



Lap It Up

Can one producer armed with a laptop unite drastically different musical genres? That's the question The Secret Handshake's Luis Dubuc attempts to answer on his debut album.

The Secret Handshake is Luis Dubuc's one-man musical mission to weave elements of emo rock, electronic music and hip-hop into a comfy musical blanket. After the success of his *Summer of '98* EP released in March (which featured remixes by math metal act Dillinger Escape Plan and nasty boys Spank Rock), the stage is set for the Dallas native's upcoming major-label debut album, *One Full Year*. Brimming with emo angst, new wave synths and glitchy beats, Dubuc's sonic experimentation just might unite the music world's tribes.

Q&A: Darren Ressler

Tell us about your project studio.

I use a G4 PowerBook, Cubase

SX3, PreSonus Firepod set of MXL condenser mics, Reason 3.0, Antares AVP-1, M-Audio keyboards and Trigger Finger.

Is there a particular producer who's influenced your sound?

Kanye West, The Neptunes and Timbaland have influenced my sound the most. I listen to their stuff constantly.

How did you select the remixers for your recent EP?

We tried to pick people that I really respected musically and could bring a different sound to the table. For example, I've always loved Dillinger Escape Plan, and I knew they would create a remix that was completely different from that anything I would do.

How did you (and Ocelot) approach the recording sessions for the debut album?

Initially I created the tracks in Reason and recorded the vocals in Cubase. I'd bounce down the separations and send them to Cory and Jimmy over iChat on my Mac. Then I went to Austin to work with Cory and Jimmy in

Cory's home studio. We went through and reworked every track—stacked keyboards and beefed up the drum sounds, re-recorded vocals, added live drums and bass. We wanted to make the most of every song.

What's your favorite studio trick?

I don't know if I have too many tricks, but I always double my

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vocals. I do the first take on the left and hard pan the second take on the right. On any given track with drums, there are about 5 to 10 kicks, 5 to 10 snares. Again, I'm not sure if those qualify as tricks but it's what I do to get my sound.

How do you approach your live shows these days? Has it changed since you first started performing?

Yeah, it's changed a lot. Now I run Cubase Live with the Firepod and I have a rack mounted D.I. box. I also use an AVP-1 from Antares live to get the vocal effect present on the album. Other things I use include a Behringer headphone pre-amp, and I also have a drummer, who plays with me live, and I play my Wurlitzer electric piano on some songs.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of being a one-man band?

The reason I even started doing this all on my own is so I wouldn't have to ever compromise anything musically and I could just do whatever I wanted however I wanted to. But the disadvantage is that financially everything rests on me as well, so everything comes out of my pocket instead of splitting it between five people or something, whether it comes to merch or equipment. I think you just end up working four times, five times harder.