

PRODUCER CROSSTALK



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New Jersey-based underground house and dance producer/artist Dennis Ferrer has been passionate about music since he was a child. Raised on a diet of soul, funk, rock and then some, he began to write and arrange 10 years ago.

On Ferrer's MySpace page he bemoans the current state of the music scene and the quality of songs in release. "Good songs today, there just aren't any," the producer explains. "They're really rare. Everything's a track nowadays and it just sucks. At the end of the day people want something they can sing because it reminds them of a time of either happiness or sadness. It hits a nerve. That's what's missing today: people who have the ability to write great songs."

Mindful of this quality gap, he took it upon himself to better the field that he loves. Along with partner Kerri Chandler the two began to study lyric writing. "It's not easy to write good songs so it's taken some work," Ferrer observes. "There was one time in particular when I already had the [writing] percentages worked out – Dennis Ferrer 100 percent. I got stuck on a bridge and then the vocalist came in humming something. I liked it and decided to use it so I had to give the vocalist a credit."

Like any producer, Ferrer utilizes technology to aid him in his work. But he also notes its potential for abuse. "Technology has allowed mediocre producers to become a bit better, bad producers to become worse and good producers to become even better," he says. "Now anyone with a computer can become a producer, so they think."

Ferrer started two of his own labels along with Chandler: *Sfere* (pronounced "Sphere") and *Objectivity*, primarily as a springboard into the music business. Conceding that it's difficult to break in, especially if you don't know anyone, he observes that "You don't want to ride somebody's back for so long. One day you need to step out in the field and say, 'I can do this, I'm on my own.' It gave us our opportunity to throw out things that we found kind of wild instead of just the generic kind of house music." Just as it takes time to establish one's self as a producer, it also takes time to get a label up and running. Ferrer says of both processes that "Right now I'm just flowing; things kind of come up in your life. The more you push the farther away things tend to get from you. Or you rush them and you get there too quickly and things just turn ugly. I've been very blessed to be in this business for a long time now and it's like the slow burn. And you know what? I prefer the slow burn to the fast-rising star. Talent always wins out, it's just a matter of time. I tell everyone that my object is not to write hit records. I love when that happens, but it's not what I strive for. All I want is to give people quality because I feel that if you're consistent, good things will come to you."

With the advent of popular music download services such as iTunes, it would appear that a happy medium has been achieved between consumers and the music industry. But in Ferrer's view all is not well. "Digital downloads are an immense problem for songwriters and producers," he says. "Nobody realizes that we're not getting any publishing or it's practically nonexistent. There's no way to track downloads predictably or to receive royalties. The only thing I have a problem with is getting paid on the backend. A solution will be found once the majors have had enough."

Ferrer's latest album *The World As I See It* will be released in February on King Street / Defected. King Street is a New York house label; Defected is based in London.

Contact Andy Reynolds / PENETRATION INC,
andy@penetrationinc.com,
212-673-0240,
www.penetrationinc.com



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