also be heard. UndaCova's netlabel Entity (www.entity.be) features flashcore music by artists such as Sedarka and Kaebin Yield which can be freely downloaded under the Creative Commons license. The work of [Xanopticon](#) also operates in a similar aesthetic domain.

[Audio Clip 7](#)

Atomhead. *SFV 2.0*, 2006

***Spiral Field Velocity 2.0. Hangars Liquides, 12"*, HL028**

[Audio Clip 8](#)

La Peste. *Urgence Detergence Autrui*, 2006

***Untitled EP. Hangars Liquides, 12"*, HL024**

What Is Flashcore?:

As described, the speedcore musical landscape is not a clear-cut one by any means. At the most experimental edge of speedcore lies the term flashcore. In an interview, La Peste explains what he understands flashcore to be:

"Flashcore is the name I'd give to a sound art that relies on the computer's increasing speed to go beyond the idea of musicality with the ambition of moving air molecules to widen the field of consciousness. Music is thought as a mental/spatial experience, experimenting the possibility to travel multi-dimensionally, opening or closing spaces which do not necessarily fit with an euclidean representation. Also, whilst the aesthetics of power electronics or sound installations rarely integrate the time factor, duration is an essential dimension in flashcore. I tried to tell it with my words at the HL website opening page. I believe the Universe itself is a miracle; there could have been nothing instead. Being astonished by the infinite complexity of the universe is, to me, the best way not to fear death. I want the music I release to celebrate the beauty of that complexity. If it works on people, then I am really happy. Flashcore is made to be wasted."

It is important to emphasize that La Peste coined the term flashcore, and while the output of the Hangars Liquides label is often referred to as a flashcore, many of the artists featured on the label would not

necessarily refer to their music with this term. Neurocore reportedly has referred to his music as cyber/abstractcore. Much of the earlier output of Hangars Liquides is indistinguishable from speedcore, until around 2001, where flashcore characteristics start to become the focus of the label. It should be noted that although I have chosen to describe this music with the term flashcore in this article, it is by no means definitive. Some of the audio clips and tracks examined in this article audibly span the boundaries between flashcore and speedcore, and in some instances terms such as 'ambient speedcore' may be used instead. For the time being, the term flashcore seems an apt description for the music due to a) its popularity with audiences, and b) the fact that the word seems to reasonably allude to the stroboscopic psychedelic nature of the music.

Decomposition of speedcore kick drum formula:

While often in hardcore techno the role of the high bpm is a means to increase the energy levels and speed of the dance, most people would agree flashcore is essentially "undanceable". The role of the kick drums (where something called a kick drum can be considered present), is instead to create an abrasive auditory noise assault in the lower frequency range, and the role of the commonly fast tempo is to give a rapid fire machine-gun attack on the senses. As there is no need to maintain a dance-friendly rhythm, flashcore focuses instead on twisting and contorting the rhythmic forms into complex structures, as this provides interest to the music. Laurent refers to his goals to achieve music which reflects the fractal beauty in complexity which he sees inherent in life. One way in which flashcore achieves this is through the contortion and decomposition of standard kick drum patterns. This achieved in different ways:

[Audio Clip 9](#)

Atomhead. *SFV 2.0*, 2006

***Spiral Field Velocity 2.0*. Hangars Liquides, 12", HL028**

In this example, there is a constant tempo which is relatively slow. We can hear this at the beginning of the audio clip, as there is a regular kick drum in a 4x4 pattern which follows the tempo. As the track develops, notice how the 4x4 pattern doubles pace and undergoes various stuttering shifts. The same overall tempo is maintained, but the increased frequency and shifts in the use of the kick drum provide interesting variations within that structure.

[Audio Clip 10](#)

Neurocore. *Mystification Des Astres*, 2004

***Untitled EP*. Hangars Liquides, 12", HL018**

Clip 10 sounds as if the tempo may have been massively increased on a passage which was originally designed at a lower tempo. A slow tempo can be picked out, where each 1st beat is in fact most likely the beginning of a bar. Therefore, although there is a constant tempo, whether or not it is high or low ceases to be relevant; it is the texture of the sound which is most important. This is an example of flashcore going beyond the formula of speedcore, because speedcore makes the fast tempo of the music a focal point of the sound. In flashcore the tempo may not necessarily be fast; audio clips 9 and 10 could both be described in terms of a tempo slower than 200 bpm. What is important, is that the staccato textures which result from speedcore's fast tempos are carried through into the flashcore aesthetic; the idea of flashcore being a 'faster' type of music (than the rest) is irrelevant.

