



According to Star Wars folklore, Jedi knights are benign individuals able to harness the fundamental energy of the universe, The Force, and make it do their bidding. Not just anyone can do this: only a select few are blessed with the necessary levels of cosmic talent. And even still, the road to Jedi knighthood is long and arduous, requiring years of training, practice and total focus. However those that stay the course are able to wield super-powers far beyond the capabilities of mere mortals.

For 30-year-old earthling Tom Middleton - sonic evanchillist, disco catalyst, gastronaut par excellence, bearded bloke from Cornwall - The Force translates as The Funk. And, as Yoda might say, The Funk is strong with this one. Best known for his solo productions as Cosmos, as well as being one half of Global Communication and The Jedi Knights, alongside long-term cohort Mark Pritchard, Middleton's route to mastering The Funk has resulted in a decade-long stream of lightsabre-sharp productions and remixes which have, repeatedly, boldly gone where no-one in the dance music universe has gone before.

Along the way, he has kickstarted the late-Nineties chillout explosion (Global Communication's 'ambient house' LP '76:14' inspired the promoters of The Big Chill to start the now-infamous festival in order to give downtempo music greater exposure); he helped shape the Nu School Breaks movement (the Jedi Knights' fusion of house, electro and breakbeats on their 'New School Science' LP is cited by scene leader Adam Freeland as a major influence), forged hypnotic, aquatic drum and bass (recording as Chameleon for LTJ Bukem's Good Looking label), pre-empted bootlegging culture (on Tom and Matt Herbert's now-defunct Cheeky Tunes label), delved into punky synth-pop (on the Jedi Knights' remix of Pulp's 'Party Hard') and, most successfully of all, unleashed an intergalactic burst of breathtakingly powerful deep house odysseys which have entranced dancefloors across planet Earth, from Miami to Ibiza and beyond (witness Cosmos' double-A side summer smash, 'Play To Win' and 'Take Me With You').

With his debut solo LP as Cosmos due on P Records in Spring 2004, Tom Middleton's training is complete: he has ascended to the level of Master, effortlessly distilling the entire spectrum of The Funk into one ever-evolving, shape-shifting, all-conquering sound - The Future Of Dance Music, no less. With dance's grip on the musical universe increasingly threatened by The Dark Side - soulless guitar bands; hum-drum glo-stick 'anthems'; the ebbing powers of former scene leaders - mild-mannered, erudite Tom Middleton's musical sorcery offers a new hope...

Standard Jedi practise has it that every knight is trained by an elder, and when Middleton was but a young Padawan, growing up in the far-flung outpost of Truro in Cornwall, he was taken under the wing of Richard James, aka The Aphex Twin, who schooled him in the ways of The Funk. In 1989, the pair began DJing together, playing early Chicago house, Detroit techno and experimental breakbeat in a small club in West Pentire. 'Richard is the fundamental reason why I make music today,' Tom recalls. 'He taught me how to use a sampler, and how to alter the settings on a Roland synth. He is the only person I have ever met to take the lid off an analogue synth and go, "No, I'm not happy with factory settings! I'm not going to be told what frequencies I can generate sound on." And I thought, "Exactly! You can break those rules! It immediately appealed to my scientific disposition.'

Tom had always been a sci-fi buff - but he loved 'proper' science too, something he picked up from his father, a graphic design and communications lecturer. A bright kid with an enquiring mind, he was put forward by for the local public school, and passed the entrance exams. Unable to afford the fees, his family managed to secure him a government-assisted place. 'I always felt very lucky to have a good education where I was given a lot more opportunities than I otherwise would have had,' he reflects. Mindful of this, Tom flung himself into his studies, excelling not only at science - biology, physics, chemistry - but the arts and languages too. He studied piano and cello, and played in orchestras, following the footsteps of his concert pianist mother.

After school, Tom went on to study graphic design at Taunton College. But by now his parallel education courtesy of the Aphex Twin was taking over, and he had begun amassing samplers and synthesisers and experimenting with electronic music. It was at Taunton, while DJing in a local club, that he met fellow music obsessive Mark Pritchard, and after Aphex Twin's departure to London, fame and fortune, Tom and Mark continued their training together, setting up a small independent label, Universal Language, and releasing their early forays into drum and bass, techno and deep house under the guises of Modwheel, Reload and Link.

Not that Tom's education had gone to waste: it's just that he had discovered ways of applying his love of science and music, and his twin obsessions with research and communication that his tutors hadn't quite foreseen. (These are reflected in his pseudonyms - Global Communication, Jedi Knights, Cosmos - and his record label, Universal Language, which began life as Evolution) 'I can remember listening to a tape of 'It Is What It Is' by Rhythim is Rhythm, and both Mark and I thinking, "This is incredible. It's so simple and effective and absolutely intense," recalls Tom. 'We both had a profound emotional response listening to the track, and it fuelled our desire to communicate those things through music too.'

Their breakthrough hit came in 1996 in the form of Global Communication's 'The Way'. A devastatingly funky slab of lush, layered house music it was one of the few British records of its era to achieve an authentic black American house sound to match that of scene leaders Deep Dish and Mood II Swing. With no major label or PR support, it peaked just outside the UK Top 40. Tom and Mark's abilities had gelled to awesome effect. This was more than just sampling old disco loops: Tom's talent for melody and harmony, not to mention his ability to play his own music as opposed to nicking other people's, compounded with Mark's gift for rhythm and production, spawned sounds that were fresh, original and breathtakingly beautiful. 'With Global Communication, we were trying to break down language barriers, and reach as many people as possible by using emotion and sound,' explains Tom. 'We were searching for the ultimate uplifting experience that wasn't the obvious sampled loop, but something that I'd played. We wanted melodic content, but within a structure, a rhythmic framework that people got.'

