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“Through the trials and tribulations of my life, music has never left me. Never left...”

... Nocturnal Magazine.net Interview

Dennis Ferrer

Objektivty, King Street Sounds, Defected
05.15.2007 ... Words by Toni Tambourine

“Through the trials and tribulations of my life, music has never left me. Never left.”
With such a statement it's obvious Ferrer's passion for music is beyond question, and this unquenchable thirst is largely attributable to his childhood: one of his earliest recollections is tinkling the ivories of a toy piano aged four in a soul-and-disco-obsessed NYC household. Another vivid memory is as an eight-year-old, making after-school trips to local record shops to buy rap records, as both his ears and imagination were captured by the birth of hip hop in and around his New York neighbourhood. 'I was born in 1970 but I'm more a child of the early 1980s and late 1970s onwards: As a kid I remember chic's Le Freak, and Rapper's Delight - that was an eye opener,' he recalls.

He also scoured the Columbia Records catalogue that his parents and aunts would use to purchase their music, and bought records with interesting names, such as the Doobie Brothers, or Kiss because of their striking LP covers. 'They were great times we listened to Chic, Sugar Hill, Kiss, Rush and AC/DC - everything rolled side by side, there were no genres or the genres were easy listening, rock and soul.'

'And that's my approach to music today: I grew up in the whatever age, where you would listen to everything and I'm doing the same thing,' continues Ferrer. 'That's why people are surprised by my variety like if I do a tech thing, or an Afro thing, or a soulful record. That's the way I grew up. I didn't listen to one type of music.'

'Let's get this right: I'm not a producer. I'm a song writer/producer.'
Ferrer is quite literally an exceptional producer, in that he writes 90% of what you hear on one of his records, from lyrics to melodies to beats. His specialty is songs ('That's what I grew up with and that's what wrong with this business, there's not enough songs'). Forthcoming LP, *The World As I See It*, redresses this imbalance: with a healthy representation of song-based house - or dance music with feeling and a message.

He is also exceptional because he's the anti-thesis of the anonymous dance music producer: he uses his real name - no pseudonyms, monikers, or abbreviations. That's because he's prepared to stand up and be counted, putting blood, sweat and tears into his records: 'This is who I am, this is not my job, this is what I love to do: when you get one of my records, there's quality - you're not getting cheated, I put my heart in it.'

Inspiration, however, can strike at the most unexpected of moments, and you have to be prepared: 'You can be taking a sh*t and be humming something and come up with a lyric and then have to run to the studio or write it down,' laughs Ferrer. 'Life is my muse - whether I'm having a sh*tty day, or I am happy or pissed off, what I write is coming from my heart. He's been schooled by house and electronic music's leading lights of the last 15 years including early 1990s acid techno pioneer Damon Wild (behind Synewave Records), Kerri Chandler who set up a studio for Ferrer in his front room, and 'brought the soulful element into my life', while Kerri's good friend Jerome Sydenham, 'taught me arrangement and nuances in records.'

However between hooking up with Damon Wild as a young and confident producer - who astonishingly bagged (blagged?) a major label deal with his first ever record in the late-1980s, aged 19 - and Kerri Chandler in the mid-1990s, Ferrer left music behind, and studied to become a software engineer. While studying Ferrer began working in a music equipment store, where house music's elite would drop by. Inevitably Ferrer's hobby of producing music grew into something more, especially after becoming friends with Kerri Chandler.

Then in 1995/1996 Ferrer went to a gig with Chandler, where again inspiration struck unexpectedly and he literally experienced an epiphany. 'Kerri played Kenny Bobien's Why I Sing and I stood in the middle of the dancefloor, not dancing and had tears in my eyes: I realised this is what I wanted to do.' Ferrer still had a day job until 6pm in the evening, that finished at 6pm), and would get straight into the studio with Kerri and work 'til 3am, only to start work again at 6am. His job suffered and was asked by his employers to make a choice. It was a no-brainer of a decision, and luckily for us, Ferrer pursued his calling and dream: making music.