[Audio Clip 11](#)

La Peste. *Alors le doute s'immiscea*, 2005

***Untitled EP*. Hangars Liquides, 12", HL026**

La Peste uses a pitch bending effect or similar on the kick drums in this piece, so that they speed up, slow down and dive in and out of the higher frequency ranges. There is no constant tempo, yet the track maintains a high level of intensity and velocity due to the wall of stuttering noises across the frequency range. This is a defining feature of flashcore. The music sounds as if the stuttering repetition of the kick drums in speedcore has been combusted and is now exploding across and between the middle and upper frequency range as well as the low end.

Beyond speedcore:

Apart from speedcore, La Peste draws influence from a variety of sources beyond the hardcore techno sphere:

“My masters are: [François Bayle](#), [Bernard Parmegiani](#), [Iannis Xenakis](#), [György Ligeti](#)...”

The influence of these composers is apparent to an extent, perhaps primarily in the ambition of Laurent's work to go beyond the usual compositional goals of hardcore techno. HL024 (La Peste, 2006, *Untitled*, Hangars Liquides, 12” HL024) certainly bears closer resemblance to works such as Xenakis' *Electronic Music* (1997, Electronic Music Foundation, CD, EMFCD003) than any of the aforementioned speedcore. It contains no discernable rhythmic elements, consisting mainly of noise gestures and ambient sounds which bear similarity to Xenakis' work.

[Audio Clip 12](#)

**La Peste. *Alaoui J'Ecoute Ton Horloge De Sueur*, 2006
Untitled EP. Hangars Liquides, 12”, HL024**

Flashcore makes the jump away from the standard structures of hardcore techno, undoubtedly inspired by artists such as Xenakis. However this influence may have also prompted another crucial leap, which is the sonic detachment from the usual rave and techno signifiers which dominant hardcore techno and similar forms such as breakcore. In the interview, La Peste comments:

“There is a word used to describe sounds from which you cannot tell where they come from: acousmatique. To me it's like the gravitational force of a black hole, there are no lights at all around it, and I am attracted into it, absorbed by the energy of the unknown.”

If we compare La Peste to an artist such as [Venetian Snares](#), the approach of hiding the source and signifiers of the sounds used is a key difference. Venetian Snares is another artist experimenting with twisting the forms of hardcore techno and pushing the envelope. Yet if we look at records such as Venetian Snares' EP on Hangars Liquides (2001, *Untitled*, Hangars Liquides, 12”, HL019) we can perhaps identify how his work differs from flashcore.

[Audio Clip 13](#)

**Venetian Snares. *I'm A Fucking Idiot*, 2001
Untitled EP. Hangars Liquides, 12”, HL019**

Note that although the complex forms reminiscent of flashcore are present, Venetian Snares employs sounds which signify hardcore techno and rave in a more overt manner. The clip features a distorted bass drum kick, a staple sound of hardcore techno. More crucially, the snare drum sounds used will be recognised by listeners familiar with jungle and drum 'n' bass, as derived from the 'Amen' breakbeat. The result of this is that when we listen to Venetian Snares music, we associate it with hardcore techno, and appreciate it as a twisted version of that form. Yet when we hear a record such as HL026 by La Peste, we are confronted by a range of sounds, such a smashing noise and various whooshing and mechanical sounds, which we cannot necessarily identify under the same taxonomy. The lack of associative signifiers produced by the music may enable the listener to lucidly construct alternative images and forms more freely. Since these associations are not grounded to any specific real-world source they may take on a quality of 'otherness', and this could perhaps be interpreted as psychedelic.

[Audio Clip 14](#)

**La Peste. *Il Etait ... "Magnetique" / Une Possibilite*, 2005
Untitled EP. Hangars Liquides, 12”, HL026**

In the flashcore manifesto, La Peste comments:

“It's time to rethink music as something that clearly goes beyond harmony and rhythm.”

