

DEEP FRIED DECKS

THE RADIO ISN'T TASTY. PROGRESSIVE MUSIC IS.

INTERVIEW WITH DARIN EPSILON

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Darin Epsilon has quickly blown up in the global Progressive House scene as one of the acts to watch out for. If you've ever heard one of his sets you'll hear just why! The man is talented and we were lucky enough to catch up with him to find out what makes him tick.

Hi Darin, can you tell us a bit about the thought process behind your mixes? You were one of the winners in John Digweed & Beatport's DJ competition in 2011. Did it reflect your musical influences and versatility? Lastly, was winning that competition a catalyst in terms of your DJing career?

Hey guys! First off, thanks for inviting me to do this interview, it's a real pleasure for me. The rules for the Bedrock DJ contest were simple: use any of the tracks that appeared on Structures Two and compile your best 30 minute mix. It took me several hours to decide which tracks I was going to use and when because I like to take my listeners on a "journey". Everything had to be taken into consideration, including harmony, pacing, musical complexity, and overall mood. I think it takes a serious understanding of music and real skill to be able to take a listener from point A to point B to point C.

After I was announced as one of the winners, it did help me to an extent. I wasn't instantly touring around the world, but it was a nice addition to the resumé, and every little bit surely counts these days.

Your first original tune (Bluephobia) was released in 2007, going on to become a major hit. You've run a college radio station and worked at a record shop so the passion for music has always been there. Were you always musically inclined on a production level? What was the reason behind going into production?

Yea, for as long as I can remember, music has always been a major driving force in my life. I wrote my first track when I was 14 and bought my first turntables at age 17. Fast forward to 2007, and I completed my first professional sounding track 'Bluephobia' around my senior year in college.

These days, producing music serves the dual purpose of satisfying my inner needs as an artist, and remaining competitive in an overly crowded music scene. Now I've even gone on to act as a catalyst for other producers' careers with my record label.

You launched your own label, Perspectives Digital, in November 2010. What was the reason behind expanding your brand?

Perspectives Digital was launched as an extension to my radio show Perspectives, which had already been on the air for 4 years.

Unfortunately, it seems that most record labels don't have their artists' best interests in mind. I have had quite a lot of my own horror stories to tell.

The advantage of having my own imprint is that I can release whatever I want, whenever I want. It allows me the personal freedom that I believe is absolutely essential for an artist these days. That doesn't mean I don't work with

other labels (in fact, I just had releases on Renaissance and Hope, and one's coming out on Sudbeat in May), but rather it acts as an extension to everything I'm already doing.

Your production and mixes contrast each other quite well. Your latest tunes, especially 'Shine The Light', focus on taking the listener on a journey by means of steadily constructed ambience and mystical rhythm. This is essentially what Progressive House is all about. Taking the listener on a journey, in no rush. Do you feel that your DJ mixes are more about reading a crowd and being flexible - reflecting musical influences – whilst your production allows you to channel your creative energy into something more acute and artistic?

Well, I believe there's a time and place for everything. When I'm in my studio, music has no boundaries, and I can go anywhere that my imagination wants to take me. In a club setting, I'm confined to other people's rules. For example, I have to play the right music in order to keep the patrons happy, so that I'll be invited back. The track selection is really important, and so understanding which tracks to bring with you, and which ones to leave at home.

Can you tell us a bit about your production set up in your studio? Are you more inclined towards analogue or digital?

The first synths I bought were by Korg (MS-2000 and Electribe drum machine), and I had such a tough time wrapping my head around them that eventually I became 100% software-based.

I write almost all my musical ideas in Ableton and Reason, and then finish the final stages in Logic because of its superior sound quality. My preferred soft-synths are Spectrasonics Omnisphere, Rob Papen Predator, Synplant, and most of the VST's by Native Instruments.

We noticed that some of your production has been used in various films. Not many producers are able to boast about something like that. Hybrid created music with the intention of it being used as a score in film. Is this an avenue that you are willing to explore further as a producer, and more specifically, as a musician?

Well, I think I've always wanted my music to transcend the dancefloor. I grew up listening to a very eclectic blend of music, so I consider DJing just one dimension to my music career. At the moment, I'm primarily concerned with playing club gigs, but who knows where I'll be in another 10 to 20 years. And yea, the film world is a good place to cross over when I become too old to party every weekend!

Progressive House is a genre that is becoming a little bit "murky" on Beatport. Various small labels are struggling to push their releases on there. Their take on the matter is that a lot of "Anthem House" or more commercial dance music is finding its way on there, marginalizing the proper "proggy". Do you agree with the above?

I would most definitely have to agree. Beatport have managed to cause a backlash amongst the progressive house community and mass confusion for their customers.

On the other hand, would any artist really want to be labeled as "Anthem House" or "Commercial Dance"? I guess I could see why this new genre hasn't been opened up yet. It's almost like a derogatory term to be labeled as a "mainstream" DJ and producer.

What can we expect from Darin Epsilon in 2013? Would you be interested in coming to SA?

That would certainly satisfy the inner explorer in me! The only time I've been in Africa was last July, when I played a huge party called Sunglasses At Night in Nairobi, Kenya.

As for productions, my track 'Red Matter' will be out May 6 on Hernan Cattaneo's label Sudbeat Music. I'll also have several new releases on my own label Perspectives Digital in the coming months. The best place to keep up to date with everything that's going on is my Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/darinepsilonofficial>

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