

style of a track, basically because most of my tracks come straight from the mind... I just start and see how it goes."

Most of Steve's tracks are built from the beat up, even if it turns into a different style than it started as. "I may start a track using a garage beat and it may end up more like a trance track," Steve explains. "I'm just trying to get that dance track feel: stomping beats and basslines, a great catchy melody and vocals that make your cheeks glow. I use the basics when I make a track, that way it's not overdone with too much going on."

"I use my own edited drum patterns as well as preset loops. I'm not afraid to use loops 'cos they can be changed instantly and save me time. I play a four-to-the-floor drum pattern, then start editing it on the PC note editor, adding hats, toms and cymbals in real time. I mess around making melodies using synths sounds, and once I have a melody I'll transfer it to the PC, where I'll add effects like echos, filters, timestretching, delays... I love getting in the effects. They give you endless possibilities."

Does Steve get his inspiration from anywhere in particular? "Sometimes I put on a trance album or maybe a chart album and have a listen for how they build tracks, how they start and finish," he admits.

And what about for sounds? "Most come from samples on *FM* cover CDs or sample CDs, plus I visit websites with copyright-free samples. I also have all the sounds from my hardware and I could get the Amiga back out as it's got loads of samples on."

Steve already sends his tracks out to various labels, magazines and websites, and has had some good feedback. "*FM* is a valuable source of feedback for me," says Steve, "plus I send it to radio stations, labels, distributors and other people in the industry. In the last couple of months I've had more notice than ever. I've had two tracks put on BBC's OneMusic website, plus I had a call from 1xtra, asking if they could enter my track into their Homegrown Cuts list for their live show. There was web voting all week and live voting on the night too, and by the Sunday night I'd reached 62%. I was well chuffed, although as the show progressed I dropped to second place. But even so, the winner only beat me by 3%! That's life I suppose!"

"I always seem to get genuine good comments from people, but are they just being nice? If their comments are always good, why am I not employed



yet? I'm also a member of the APR; it's strictly private members only and I was invited into it. It's a great place to be, with tons of help and some great people involved. It might even bring me full-time employment."

### The future

Most of us will admit that our music takes priority over other things, and Steve is adamant that his music should be more than a hobby. "I love producing," he admits. "I want to do this for a living. I've done so many tunes now and I want the world to start hearing me. I've contacted so many places for help and advice and I now have more than enough knowledge but I'm still not getting to the right person or place. I enjoy my job, it's a pretty cool place and if I didn't like my job, I wouldn't do it, but I'd love a music career: producing and maybe remixing full time."

While Steve doesn't yet earn any money from his music – "I have my brother and his mates round, and we produce together, but I wouldn't charge them" – he does have ambitions in the financial department. "My gear has been bought by working my arse off, and if I did get loads of money for my music, I wouldn't be tight. I have friends and family who could benefit, as well as charities that need help. I'd show a few millionaires how to use money. *Share it!*"

"I realise it's not easy to get into the music industry, but I've got this far so I may as well continue. I've got to keep sending in tracks until they stand out from all the others."

Does Steve see his music becoming a full-time job then? "I honestly don't know," admits Steve, "although I'll say yes. Everyone I speak to, even in the

Steve could move his set-up into the loft 

Steve's Spirit M8 is the apple of his eye 

industry, tells me I'll get noticed sooner or later, and somehow, I'll get my foot in the door."

So where does Steve see his music in five years' time? "In a new house with a new studio producing wonders for the world," he smiles. "I'll have contracts from record labels and will be established within a community of top producers, DJs and MCs. I'll be doing gigs, throwing great parties, buying new things: car, furniture, studio gear... whatever I can afford really. Seriously though, it would be great if this happens. My music is endless and I'd really enjoy doing it for a living."

### FAVOURITE KIT

"Definitely my new Spirit M8 mixer. It's opened up so many possibilities. All it needs is to be fed lots of cables from lots of new gear! It's allowed me to use all my equipment again, but now I'm running out of space! I do love the fact that although the Spirit desk is analogue, it has a useful digital coaxial output on the back; very useful for direct recordings."

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