

## These are the Tracks that Define Autumn in These 3 Cities

As a self proclaimed music addict, I often find myself spontaneously placed in other countries following the beat of a good party, a festival, a record label showcase, or one of my favourite DJ's sets. Some cities (or islands) I visit more than others, but that has definitely not immunised me to the awe I find myself in each time. So when I return home after a short (or extended) weekend away, inevitably detesting being a participating member of real life, people around me ask me what it was like in these (not so) faraway lands. There are so many moments that have defined my view of the underground scene today; so many memories that take me back to the cities, the island, the sunrises. But I can't simply describe these incredible places in words, and the shaken pictures I've taken over the years through my iPhone's eye cannot convey the whirlpool of stimulation these hidden worlds have had to offer. So whenever I'm asked "what was it really like", I can't seem to think back without a soundtrack quietly, yet persistently playing in the back of my mind.

For this reason, I have compiled a selection of the tracks that perfectly capture the experience of visiting these epicentres of electronic music during the autumn months: Amsterdam, Berlin and London.

### **Berlin in the Fall**

Matthew Herbert: *It's Only* (DJ Koze Remix) [Pampa Records]

<https://soundcloud.com/pamparecords/aa-herbert-its-only-dj-koze>

With its delicately haunting vocals, this beauty always reminds me of driving into a rainy Berlin in the early morning hours, my finger slipping on "repeat" as soon as I sensed it fading out on the car stereo. The track is the perfected attainment of "tension and release"; the reunification of West and East and the undefinable balance that engulfs both sides today. It so deeply captures the somber surrealism that subtly coats the city of Berlin; if it were a painting, it would undoubtedly be one of Dali's works. The sensual and intricate beauty of Koze's remix of "It's Only" perfectly depicts the East Berlin I so fell in love with; the art in the details, the subtle order in its chaos, the wild bursts of colour contrasting the dirty grime of the asphalt that all somehow keep the city in bloom at all times of the year. There's something so sexy about watching the sunrise without the notion of leaving the party ever having to enter your mind. Like the track, the city is a journey in itself. You don't have to be a first timer to experience the mystery it has to offer.

During my first ever visit, we stayed on Kurfurstendamm; the equivalent of Paris' Champs-Élysées. As beautiful as it was, prematurely laced with Christmas lights, I would have never imagined that this was the city that was unified by techno in the late 80's. As we drunkenly stumbled down the steps to a metro that never sleeps, we ventured off towards the East. Although it was quite a few stops away, time passed quickly as countless faces stepped in and out, the hands of some gripping bottles of beer of Club Matte (no paper bag necessary).

Coming from the West and walking up those stairs on towards Friedrichstrasse is enough to sober anyone up. The entirety of the East is the equivalent to Berlin's underground world. It's that hidden illegal rave in the nearby forest of a busy business district you would never have suspected unless you were given the tip. Only in this case, the rave consists of multiple raves, and instead of hidden they proudly carry on in the likes of old power plants, abandoned department stores, and enormous swimming pool compounds (sadly, no more). It's no secret that not everyone is invited to the party. But if you're sniffed out as a soul seeking to get lost in dance and quality music rather than take selfies for your Instagram (at the risk of having your phone confiscated), your chances will go up. And if you make the cut, you'll enter a world that will make you question any definition of freedom you may have had prior to this moment. Hours drift by, and before you know it, it's morning; but that changes nothing. After witnessing my first sunrise on a night out in the East, I realised that for many this was the Berlin equivalent of a social drink. As was explained to me at about 7am by a smartly dressed local, it wasn't uncommon to go straight to work a couple of hours later.

Like the multiple elements of Koze's misty remix smoothly melting together, Berlin challenges the mind's perceptions of time and space; as day fades into night, the moon hides behind the clouds...and by the time you've looked back up, it's become the sun again.

