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OCTOBER 28, 2019 | BY MIKE DAVIES

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It is perhaps one of dance music's most famous creations – a timeless classic from the so-called “golden era” of trance in the late 90s and early 00s, a track that has appeared on countless compilations, introduced many young minds to dance music in the first place, and more recently, has become something of a double-edged sword thanks to its meme status and usage at major non-music events. Yep, what other track could we be talking about than [Darude's](#) 1999 classic *Sandstorm*, which is now celebrating its 20th birthday.



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The story of the track has been told many a time, but as a brief history lesson – in the 1990s Ville Virtanen was producing happy-hardcore, before moving onto Eurodance, then settling on trance music as the millennium drew to a close. In 1999, a flash of inspiration came from the default “User 11” patch, titled “Sand Storm”, on the JP8080 synthesiser, a unit that came to define the uplifting trance sound. It was also the first track Darude collaborated on with Jaakko Salovaara, an experienced fellow-Finnish producer who was about to achieve worldwide success with his Bomfunk MC's project, notably the track *Freestyler* which was released the same month. Under his JS16 moniker, Jaakko and Ville had *Sandstorm* finished in just one week, and then unleashed it on the world.

It started slowly – the track was released on 16 Inch Records in Scandinavia only, but was quickly signed to the UK's Neo Records and began to gain serious traction in the clubs. As is still so often the case today, the track spent several months as an “underground” release, but as the spring and summer of 2000 rolled around, *Sandstorm* was a firm feature in the various mainstream charts worldwide, and there was scarcely a dance music compilation that didn't feature the track.

In more recent times, the track has gained almost cult-like status outside of electronic music. Starting in 2009, it was played during a South Carolina Gamecocks football game, allegedly by accident at first, but since becoming a rallying-anthem for the team. Perhaps most notably of all, it has gained notoriety online in the form of a meme, whereby users on platforms such as Twitch or Youtube asking for the name of a track, will receive the reply “Darude – *Sandstorm*” regardless of the actual track playing.

So whether you love it or hate it (and there can't be many in the latter camp!) it's certainly been a rollercoaster 20 years for one of dance music's all-time classics.

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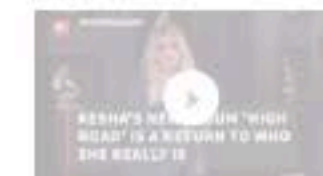
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