These are not new ideas in music; the idea of basing music on noise and dissonance dates back to 1914, [The Futurists and Russolo](#). But perhaps what La Peste is alluding to, is that it is time for music within the

hardcore techno evolutionary continuum to go beyond harmony and rhythm³. It's certainly true that hardcore techno has seldom fully disassociated itself from its rave music signifiers. The recent boom in popularity of [mashcore](#) is an example of hardcore techno multiplying its cultural associative qualities as much as possible. Minimal techno artists such as [Basic Channel](#) perhaps achieve a successful reduction of techno music toward a purer more acousmatic sound uncluttered by signifiers. Perhaps flashcore represents a hardcore techno equivalent; a psychedelic and detached sound; yet unlike the throb of Basic Channel, flashcore is driven by the more intense assault of speedcore.

Atomizer:

The staccato sound of speedcore kick drums seems to have been transported across the whole frequency range in flashcore. Flashcore is composed from very detailed, complex structures of short, fragmented sounds which La Peste refers to as "nano-audio explosions". La Peste describes the purpose of this in terms of achieving as many micro-emotional responses from the listener in as short a space of time as possible⁴. If we consider the acousmatic approach to the use of sound, in principle this makes sense. The listener is bombarded with a torrent of unfamiliar sounds. Theoretically, the listener may attach an emotional or psychological response of some description to each one of these sounds.

This may be the key to the psychedelic effect which flashcore seems to achieve on this listener. The consumption of hallucinogenic drugs often seems to have an effect of catalysing the mind to create torrents of shifting fractal patterns and forms. Synaesthesia effects are commonly reported, where the heightened torrent of thoughts and ideas seems to flow between visual experiences of colour, sound and emotion.

If we consider the effect of flashcore in relation to this, it might be seen that the result of imposing these torrents of sound upon the mind is to simulate this catalytic effect on the brain. Instead of a drug stimulating the nervous system to trigger these heightened states of thought, the sound is providing the stimulus. Complex sculptures are formed in the mind of the listener from the torrent of pin-point sounds. Each sound is like a stimulating dot in a multidimensional sound-matrix, and the dots combine to form twisting sculptural shapes in sound.

Live:

It may be considered, that the effect of flashcore is distinguished by virtue of the psychological effects of an acousmatic approach to using noise sounds, combined with the intensity and physicality of speedcore techno aesthetics. The means of achieving this physicality however, is not confined to purely compositional techniques. As with much hardcore techno, the music is routed in sound system culture. Audiences and composers attest that the music is best experienced in a live environment through a powerful and well-tuned sound system. In the Hangars Liquides flashcore manifesto La Peste suggests the auditory experience of flashcore may be able to "widen the field of consciousness", and that the goal of this music is to make people "explore [their] minds", to achieve a form of transcendence. I asked flashcore listeners on an internet forum if they felt the music could provoke effects in the brain which could on some level be compared with transcendental or altered states of consciousness achieved through meditative states or use of hallucinogenic drugs. One listener commented:

"I had La Peste play live for me here in Scotland in February last year... there were no flashy lights, just an occasional strobe (which helped the mind-fuck, it has to be said). We had a crystal clear sound and I was on no drugs, standing in the middle of the room with my eyes closed (dancing was not an option). And still to this day I cannot articulate fully what the sound was like... when leaving the room, I felt disorientated and almost "high" if you like... it's something that has to be experienced to be understood. So I'd say, yes. But not listening to it in the house. If you have a good clean, loud sound system, then yes."

Another listener at the event commented:

"I was DJing at that night, between La Peste's music and the strobelight (the strobe meant you literally couldn't walk in a straight line), it was an unbelievable experience. As [listener #1] said, when you left the room to go to the bar, it was like opening your living room door and walking

off the edge of a cliff. I've only ever tried hallucinogens once, and I dare say that night was better.”

It should not be overlooked then, that the live experience of flashcore is somewhat relevant to its design, enhancing the physical and mental effects of the music. In many ways there's a strong comparison between this 'physical/mental' approach in [dubstep](#), with the proclaimed [DMZ](#) tagline “come meditate on bass-weight” which appears on fliers. Dubstep aims to achieve a meditative effect through the physicality of sound system bass, combined with psychedelic dub effects. Perhaps further investigation of this concept, and cross-pollination with other musical forms might open up new aesthetic avenues in other forms of music.

