

It's a Hit

Singles, Remixes & MP3s

by [MICHAELANGELO MATOS](#)

"Tessio" Remixes

by **Luomo**

(Great Stuff Roots Edition)

Sign that I'm an old man: I think it's funny that **Luomo's "Tessio," a mere nine years old now, is being honored as "roots"** by the Munich dance label Great Stuff's "classics" division. The latter designation I'd never argue with: *Vocalcity*, Luomo's debut that this song is on, is easily among my favorite albums of the decade. It's also a song that its maker has tinkered with endlessly, including a rather different version on *Vocalcity's* 2003 follow-up, *The Present Lover*, which brought about remixes of its own; here, the honors are done by **deep-house Hamburg resident Stimming** and the tougher **English techno duo Spektre**.

You'd think a near-decade would have hardened the original by now, but if anything it's opened up over time. Three more albums have revealed Luomo's cracks, which makes "Tessio" sound more like a glorious accident than ever, especially the final five minutes, in which basically nothing happens except the focus shifting around to every sonic element in turn, allowing the listener to revel in the pure play of it all, **an update of Arthur Russell's spirit as well as sound**. Every so often a young man's voice murmurs, "Try to stay alive," as life goes on all around him.

Stimming's remix gets the job of updating the original in a similar context—dubbed-out house. Touches such as dropped-in sound snippets (clacking high piano notes, watery horns) buttress a neat, almost absently propulsive groove at odd moments, reminiscent of Akufen's *My Way*, a contemporary of Luomo's exciting early work. But the track holds its own with the vocal, a coolly harmonized unidentified women who made lines like "I'm trying to be all yours/Although I ain't answering your calls/Don't say it's false/I'm only following my thoughts" sound both weary and relieved, the nervous undertone that gave the original its subcutaneous pull is here routinized. Once the words had come across as **a love-hate letter to dance music itself**; now it just sounds like a relationship song—a damn good one, but it's a loss nevertheless.

Spektre has the more overtly hokey entry: Their remix could as easily be a remix of Âme's '05 classic "Rej," and there's a heavily filtered "bridge" that goes on for quite a while before the whole thing starts bounding again. It's not "minimal" by any stretch of the imagination, and that deliberately crowd-pleasing aspect is what I like about it. Isn't that what the classics are for? ★

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