

Personality Clash: Honey Dijon x Harry Romero

Discussing New York club culture, black heroes, and uncovering their own identities...

A good DJ will never be fully satisfied with their sound - after all, there's always new spaces to explore, new skills to uncover.

That's what keeps **Honey Dijon** and **Harry Romero** at the top of their game. Both have distinctive styles, yet both also sharing a willingness to embrace the new, to keep moving forever forwards.

Driven by a deep-rooted passion for club culture and the freedoms it can offer, the pair recently set aside time in their schedule to share mutual truths, following Honey's remix of Harry Romero's release 'Tania'.

Hitting each other up on WhatsApp, the freeform conversation moved from common heroes to New York club culture and uncovering fresh aspects of their identities...



HARRY: It was amazing to have you remix 'Tania', when did you first hear the original and why did you agree to rework it?

HONEY: I first heard 'Tania' at Danny Tenaglia's party Be Yourself at Vinyl in New York. Danny broke that record and for weeks, no one could figure out what it was. It destroyed the dancefloor

every time he dropped it. Danny is one of my inspirations and mentors to me so that's why I jumped at the chance to rework it. It has a deep emotional connection for me.

HARRY: What are your fondest memories of that time?

HONEY: A sense of community and dancing with so many people that have become lifelong friends. Clubbing was different before the internet and tech and finance hadn't completely destroyed the fabric and diversity of NYC. Clubbing was communal and celebratory and not just entertainment. These were people's lives. They lived the music and the culture.

HARRY: Speaking of Danny, you and I both see him as an inspiration/mentor, what do you think the three of us share in terms of house music values?

HONEY: Respect for the foundations of house music. I think we revere the conscious music of R&B and disco that birthed house music. We take the role of DJ and Producer very seriously. I think it fair to say even if we couldn't make a living from it we would still find some way to be a part of the culture because we breathe it. The love of music and sharing that with people gives one a sense of purpose I would say.



HARRY: It really is a part of us and you are right... one way or another we'd definitely be a part of this at some level. We are definitely lucky.

HONEY: And hard workers...Your output is prolific!

HARRY: I saw you met Madonna recently. What was that like? I woulda been pinching myself the whole time.

HONEY: You were pinching yourself?! Shit, what did you think I was doing haha! It was a full circle moment for me. I never thought playing underground house music would lead me to this place.

My life has been nothing but love. What I mean by that is that everything that I have deeply been a fan of or loved has somehow crossed my path. Keith Haring, Jean Michel Basquiat, Larry Levan, the Paradise Garage and Sound Factory. This was a magical time in NYC and Madonna was a part of that so I felt like I got close to everything I love. It was surreal and awesome and amazing all at the same time. I just felt gratitude that I got to meet an actual legend in the game.

HARRY: I was too young for the garage, Basquiat and Haring but I totally get it. Crazy how their energy lives on and you were able to tap into that spirit through Madonna. They are quintessential NYC of an era that we can only read about, sadly.

HARRY ROMERO in The Lab NYC



HONEY: Well my question to you is, what do you think of the state of dance music today? For me it feels like we have not had a new movement sonically when it comes to house music. What do you think about that?

HARRY: I think generally speaking there's a real lack of personality in the house music. I remember when I could hear a record and pretty accurately guess from what part of the world it came from. Regions had a sound. I could tell you if it was made in France or Germany or Spain. Now with everyone grabbing from the same place a lot of the music sounds generic and lacks

personality. We did things a certain way in the tristate as they did differently in Chicago or England.

Add this with the fact that a lot of “producers” are just making tracks to get gigs. This is not good because there is no push to create art. When you become complacent and don’t push yourself out of your comfort zone then the art gets lost. When the motivation to make music is to get a gig then you’ve missed the whole point. When the motivation is just for a 'hands in the air' moment in your track then you’ve missed the point. When you’re creative process is dumbed down to a paint by numbers approach then you’ve missed the point.

Take chances and have fun in the studio. Surround yourself with creatives that encourage and will call you out.

HONEY: Great perspective. I agree but that goes back for me to entertainment. If the goal is to get the hands in the air instead of the feet and asses moving you’ve missed the point.

HARRY: Word the fuck up! I’m having the best time lately in the studio. I see you crushing it all over the world and I could not be happier and prouder for you. Congrats on all your success and keep spreading love. Oh and congrats on your Outstanding Impact Award. And like I always tell you, “check the Dropbox for some heat!”

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HONEY: My next question is, there are so few people of colour in dance music. Only a handful that are very visible. I rack my brain trying to discover new young and upcoming black or latin

producers especially in house or techno. With much respect it seems like only heritage artists are still being profiled. What happened in your opinion?

HARRY: Oh man. Here we go. We are going in! Get the popcorn!

HONEY: Have people of colour abandoned the artform for hip-hop? It seems like only queer people of colour are interested in the music and usually from ballroom culture... Maybe it's gone full circle and returned to its roots.

HARRY: This is a multi dimensional topic. We could argue that yes, black and Latino kids are more into hip hop these days. We could argue that it's another Elvis Situation. I really rack my brain with these questions constantly. I mean, techno is black music from Detroit. No question about it. Yet the percentage of black artists, excluding the obvious legends, that are playing the major events is super low.

HONEY: I agree. We would need a symposium on this topic with multiple perspectives. My last question because mama has a flight to catch! If you could pick one artist to work with, who would it be?

HARRY: Stevie Wonder. He just oozes soul. I would love to spend a day with him for obvious reasons.

HONEY: Yes Stevie would be ace. We all know who mine would be! Mutha Grace!

HARRY: Grace in your face!!!

HONEY: It's been fun chatting keep up the great work. I have nothing but respect for you and your contribution to dance music and your talent. It was an honour to remix 'Tania'!

Honey Dijon Boiler Room x Sugar Mountain 2018 DJ Set



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