Technology:

In the flashcore manifesto Laurent places an emphasis on the use and significance of technology in the creation of flashcore. It is certainly true that such complex modulation effects upon which flashcore is built could not have been so easily constructed in the past. Yet surely with a lot of patience similar sounds could theoretically have been produced. It is true that the live manipulation of such sounds and modulation effects could not have been achieved without the processing power of today's computers. Laurent comments on how he produces flashcore in a live situation:

“Live is essential to me when comes a moment music is broadcast on a big sound system, with people gathering to celebrate the emergency of life. At that specific time, I think it's an imposture to "play" something pre-programmed. I feel it as an existential obligation to give a real live performance. To do so, I use [Ableton's Live](#), that I configure so that it allows me to really play it as a meta-patch packed with audio and midi data, feeding customised plug-ins and virtual synths. I like to use flexible softs, such as Bidule, which allow me to have a tweakable matrix with extensive modulation capacities. I spend quite a lot of time designing patches to turn my live set into an instrument I can 'fly' with the ambition of going at the place I dream of at specific moment in time. Everything fits in a PowerBook, a firewire audio interface and 2 USB controllers. I have never brought Kyma on stage, but I plan to do so at the end of the summer.”

[Kyma X](#) is a sound design environment which allows the user to design instruments, synthesis and sound manipulation tools from scratch. The software is used in conjunction with the 'Capybara' — an upgradeable outboard sound processing unit specifically designed for the purpose. The result is a system that enables complex audio processes to be implemented in real-time. Laurent's use of Kyma can be heard on releases such as *WTC.XTC* (La Peste, 2004, *WTC.XTC*, Hangars Liquides, CD+DVD HL023), and HL 024 (audio clips 8 and 12 which accompany this article both utilise Kyma). The 44-track CD which comes with *WTC.XTC* features a continuous mix of music which runs for over an hour. One thing which strikes you when listening to this CD is the loose and improvised feel to the structure of the music; something which is partly facilitated through the use of Kyma X.

The aesthetics of flashcore seem to be inherently tied to the technology. In Ian Trowell's essay [Auto Synthesis](#), he discusses the aesthetic tendencies of techno toward reflecting an aesthetic of the machines themselves, versus house and trance which continue the traditions of disco using machines to make the music:

“The partition begins to form in the actual dynamics themselves, between genres that work to mechanising the beat and the music (house, garage, etc.), and those genres that work towards making the sounds of the machines themselves (or the hubbub sound of a future controlled by machines) echo across the dance-floor.”⁵

Flashcore continues the tradition under which techno is described here. It could even be viewed as a technological festishized music. Certainly the manifestos indication of “nano-audio-explosions” in the brain, could be interpreted as a cyberpunk/cybergoth concept of sonic-wetwire facilitated by 21st century technology. Artist names such as Neurocore, the [Underground Perversions](#) label, and the presence of flashcore in clubs such as the [Slimelight](#) (London's longest alternative, goth and cyber nightclub) suggest flashcore has its place in cyberpunk/cybergoth culture.

Comparing flashcore innovations with breakcore & dubstep:

Fragmented styles of electronic dance music have often yielded exciting new sounds. In recent years, the advent of dubstep has occurred through mutations in dark '2-step' garage, combined with influences from jungle and dub to create a new sound. Yet invariably once a style and formula is established, commercial forces take over and the music can become somewhat stagnant. [Kode9](#) describes the current state of dubstep, in which after the initial flush of vital new music the genre has suddenly become flooded by artists producing a similar 'half-step' style:

“I think if people just see it as purely dub it's a problem, because they'll just make less good versions of reggae. But people need to remember what is interesting about these musics — jungle through to dubstep — is that they can weave together every single music ever, potentially, at that speed, with those basslines. There's no reason why there shouldn't be aspects of techno, hip hop, reggae, soul, electro, house... I mean it's just a speed. The danger right now is that it has become dominated by half-step. But I'm sure that won't last.”⁶

The popularity brought to the breakcore scene by mashcore artists such as [Shitmat](#) and [Bong-Ra](#) has resulted in a similar effect. New sounds have been created by cramming as many pop-culture samples and references into the breakcore structure as possible. Yet now many similar records are being produced, as artists remix every ragga acapella which becomes available in a similar style.

