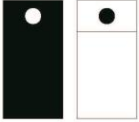


PRELUDE 1
SALFORD, 17 APRIL 2019



CASISDEAD

Everything's For Sale

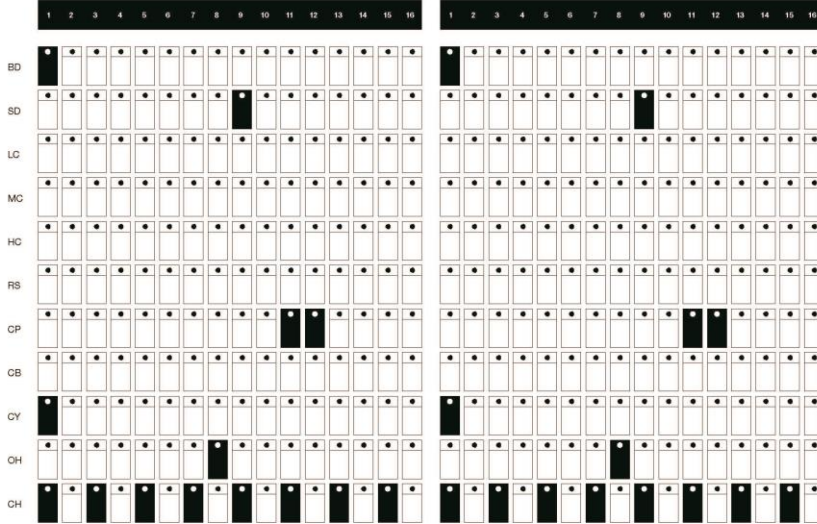
(feat. Alexander O'Neal)

Track Information

Artist: CASISDEAD
 Track: Everything's For Sale
 feat. Alexander O'Neal
 Genre: Rap/RnB
 Year: 2020
 Label: XL Recordings
 Country: UK

1st Part (Steps 1–16)

2nd Part (Steps 17–32)



Tempo

The TEMPO dial controls how fast the drum sequence plays. Set to the correct dial position as shown below.



Pattern Write

The PATTERN WRITE dial selects which part of the sequence is being edited. To set a 32 step sequence, set the dial to 2nd PART, hold down the RED BUTTON and press Key 16.



Instructions

Use the diagram above to program the steps into your Roland TR-808 drum machine, then sit back while memories of your favourite 808 beats from the past are brought back to life.



It's an overcast early spring afternoon. I'm in a recording studio on an industrial estate on the outskirts of Manchester. I've been here for an hour. It would have been hard to locate but I was collected at Manchester Piccadilly by a professional who had researched the destination and got us here easily. He used to drive Keith Flint during The Prodigy's UK tours, and having picked me up we spent the short journey reminiscing about Keith, who passed away less than a month ago, at the age of forty-nine.

I arrive in a sombre mood. There are three musicians here. A man known as CASisDEAD has just arrived from a stopover in Nottingham. He is the most idiosyncratic, articulate and fluent British rap lyricist I have heard since Dizzee Rascal emerged from Bow E3 in 2002. CAS's themes are typically the underbelly of street life, drug sales and sex work. In the first really classic song he has made, 'Pat Earrings', he tells the apparently heartfelt and melancholy story of his ill-fated relationship with a prostitute. At the conclusion of the song, he finds she has continued to see clients despite telling him she has stopped. 'Heartbroken, I'm at wits' end / She's never accepted by my friends / That's cool 'cause I never liked them'. The narrator is bereft.

As is often the case with those who make disturbing art he seems a person of integrity. Those in the public eye who go out of their way to seem benevolent, the supposedly squeaky-clean ones, are the ones to beware of. Nasty pretends to be nice, and vice versa. CAS has his face covered at all times when in public. Oscar Wilde said, 'Give a man a mask and he'll tell you the truth.' CAS has a taste for the analogue synthesiser sounds of the 1980s, music that soundtracked my youth and was popular around the time he was born.

I have programmed my Roland TR-808 drum machine in order to echo the feeling of the year that the machine was first released: 1980.

This item is my favourite material possession. Its sounds and groove have been enjoying a renaissance in popularity since the James Brown samples of classic East Coast hip-hop made way for the more electronic palette that was being used by rap artists from the South. Its distinct

sonic character is still a crucial part of the hip-hop production landscape.

Drums are only part of the story. In creating music for this session, I have enlisted someone who not only has the ability to craft unforgettable melodies but owns a collection of the vintage analogue synthesisers necessary to sonically execute this job properly. He sits behind one of these while his daughter Missy and his best friend Remi potter around. His name is Damon Albarn and, as frontman of Blur, mastermind behind virtual band Gorillaz and all-round musical polymath, he has scaled every imaginable height of creative and commercial success.

Damon and I are both fortunate to have benefited enough from our musical endeavours to each have our own first-class recording facilities in west London. We are in this particular location because of the third musician. We want him to record a hook for the song and this is where he wished to do it. He possesses a deep, deep soul voice that evokes not just the specific time we wish to reference, the mid-eighties, but the theme CAS wants to explore in this song, which is intended for his debut album, for release on XL Recordings.

This theme is the ephemeral nature of fame. The song is to be called 'Everything's For Sale'. It may become a worldwide hit. Or it may never be released, or even completed. At this formative stage of the creative process uncertainty is a given.

This third musician's name is Alexander O'Neal, and he is a sixty-five-year-old former Prince associate from Natchez, Mississippi, by way of Minneapolis, where he was the original lead singer for The Time, before making three solo albums with legendarily great production and writing duo, and fellow Prince acolytes, Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis. These albums were quite successful in the US, but in the UK he became a huge crossover pop star, scoring Top 10 singles with his songs 'Criticise', 'If You Were Here Tonight', and his duet with Cherrelle, 'Saturday Love'. His second album, *Hearsay*, went triple platinum in the UK, and he sold out three consecutive nights at Wembley Arena.

His appetites were always legendary. Along with most other eighties success stories, his star faded through the nineties. With each new decade music changes irrevocably and only a tiny number of musicians can transcend the decade they found fame in. In recent times Alexander has appeared on reality TV programmes *Just the Two of Us*, *Wife Swap* and *Celebrity Big Brother*.

When CAS gave me a list of the eighties voices he wished to try to feature on his album, I knew that Alexander O'Neal was the one to pursue. My guess was that we would find him in LA, perhaps living near the airport, but it turns out he lives in Manchester.

We're here to capture the voice of this weathered soul survivor, and prior to the session he has been supplied with a map in the form of a recording, a guide version of the song that Damon, CAS and I made in London. Our preparation and planning have been exemplary and, while I have experienced enough 'best laid plans' scenarios to know that nothing is ever guaranteed, an hour into the session we have a heartbreakingly soulful performance from Alexander O'Neal on our hard drive. CAS says to me that it is important to absorb moments like this. I agree. I have had many of them but they always feel dreamlike. Alexander says he needs to buy a bed, inexplicably, and with that he is gone.