

ITALY

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**Rone: Spanish Breakfast**

InFiné

French musician and sound designer Erwan Castex appears to be hunting bigger game than a straight-up collection of techno tracks in his debut Rone full-length *Spanish Breakfast* for the Paris-based InFiné imprint. Having fashioned an imaginary, fairy tale-like wonderland, Castex transports the listener into an enchanted world that alternates scenes of carefree joy and nightmarish unease. The story-like nature of the release is signified by the inclusion of an "Intro," "Outro," and central interlude ("Interlude In The Bed"), all of which provide brief rest-stops along the way.

"Spanish Breakfast" and "Belleville" are sparkling techno tracks of sunlit character where beats skip buoyantly and iridescent keyboard melodies joyfully sing. In these cases, no dark clouds loom on the horizon and threaten to dispel the enchantment Castex seems so intent on cultivating. A slightly darker ambience begins to surface in the brooding melodies of "Aya Ama," though the track's driving, *schaffer*-like pulse is no less propulsive than the others, and the downward trajectory continues during "Poisson Pilote" where fragmented voices stutter over a throbbing, clockwork rhythm base. The charging minimal techno of "La Dame Blanche" includes a clanging rhythm that sounds a bit too reminiscent of Samim's "Heater" though the presence of saxophone wail by French jazz musician Adrien Roch admittedly shifts the focus elsewhere. In "Bora Vocal," the speaking voice of French SF writer Alain Damasio (his *La Horde du Contrevent* a bestseller in France) is heard alongside surging tech-house rhythms in a track that grows ever more uplifting as it progresses. In sum, the collection hardly re-writes the techno rule-book but Castex deserves some credit for trying to hanging his off-swinging and stylistically-varied tracks on a story-line.

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