Both breakcore and dubstep have sought new sounds by mutating older forms. Yet the trend has then led to quite swift stagnation from all but the most innovative of producers in the field. By comparing the means by which flashcore evolves aesthetic forms it may be possible to judge if the genre has any longevity.

The stagnation of dubstep and breakcore seems to be attributable to the increased audience, commercial value and numbers of 'bandwagon' people producing it. The flashcore 'scene' is currently very empirically small, and the music is inherently inaccessible; while genres such as dubstep and breakcore essentially remain music to be danced to at a rave, flashcore is noisy and often undanceable. It is therefore unlikely to become tainted by commercial pressures.

The mode of flashcore's transmission is slightly different to dubstep and breakcore. As Trowell comments in *Auto Synthesis*, one of the key changes in the advent of techno and rave culture, is not only the music itself but the means of broadcast. Dubstep, breakcore and flashcore all remain firmly rooted in sound system culture, but in flashcore the means of live performance is nearly always a laptop with specifically designed patches and instruments. Laptop DJ performances are commonplace in breakcore and other forms of electronic music, but turntable DJ performances are also a fundamental means by which the music is experienced. In flashcore this is not the case, since virtually no one performs flashcore DJ sets (though the author of this article plays flashcore records in eclectic DJ sets).

The effect of this is that less people can properly experience flashcore, as only the producers can effectively perform it. On the other hand, removing the turntable and DJ factor from the process completely may benefit the quality and form of the music's abstraction. Although it is possible to blend records to achieve abstract forms, within techno there has always been a strong tradition of different artists producing records at a similar tempo with a staggered layering of instruments enabling DJs to beat-synchronise records to flow together seamlessly. Although flashcore is still released on vinyl, the fact that in a live performance turntables will not generally be used may inevitably propel the music toward a less homogenous aesthetic state.

Propagating the music in this way makes it more disposable; as La Peste describes, “flashcore is made to be wasted”. Yet it also makes the form much more difficult to replicate. In genres such as dubstep, we have seen crossover from garage and drum & bass producers (for example [Tech Itch](#) and [Skynet](#)) who can use their existing skill set to produce similar sounds under a different template. Flashcore makes this tricky, because the key artists are designing unique specialist tools using instruments such as Kyma X to create the music, rather than relying on Cubase, pre-packaged VST instruments and presets. This may ultimately mean that flashcore is able to maintain a certain high-bar for quality, as long as proper attention is given to original instrument design.

Summary:

From the music's hardcore techno roots via the influence of other artists such as Xenakis, flashcore seems to create its effect by employing an acousmatic approach to present sound in contorted and decomposed forms derived from speedcore. The decomposition of hardcore techno signifiers in the structure and timbre of the music detaches the sounds from the normal taxonomy experienced when listening to forms such as dubstep or breakcore, and assists the music in achieving a more abstract psychological effect. It is possible that the velocity at which the torrents of micro-sound gestures are received by the brain serves to accelerate the rate at which responses are formed, thus constructing fractal-like sculptures of complexity, which might be compared to the effects of hallucinogenic drugs. In this way the music may be considered to achieve an effective psychedelic response.

The nature of flashcore's specialised production and performance involves the use of specifically designed software patches to create live noise instruments. La Peste's use of Kyma X to create this music using real-time patches facilitates a more improvisational approach which further serves to break down hardcore techno structures. The music can be considered as an artistic response to the possibilities of new technologies, and embraces this as its aesthetic. Due to the emphasis that it should be experienced as a live performance over an appropriate sound system, it cannot easily be propagated to a wider audience. However this may help to maintain a certain level of quality control, since flashcore cannot easily be replicated, and exists only in the outer orbit of turntable DJ culture.

Flashcore represents an exciting new form of music, to which anyone interested in new electronic music forms which push the envelope of sonic possibility might look for inspiration.

