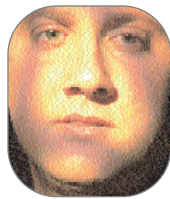


INTERVIEWS



ROBBIE RIVERA



Besides building a reputation as a top DJ and producer, Puerto Rico's Robbie Rivera is one of music's most in-demand remixers. He's worked over tracks by Faithless, Felix Da Housecat, Sybil, Moloko, Victoria Beckham, Madonna, Puretone, Brandy, and others.



His latest conquest is a coveted resident spot at Crobar Miami. He's also got his own record label, Juicy Music, and has released material on Subliminal, Positiva, Ministry of Sound, Tommy Boy and Strictly Rhythm.

Robbie was bitten by the DJ bug early in life. "I started DJing in Puerto Rico when I was 13. I was doing weddings, school parties, the works," he says. "By the end of high school I was playing some clubs and Friday nights at the only dance music mix show in San Juan."

But the music scene in his native Puerto Rico couldn't support a house music master in the making, so Robbie packed his bags and headed for the mainland to continue his education. "At 18, I went to study music production at The Art Institute in Fort Lauderdale," Robbie says.

But the most important education Robbie got was out of the classroom. "I purchased a keyboard/sampler/work station, the Kurzweil 2000, where I started arranging

beats and melodies. This is where it all started." Teaching himself to use these new tools, Robbie was soon producing his own material. He recalls, "I released my first record in 1995. It was called 'El Sorullo.' It was a Latin house track. I had to do my own label because nobody wanted to pick it up."

These days, you can catch Robbie at his new residency at Crobar Miami. Of the gig, he says, "I play once a month on Friday or Saturday. The vibe is great and the sound system is tight and loud just how I like it. I play from 1am to 5am. My sets range from funky house to hard house to dark moody tribal stuff."

He aims for an inclusive audience, describing his crowd philosophy like this: "I like to spin for pure clubbers. I like mixed crowds. My fans tend to be from 18 to people in their 30s."

Robbie also lists a diverse group of artists among his influences. "I look up to, and admire, producers that are very original in their productions," he says. "For example King Unique, Daft Punk, Deep Dish, Rollo from Faithless and Danny Tenaglia, to name a few."

At the same time, Robbie values originality and uniqueness. Like any respected DJ, Robbie is often cornered by up-and-comers seeking the formula for success. "My advice is to be original and creative," he says, "There is a lot of competition in this industry and you have to ignore criticism."

- Dan Ackerman



JUDGE JULES



A member of the elite British Radio 1 fraternity, Judge Jules is used to playing tastemaker for 1.5 million weekly listeners over the airwaves. With exposure like that, it's little wonder he came in at number three on *DJ* magazine's "Top 100 DJs in the World" list last year.



Like many DJs, Jules started on his career path early in life. "I guess it's a familiar story," he says. "I had the largest record collection among my social circle, which looks cool when you're in your early to mid-teens. As you enter your twenties, you start having to DJ to justify your continued vinyl addiction, for risk of appearing a nerd, and earning some money via DJing is the best way."

Jules calls legendary DJ Norman Jay his long-time mentor, but his influences range far and wide. He says, "I respect anyone who's stuck by their musical guns whether or not their genre's in fashion. Of particular note would have to be Carl Cox and Ferry Corsten."

With a background like that, it's little wonder Jules isn't locked into a specific audience. Asked what kind of people he makes music for, he can

only say, "The people who come to my gigs, I can't be more specific than that."

But with his new record about to hit the shelves, Jules is also aiming for the at-home set. "I've made a range of chill-out and funky house

I guess it's a familiar story, I had the largest record collection among my circle.

tracks," he says, referring to his forthcoming Hi-Gate album *Split Personality*, "that are predominantly for listening pleasure."

Despite occasional doomsaying from the British music press, Jules continues to be optimistic about the future of club culture. "In the UK there were a couple of quiet months during the summer, and many journalists started prophesizing clubland's ultimate downfall," he recalls. "But things have come back stronger than ever, and the state of play's very healthy."

But Judge Jules has good reason to be optimistic. "I've achieved most of my goals," he says. "DJing around the world, broadcasting to the masses on the radio, and making records that people seem to appreciate." So, as for future goals, "it's really a case of more of the same."

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