Footwork, a dissonant soundtrack to Chicago dance battles, is a reminder of how strange and compelling abstract sounds can be, writes Andy Battaglia

The sound was disjunctive and consonant and peculiar. Even in an electronic music realm that proliferates experiments and novelties, footwork remains an anomaly smoothed and unsettling sound, with a higher likelihood than most of eliciting from listeners equivocal states of mind fixed on a fundamental question: “What is the world to this?”

Compounding the weirdness of it was the startling fact that footwork was made expressly and explicitly for dancing, with home ownerships ensconced at local clubs and passed around at parties. The sounds jolt, jerk, and break apart while running at wild speeds or in slow-motion. The signals in it stutter, about it is fashioned to jam the music, of a kind, but everything as Chicago footwork. It’s dance equation.

“Music, of a kind, but everything else than an ephemeral, ineffable thing in itself. It’s invisible, unrepresentable to the senses, music is less, even less than the air that we breathe...”

There, Jlin started making music in the style fo...