**GOLDEN FEATURES**

Sydney dance music producer Tom Stell chose the artist name Golden Features in 2014, around the same time he started to DJ and play live sets wearing a gilded mask.

For Stell, anonymity was a means of deflecting attention from himself and having his art appreciated for art’s sake, values that were instilled in him as a teenage graffiti artist.

Ironically, the mask has only attracted more interest in the mystery man behind it, but there’s no doubt that Stell’s music has spoken for itself, and loudly.

His self-titled EP in 2014 landed him extensive airplay on youth radio kingpin Triple J; his follow up EPs *XXIV* and *Wolfie/Funeral,* in 2015 and 2016 respectively, saw him sell out his Australian headline tour in 2015 and rack up appearances at Falls Festival, Splendour In The Grass and Field Day. His long-awaited debut LP, *SECT*, delivers on the promise of his earlier releases. It’s the work of a perfectionist, who took a year off touring to concentrate on the album. “I was in that same space, a 3-metre by 3-metre studio, every day,” says Stell. “I had a hard time switching off at family functions and stuff. I’m always thinking about music.”

A former underground hip-hop head, he was introduced to electronic music at a Future Music Festival headlined by Chemical Brothers and Boys Noize. “It set the whole thing in motion and I got hooked,” says Stell. He bought some equipment and dabbled in “hyper-aggressive dubstep” and big-room EDM, but a visit to Miami left him disillusioned with the scene that had initially seduced him.

He turned instead to some of the biggest names in electronic music of the past twenty years – Daft Punk, Chemical Brothers and Justice, to name a few –to take notes from the masters, influences that inform his rich, assured work as Golden Features, with his own modern, distinctive flourishes.

While making *SECT*, Stell was listening to everything from Joy Division and New Order to Queens of the Stone Age, Nirvana and “a lot of that 2007 era Ed Banger stuff”. His travels inspired him too, particularly a trip to The Louvre museum in Paris, where “a lot of the art is really extravagant and over the top,” he says. “I like the idea of going too far with melody or sound or arrangements.”

A sect describes a group of people with radically different beliefs to those of wider society. It makes sense that Stell, who says he’s always felt “detached and alienated a bit”, would choose *SECT* as the name for his album. “I’ve always liked the idea of people being able to come together under the grounds of feeling alienated elsewhere,” he says.

As Stell launches the album with his biggest headline tour to date in Australia, expect his growing sect of followers is set to reach great new heights. One of Australia’s most exciting young talents has just delivered his best work yet -- and he’s just getting started.

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