

Mike Huckaby

Written by CGNY

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Tastemaker, Educator, Sound Designer, and Motor City Proponet. [Mike Huckaby](#) has done much for Detroit electronic music. The man behind the once legendary Record Time store has gathered an encyclopedic knowledge of music. He is one of those guys who knows all the roots and culture of electronic dance music. After a little break he's back playing Movement Electronic Music Festival Memorial Weekend this year!

CGNY: When was the last time you played Movement?

MH: The last time I played was in 2009.

CGNY: It seems like the lineup this year is very heavily old-school Detroit influenced. You, Juan Atkins, Jeff Mills. How important do you think Movement is not only for techno but also in terms of keeping Detroit city as a focus for techno worldwide and in keeping the Detroit sound alive?

MH: I wouldn't say that the lineup is old-school Detroit. I would basically describe that as natively Detroit. The festival has ventured off into a lot of European acts. It would almost be impossible to describe the role of Detroit techno without the advent of the festival. So it really plays an important and crucial role in the development and continuation of Detroit electronic music. It has permeated throughout all corners of the globe now and has been doing so since the first years of the festival. It has also solidified the possibility and continuation of vinyl releases by many native Detroit artists.

CGNY: Why do you think that is?

MH: Because Detroit is a vinyl city. We are all, most artists, either were, or are currently running a label that actually manufactured a physical product. DJs in Detroit would've migrated towards digital djing a lot sooner than ever expected, without a doubt. The festival plays an important role on the financial aspect of the city, the cultural aspect and even the creative aspect because it's still possible to run a Detroit label that presses vinyl.

CGNY: Yes my friend Buzz Goree runs the Mixworks label and when he mentioned it I was happy to hear there is still a market for vinyl records there. I watched the RA documentary about your mentoring young kids in Detroit. Are you teaching them to play on vinyl?

MH: No actually no because it's really not so feasible for a kid. A kid will have to develop himself and move towards that once he understands what the entire realm of possibilities are for him at this point and stage of the game. Any of their extracurricular activities is funded by their parents. And their parents often can't afford these expensive set ups such as midi keyboards, samplers, synthesizers, drum machines. So software is an economical outlet for the parents to engage their children. So you have to take that into consideration when you're looking at the economy of Detroit.

CGNY: Do you think the young people you work with and teach, do you think they're aware of the history of the Detroit techno? Is that part of your musical education program to teach them the influence it has had on electronic music world wide?

MH: Well that answer is yes and no. They are not necessarily aware of the influence of Detroit techno on electronic music but hip hop they are because of Jay Della and Eminem. On that level they are. On the electronic side no but that is what I'm slowly but surely making them aware of. I make them aware through my sound design opportunities, my traveling that I do, the RA documentary. They get it. I'm often coming back to class from another country. It's been pretty hectic and I was actually falling asleep in class, having come directly from the airport from Europe. So one of the kids was like 'you're falling asleep". So they know where I'm coming from!

CGNY: Sure! Recognizing that this is your other life, traveling and playing music all over! You also last year mixed the Tresor 20th anniversary release and obviously you play a lot of overseas. How do you think techno is received in America versus Europe? It still seems like we're playing a little bit of catch up here in terms of techno in the US. Is that fair to say?

MH: It's all due to the European culture. Electronic music has permeated all institutions in Europe. It's in art, in science, in the movies, in everything political. Here in America it is kind of separated from institutions. It's not embraced scholastically and academically. It's not embraced at all. It's just some like crazy thing that young people do that's been decided by some elderly academic staff or person on board. So you know it's the attitude, the laws against alcohol and nightclubbing and the hours that it can take place in. All of these things are extremely conservative in the US. Also its oversaturation of commercial music and hip hop that kills the opportunity for most people to even appreciate electronic music here in the States. We're dealing with a lot of that but the music still gets out. There still is a movement and appreciation for electronic music in America but not as much as Europe. But the thing about America is the music industry here doesn't know what the hell is going to happen next. They have no idea. The commercial industry, the hip hop industry; they have no idea where this is going.

CGNY: It's certainly interesting times musically. Do you still get to play out much in Detroit (apart from Movement) or are most of your gigs overseas?

MH: I still get to play out here but I'm pretty swamped with just work right now. I'm never hanging out much. Once I had a lot of time on my hands, now I have none. I just finished up a remix for Jazzanova, working on sound design for a lot of companies. I mean I asked for this and now it's here!

CGNY: So in terms of your set at Movement, do you prepare a set or just vibe with the crowd?

MH: A bit of everything you just said actually. It's all of that. And it's focusing on one or two records that you definitely want to play no matter what. Finding a way to do that can be a challenge and can also be the fun part of it and having the bravery to do so.

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CGNY: I remember from that RA movie that there were some students you were keeping an eye on in terms of potential. Anyone in particular you're listening to?

MH: Yes the students have a lot of potential but it's often unrealized. They're at a crucial age where they are often not sure what to embrace for a lifetime. A lot of them need a lot more encouragement, they need a lot more development and they need that mentoring. For me I still listen to a lot the guys who came up with me in the game or who were slightly ahead of me; Kerri Chandler, the Masters at Work, Glenn Underground. For me that's what I listen to and continue to listen to.

CGNY: Well we look forward to you rocking the stage at Movement! Thanks Mike!

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For information about Movement go to <http://www.movement.us>