Karma Chameleon

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He’s the most interesting pioneer you’ve never heard of. Philip Glass adored him; David Byrne and Allen Ginsberg collaborated with him. From the late ’70s through the ’80s, cellist/sitarist/disco-producer Arthur Russell (1952–1992) straddled performance art and the dance floor until AIDS stopped the show. He produced Sire Records’ first 12” (“Kiss Me”) and laid the blueprint for the Paradise Garage sound with Larry Levan’s remix of “Is It All Over My Face.” Now *The World of Arthur Russell* (www.souljazzrecords.co.uk) serves up a platter of Russell’s eclectic output, including quirky, proto-house classics and quieter tracks laced with earthy cello and hallucinatory vocals. For more on the Russell revolution, keep an eye on audikarecords.com; a triple whammy of re-releases is due in February.

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