

for around 50 years now, since 1911... taking the...

## **RICHIE HAWTIN,** **MUSICIAN/DJ**

Early last year, the DJ and producer Richie Hawtin was putting together a live show to mark 20 years of Plastikman, the most prominent of his many musical alter egos. Due to its scope, the show posed a considerable challenge to the British-born techno megastar. "When you do an electronic performance, traditionally you have a mixing board with all these knobs and faders to create the sound," he explains. "For this show, each song called for a whole different set of knobs and faders."

What Hawtin needed, in order to control all those diverse environments at once, was a touch-screen device. The iPad came out in April. Within two months, Hawtin and his team had integrated it into the Plastikman performances. Six months later, they formed a company, Liine, to turn the apps they'd developed into commercial products.

One of these apps, Griid, "allows you to navigate a musical environment that would be hundreds of screens deep if you were trying to look at it

on a normal laptop. With your hand movements you can zoom from left to right, find the instrument and the melody that you want, and start, stop or modify it with a quick touch."

Griid interfaces with the popular Ableton Live sequencing software and can be used in the studio as well as onstage.

Harnessing touch-screen technology, Hawtin says, is like "following a dark path with a torch and stumbling upon new techniques.

The show has evolved into

something that we didn't even realise was possible." Being able to use both hands on a screen, rather than being tethered to a mouse and keyboard, "transfers a bit more of your spirit into the technology you're using".

Ever the restless techno-pioneer, Hawtin is now looking forward to future devices "that can sense not only left or right movements but how much pressure you're applying to the screen. That, as far as musicians like me are concerned, will be the next huge development."

**Interview by Killian Fox**