Selected discography:

- Atomhead. 2005. [Resonance FM Podcast](#)
- Atomhead. 2006. *Spiral Field Velocity 2.0*. Hangars Liquides, 12", HL028
- EPC. 1998. *Haikumputer*. Hangars Liquides, 12", HL001
- Euromasters. 1992. *Alles Naar De Kl—te*. Rotterdam Records, 12", ROT009
- Komprex vs. Frazzbass. 2005. *Spaghetti Cunts EP*. Special Forces, 12", SPF011
- Korrigan 1998. *Antisocial Koporation*. Hangars Liquides, 12", HL006
- La Peste. 1998. Untitled EP. Hangars Liquides, 12", HL003
- La Peste. 2001. Untitled EP. Hangars Liquides, 12", HL021
- La Peste. 2006. Untitled EP. Hangars Liquides, 12", HL024
- La Peste. 2005. Untitled EP. Hangars Liquides, 12", HL026
- La Peste. 2004. *WTC.XTC*. Hangars Liquides, CD+DVD, HL023
- No Name. 2006. *The Last. Homicide*, 12", Homicide The Last
- Neurocore. 2006. *The Starship Travellers EP*, Underground Perversions, 12", UPR05
- Neurocore. 2004. *Untitled EP*. Hangars Liquides, 12", HL018
- Sleepbug, Element Abuse, Obnoxious. 2005. *Insomnia EP*. Anti Narcose, 12", NARC01
- UndaCova. 2006. *Intrusion. Dyslexic Response*, CD, DR14
- Various. 2004. *Carbon*. Mirex, CD, mirex_C_3
- Venetian Snares. 2001. *Untitled EP*. Hangars Liquides, 12", HL019
- Xenakis, I. 1997. *Electronic Music*. Electronic Music Foundation, CD, EMFCD003

References:

- [Discogs](#). 2007
- [Entity](#). 2007
- [Flashcore](#). 2007
- [Hangars Liquides](#). 2006 (site inactive 01/03/07)
- Huxley, A. 1994. *The Doors Of Perception*. Flamingo.
- Noys, B. 1995. *Into The Jungle. Popular Music*. Cambridge University Press. Volume 14/3, 321-332.
- Pinchbeck, D. 2004. *Breaking Open The Head*. Flamingo.
- [Red Bull Academy Lectures](#). 2006.
- Reynolds, S. 1999. *Adult Hardcore. The Wire*.
- Reynolds, S. 2006. [BlissBlog](#)
- [Scottish Hardcore](#). 2006

- Spannered. 2007. [Kode9: Don't Mention The Dubstep](#)
- [Symbolic Sound](#), 2007
- Trowell, I. 2001. *Auto-Synthesis. Organised Sound*. Cambridge University Press. Volume 6/3, 215-233.
- [Urban Decay](#). 2007

Footnotes:

¹From the Hangars Liquides website www.hangars-liquides.com (inactive 1/03/07), also featured on www.flashcore.org.

²Online interview with La Peste at the site [Scottish Hardcore](#) (1/02/07). All quotations from Laurent Mialon in this article are taken from this source, with the exception of the flashcore manifesto previously mentioned.

³The idea of 'hardcore continuums' used here is based on Simon Reynolds discussion of a 'UK hardcore continuum' in the article 'Adult Hardcore', published in *The Wire* magazine, April 1999. The concept has since become popular within journalism as a means of describing dubstep. This may be due to the fact that prominent dubstep artist Kode9 seems to have adopted the phrase, using it to discuss his music in interviews such the [Red Bull Academy Lectures](#) (01/03/07). Reynolds argument has been criticised for being to 'Brit-centric'. On his [blog](#), Reynolds defended his argument on the grounds that he is discussing a UK hardcore phenomena, and that there are other hardcore continuums. It is using this model of understanding that is used here to describe a 'hardcore continuum'.

⁴This is referred to specifically in an interview transcript with Laurent Mialon, which was on the Hangars Liquides website. The site is currently being refreshed and is thus the article is unavailable.

⁵Trowell, I. 2001. *Auto-Synthesis. Organised Sound*. Cambridge University Press. Volume 6/3, 215-233.

⁶Kode9: [Don't Mention The Dubstep interview](#) on Spannered.

■ [Contact Jon Weinel](#)
[comments \(0\)](#) | [Add comment](#)
[Back to top](#) | [Back a page](#) | [Permalink](#)
Linkage

- [Flashcore.org](#)
- [La Peste at Discogs](#)
- [Hangars Liquides](#)

Share this page

- [Stumbleupon](#)
- [Del.icio.us](#)
- [Digg](#)

Contributors retain the copyright to their own contributions. Everything else is copyright © Spannered 2009. Please do not copy whole articles: instead, copy a bit and link to the rest. Thanks! | [Disclaimer](#)