### **Amsterdam in the Fall**

Tom Trago: *Hidden Heart of Gold* [Voyage Direct]

<https://soundcloud.com/voyagedirect/vd21-a1-tom-trago-hidden-heart>

In just over 12 minutes, Tom Trago has captured an intense rollercoaster of energy in all its varieties; mystery, insecurity, safety and stimulation all intertwine in one powerful track. The playful bassline of this haunting tune gives it a controversial, yet harmonious balance to the otherwise melancholic layering of its vocals; overwhelming the expectations of our senses, much like the majestic Dutch capital.

It feels like walking through Amsterdam as a newcomer, taking in its incredible architecture covered in a veil of grey, it's streets most frequently glistening in rain. It's so easy to get lost in the masses walking from Central Station to the Dam, (and even easier getting lost down the narrow streets of the Red Light District after a visit to a coffeeshop or two).

At some point in the night, you've floated away from the pleasantly lost faces crowding the busy little streets of the centre, to -as most tourists, at some point in the night- drift on to the bar frosted area of Leidseplein. Scoped out as a foreigner but not an actual tourist, you're given a tip for a party that's happening a bit further outside the assiduous city centre. Not that much later, you find yourself outside a seemingly small club you'd only recognise by the crowd swarming around its entrance like a beehive.

After waiting in the (often extensive) line, trying to light a cigarette to keep warm in the relentless drizzle of the Amsterdam sky, you've reached the door, and soon after, bared all for the security guard. You walk past a dark hallway to reach another entrance, the dim lights slowly getting brighter, the speakers steadily taking over your body. You take off your jacket to enter a room heated purely by energy, only to end up surrounded by people who no longer seem lost. Just like that first epic break in "Hidden Heart of Gold", the build up to this moment has now been given the perfect release.

### **London in the Fall**

Huxley: *Inkwell* [Aus Music]

<https://soundcloud.com/ed-marquis/inkwell-huxley>

Much like a powerful bassline, London is a city with a resounding pulse. Rebellious in its elegance, and most often dressed in rain, it's easy to associate it with a deep, sticky bass. For that reason, "Inkwell" is a tasty brew with the mysterious flavour of the city; a warm, melodic blend of bass house topped with smooth, garage laced vocals.

The massive population of the city significantly contributes to the chaos you experience merely trying to cross those Central London streets. Much to your surprise though, it's a pleasant chaos. Startled at first, you slowly begin to feed off of the bustling energy around you, and may even find yourself missing it when it's gone. The track eases you into that undying energy, the magnetic mayhem surrounding you, sensual foreplay to the night you don't even know is waiting ahead.

Just a stone's throw away from the high end department stores of Oxford street, you escape to the narrow streets of Soho, sprinkled with sneaky little bars throughout. But once you've had a cocktail...or four (which took you a decent amount of time to select due to the extensively adventurous cocktail list), you're back to minding the gap, just to find yourself in a misty East London. The streets here have little resemblance to the side you just abandoned, and you'd be lucky to find a bar without a long queue accompanying it. As you're

not on anyone's guest list, and by this time most bars are closing, you wander just 10 minutes further, time getting lost in the faces of the many happily intoxicated strangers around you.

You find yourself curiously drawn to a dark, wet, narrow little street that, through the subtle rhythm of the London drizzle, seems to whisper "*Come walk into my life*". Had you not felt the subtle vibration as you entered it further, you would not have noticed the heavy steel gate that lead you to your destination of the night (and why not, morning). You stumble down a metal staircase to find a hidden, pulsating world; the perfect blend of dark and vibrant. It's pulse keeps getting stronger as the night drifts by, constantly feeding on a crowd that seems to rapidly self multiply like an amoeba. Like that first listen to Dodman's sultry track, you get lost deeper and deeper into your surroundings, melting in to the ubiquitous heartbeat of the warehouse, unable to fight that deep, dark bass that's made a delicious, possessive claim on your body since the moment you stepped in.

*Note: The tracks selected are not based on most recent releases or releases made in the Autumn months. They're a personal selection based on capturing a specific atmosphere and delivering an experience.*