Another Middleton/Pritchard pseudonym, The Jedi Knights, was initially formed to kick against the mid Nineties techno scene, which, Tom recalls was 'dark' and 'moody'. 'They were going for this dark room, shirts-off, banging music experience, which wasn't particularly funky or soulful. The Jedi Knights was a response to what was going on at the time - it was a rewind to the fun and frolics of P-funk, Kraftwerk and early electro.'

You came to save us from The Evil Empire? 'Exactly! At the end of the day I like to be uplifted. I like to be made to feel good, happy, optimistic. I don't like to be made to feel scared or intimidated in a club environment. So I use tricks and sounds that, ultimately, whatever headspace you are in, are the equivalent of being on an E.' Though he has made music spanning many genres, these core feelings lie at the heart of everything Middleton does - from early LPs as Reload for Alan McGhee's Creation, through two Global Communication LPs on Dedicated, a compilation of his and Pritchard's early work for Warp, a Jedi Knights LP on Universal Language, and two stunning mix compilations: 1999's 'A Jedi's Night Out' for Mixmag, and this year's 'The Sound Of Cosmos' three-CD mix for Hooj Tunes.

Middleton's unique way with The Funk has also yielded some of the most inspired and spectacular live dance music in the galaxy: the Jedi Knights have performed with a 30-voice choir, and employed performance artists to interact with the crowd during gigs.

Now Tom is set to unveil his most exciting album project yet, as Cosmos. 'I don't think there is a bigger concept to represent the broadest spectrum of what I can create,' he says. 'Cosmos is the sum total of all my musical experiences to date.' As ever, Tom is several steps ahead of the pack — one of the myriad new musical forms on his forthcoming LP is 'deep step' — 'a slightly subtler UK garage with swung beats and more of a deep house structure; hypnotic, evolving, organic, warmer.'

In the nick of time, dance music's disparate rebel alliances have found a visionary new leader. There is a disturbance in The Force — a sonic tremor so powerful only the four corners of the universe can

contain it. Tom releases the single 'Take Me With You' on September 16th through P Records which will be the first part of a magnificent saga of music under the guise of Cosmos. The album as yet untitled will follow in the early part of 2003. Witness the Cosmos hatrick of summer monsters from 2000-2002: 'Play To Win', 'Summer In Space' and finally 'Take Me With You'.

Tom Middleton Biography

Hailing from the deep South West of England, artist, producer, amateur Cordon Bleu and Fusion Chef, and in-vogue remixer with DJ residencies in the capital and a bi-monthly Deep Step, House, Chillout and Breakbeat Radio show on Kiss FM.

(key facts : Archbishop Benson and Truro School Old Boy 77-

Classically trained 'Cellist and Pianist, grew up on a diet of 80's Electro, Synth Pop, Hip Hop, Goth, Rock, Jazzfunk, Early Acid House and Detroit .

Learned "the Art of Sampling" Djing and music production from the Electronica-genius Richard "Aphex Twin" James back in 1990.

Set up cult label "Evolution" with partner Mark Pritchard in '91. Released 7 highly collectable EP's..including The seminal Global Communication Grandfather Clock track.."Ob-selon Mi-nos". ('94)

Key releases :

Reload "A Collection of Short Stories" LP on the Infonet imprint ('93) and the debut Global Comm LP "76:14" plus remix LPS "Pentamerous Metamorphosis" and "Remotion" on Dedicated. ('94)

"The Theory of Evolution" LP collection of early classics on the Warp imprint. ('95)

Drum and Bass project Chameleon on the LTJ Bukems Goodlooking label ('96)

Electrofunk and breakbeat project Jedi Knights "New School Science" LP on the Universal Language label ('96) plus various Deep Tribal Tech House incarnations like Secret Ingredients and Modwheel.

Signed Matthew Herbert's WishMountain EP's to ULP ('97)

Mixmag live 27 : "A Jedi's Night Out" compilation ('99)

Signed to Island Records in '99 and released the club anthem "Summer in Space" under the Cosmos moniker.

Currently working on Cosmos Album, and Amba Audio-Visual Chillout project, including unique Big Chill festival performances with a 30 voice Choir. [For further information on the Big Chill See [Links](#)]

Key member of NuJazzFusion/Electrofunk/Drum'n'Bass/SciFi 5 piece live improv band The Bays rocking the festival circuit and wooing crowds wherever they play. Tom champions a state of the art 'fit-in-a-rucksack" laptop computer set up when jamming with The Bays..known as the "Science Department." [See [Links](#) for audio from recent dance Rhythm festival in Holland..where band was voted best act of the festival]

And if that's not enough...has produced a box full of club remixes too, including Leftfield, Pulp, Underworld, Prince, AllSaints, Eddy Grant, Goldfrapp, Lamb, Incognito and Depeche Mode.

On a constant quest for the ultimate solutions for dance music production on a budget Tom highly recommends the one box wonder drum machine -sampler-sequencer -synth Yamaha RS7000, and for Mac users; Propellorheads Reason Software and Emagic Logic Audio.

A keen ProTools user, self confessed technophile, practicing Jedi Knight and advocate of both digital and analogue media in the Arts.