



Words Matt Earp  
Illustration Matthias Marx

# JAHTARI

FROM A FLAT IN LEIPZIG, DISRUPT MAKES DUB BRAND NEW AGAIN.

At its simplest, Jahtari is a web label dedicated to digital laptop reggae. It's hyper-modern dub music, an attempt to do something with the genre that hasn't been done before while still keeping the bass at the center and the accent on the offbeats. Artists build tracks from bare bones, keeping in mind "dramaturgical flow"—meaning every bar should make sense and have a purpose. This translates to instrumental reggae-dancehall that calls to mind the playful and weirdly flat beats of the '80s Sleng Teng era, with riddims double-dipped in King Tubby's organic echo chamber and the digital tweaks and glitches of modern German dub technicians like Pole.

At the heart of the Jahtari maelstrom lies one of the music's kindest and gentlest souls, Jan Gleichmar; he runs the entire operation from his flat in Leipzig, Germany, and produces over half of the tunes released on the label under the name Disrupt. By day, the worldly Gleichmar records sound for a German documentary crew covering the Middle East and India. He's also a certifiable film buff, a trait reflected in his tunes, where snippets from Bollywood movies and sci-fi flicks get dubbed out alongside forgotten videogame samples from your past.

"The idea is to have set limits on the equipment and to work within these boundaries," says Gleichmar, pulling a drag from his ever-present cigarette. "A track should work first and above all because it contains fine and unique ideas and surprises."

His philosophy has attracted a slew of like-minded artists who fill out the Jahtari roster, such as California's Blue Vitriol (check out their ambient-influenced *They Went to Titan* EP) and Denmark's Bo Marley, who dubs out vintage synths and live instruments. Even Disrupt's neighbors from up the street are in on the act, with Illyah producing analog-heavy sounds to back the wistful crooning of chanteuse Ltd. Candy. Influential Jamaican vocalists like Mikey Murka and African Simba also lend their talents to Jahtari's wildly psychedelic catalog, which is pushing 25 net-only releases (all available for free).

Disrupt's sound has grabbed the attention of London's Werk Discs, who released a slew of Disrupt tunes, including a single, a full-length called *Foundation Bit?* (complete with a bonus 7-inch), and a series of four 10"s with album tracks and exclusives. "I've heard lots of artists messing around with dub, trying to add their own flavor," explains Werk label boss Darren Cunningham. "For me, Jan really demonstrates a true understanding of the history, techniques, and construction of beats attributed to proper dub, whilst adding his own digital interpretations."

Jahtari has also expanded into the physical world. A label best-of CD compilation, *Jahtarian Dubbers Vol. 1*, is out now and a vinyl EP from Julien Neto (as John Frum) is coming soon. In the meantime, grab a game controller, light a spliff, and find all the 8-bit dub you'll ever need on the Jahtari website.

*Jahtarian Dubbers Vol. 1* is out now, and a vinyl EP from Julien Neto. [www.jahtari.org](http://www.jahtari.org)