... Nocturnal Mix Sessions Monthly MP3 February 2007

The Nocturnal Mix Sessions are a 60-80 minute monthly set recorded by Nocturnal's resident DJs and packed full of the latest and hottest tunes out there. To quick start 2007, we have a very special LIVE recording from our monthly Nocturnal Soiree parties at Toronto's chic Chinadoll. With hot new tunes from Dave Spoon f. Penny Foster, Michael Grey f. Steve Edwards, Joshua Heath, Ben Macklin f. Tiger Lilly, and an original from Phantasm himself infuse this sexy yet pumping set. This is how we do every month live at Chinadoll, so check the Upcoming Events to join us for one of Toronto's hottest nights of upfront choonage!
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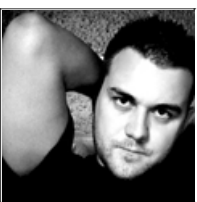
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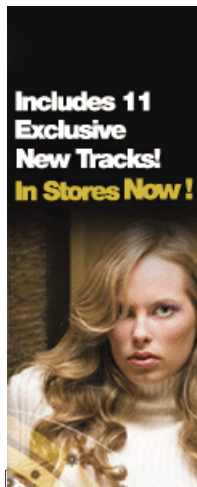
Upcoming Nocturnal DJ Appearances

- May 10
Edit w/ D-Formation (Spain) + Simon Jain @ Hotel Toronto
- June 3
Launch of Sunset Sessions @ The Docks Toronto
- June 8
Andy Reid, Simon Jain, + Matt Shaw @ The Hostel Toronto
- July 1
Baby Slam Boat Cruise Toronto



... Funkagenda Interview

If you havent heard of Funkagenda by now then where have you been hiding? Over the last 18 months, Groovedigital's in-house engineer has become a name synonymous with quality house music. Already having featured on labels as prominent as SUBLIMINAL, POSITIVA, BIG LOVE and TOOLROOM, his production and remix skills are highly sought after worldwide. In fact he is now fixed firmly in the 24 Management stable, home to NIC FANCIULLI, STEVE MAC, SEB FONTAINE and CHRIS LAKE amongst others...
... Read the Interview



'As long as it's 4/4, bumping and a club record, I'm happy - I don't want to make anything sleepy.'

Ferrer doesn't mince his words, but unlike many egotistical producers he can back it up with the real deal or at least three of house music's and the global dancefloor's biggest records of the last three years: Sandcastles, Most Precious Love, and The Cure & The Cause. He makes music with a vibe, and as long it meets the criteria of '4/4, bumping, club and not sleepy' he's a happy man.

The last thing Ferrer is concerned with is fitting a genre or scene. Which is useful for a visionary such as Ferrer, as barriers between dance music genres currently seem as relevant as the Berlin Wall. Take for example the club sound du jour 'minimal' which blends techno, electro and house, or indie kids rocking to Nu Rave or guitars meets happy hardcore (Klaxons, Sh*t Disco, Data Rock) - while the collision of guitars, synths, disco and club beats in the form of cool dance bands (Scissor Sisters, The Rapture, Fischerspooner, Spektrum, Cut Copy, The Presets, Infadels) is beyond measuring. 2006's dance music darlings Ame aren't house, techno or electro - simply deep.

Nocturnal: Rumour has it that you're still a big kid. Is this true?

Dennis: Very true. I've always been a kid; young at heart brother! I still love video games. I love playing with my kids, just acting like a big kid in general. I just love it. I think that everyone takes life too seriously and I think that you only get one life, one ticket on the roller coaster and that's it. You should live your life like it's the last ride, you know, throw your hands up in the air!

Nocturnal: Does being a DJ give you that freedom?

Dennis: Yeah, but even before I was like this. I've always been this way. I think everyone should feel like they're blessed to be here. It's a great time to be alive right now.

Nocturnal: Big TV or little TV?

Dennis: LCD 42" baby! I have 2; one on the family room one in the parents room.

Nocturnal: What video games are you playing at the moment?

Dennis: Ghost Recon 2 on the Xbox 360, but I haven't been home in two weeks so I haven't played it at all. I also have a PSP I take on my travels. I still like Grand Theft Auto: Liberty City. I have a whole bunch of games, but my latest toy I take with me is my MPC-500, which is another piece of music kit.

Nocturnal: What's your most treasured possession?

Dennis: My equipment. My Neumann U-47 and U-67 microphones and my Neve 1064. Those are my most prized little babies in my studio.

Nocturnal: I was told once that you flew from the US to Paris to pick up a mixing desk. Is that true?

Dennis: No I picked up a microphone. That's what I'm doing in London too; I flew in from Greece to pick up another mic. They want \$10,000 for it back at home. Ha ha! I can get in here much cheaper, and in better condition; it's been well maintained. I buy pieces of kit all the time.

Nocturnal: How would you describe your music in your own words?

Dennis: I think it's just different. I think it's not the run-of-the-mill house record. I think the best description is; 'quality'. I try to give everyone quality. It might not be a big hit, but at least I'm giving you my heart.

Nocturnal: Is the ITH compilation on Defected a snapshot of how you would play if you were playing live?

Dennis: Yes it definitely is.

Nocturnal: What's the difference between the two mixes?

Dennis: Nothing really, I just tried to play as close as possible to how I play in a club. It was very difficult actually cos there were so many great tracks I that I just couldn't find. I just had to make a decision that I would choose the tracks and mix it like I was in a club.

Nocturnal: Would you say you're completely happy with the result?

Dennis: Oh I'm completely happy. I wish I could have made 5 CD's but...

Nocturnal: The third disc is made up of your 'Inspirations' Where did they come from?

Dennis: That's just growing up man, really honestly that was all my childhood. I've never been asked to do anything like that so for me to be able to do that was a total honour. It was great.

Nocturnal: What other producers and DJ's are on fire around you at the moment?

Dennis: Spinna, Frankie Feliciano, Loco Dice, Martin Buttrich.

Nocturnal: Do you bring in any live elements to your production?

Dennis: All the time. We bring in anyone from Roy Ayres to anybody if we think we need it.

Nocturnal: You still look young despite your never-ending late nights. What's your secret?

Dennis: My secret is to sleep all day. Ha ha! No, I'm just playing. It's hereditary man. I'm Spanish and us Spanish guys age pretty well. My parents aged very well. But don't get me wrong; it's also sleep. You know, I may spin till 7 in the morning but I'm gonna sleep till 4 in the afternoon. My body clock has been jacked for 10 years, I can't sleep at all. I have permanent insomnia. When I'm home, when I'm back in the States I can't sleep before 5, 6 o'clock in the morning. I'm up watching my kids go to school before I can crash. I think everyone in my house and everyone associated with my family has paid the price. It isn't an easy life. Everyone thinks it's a glorious life and it's not, it's a tough life; one that not many people would understand.

Nocturnal: So the DJ life isn't as glamorous as it sounds?

Dennis: No it's not, but I'm not only a DJ I'm also a producer. So now you're talking about spending late nights making records, and on top of that I'm a father and a husband. The workload is ridiculous!

Nocturnal: Can you tell me about an amazing DJing experience you've had recently?

Dennis: The Miami WMC was off the freakin' meat-rack, that was out of control! That was me, TMV, Marcus Wyatt. I mean that was hands in the air action; it's all over YouTube! I dropped 'Underground Is My Home' and everyone was going bonkers. It was great in the sun, and then it rained and I played 'Everyone Get Happy', and then the sun came out again. It was just



... Essential WMC 2007
For the past 10 years Nocturnal has made the trip to the sunny southern tip of America, South Beach Miami for the annual Winter Music Conference. Over the years the conference has grown from a once intimate gathering of the heads and tastemakers to North America's version of Ibiza all compressed into a six day period! Nocturnal had a whirlwind trip hitting an unprecedented 22 events in 6 days!!! We shook it with Toolroom, Cr2, Subliminal, Pacha, MN2S, Om, Mnus, Wet Grooves, Blow Media, Burrige Barrage, Juicy Beach, Little Mountain, the BBC Radio 1, and many more and will bring you over 1000 photos from an absolutely action packed WMC 2007...
... Essential WMC 2007

amazing. It was all in good fun, you know, no money but all in good fun.

Nocturnal: What's next for Dennis Ferrer?

Dennis: I'm working on a few more releases, stuff on Objectivity. Wow, there's just so much stuff it's gonna be a really good, busy year I think.

::: Related Links

::: www.myspace.com/dennisferrer

::: www.objektivity.com

::: www.defected.com

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