



**DJ/Producer [Go Hiyama](#) has released over 30 original productions on labels such as Perc Trax, Token, Audio Assault, Planet Rhythm, Coda and Warm Up. He also runs the label "HueHelix" with Ryuji Takeuchi, Tomohiko Sagae and Kazuya Kawakami. He is one of the leading techno artists from Japan and I had the opportunity to chat with him over Skype. (Translated into English by [Go Kaneda](#) )**

**CGNY:** I came across your soundblog (<http://gohiyama-soundblog.tumblr.com>) and thought it was a very interesting concept. I especially like your latest posting, soundblog 30 in which you recorded the sound of a Japanese festival and posted pictures of it as well. It really captured the moment.

**Hiyama:** Thank you. I was not expecting for people to listen to it. I didn't have that in mind when I made it. I did it for myself.

**CGNY:** So this soundblog was not for field recording of samples to use for your tracks or anything of that sort? This was just for your own enjoyment?

**Hiyama:** Yes

**CGNY:** And do you every record samples and use them in your tracks?

**Hiyama:** I don't usually use samples often for tracks. I do it sometimes. Well, actually, I was just making a track earlier where I was using the recorded sounds from the hangers while I was doing my laundry.

**CGNY:** What kind of equipment do you use when you produce?

**Hiyama:** Currently I'm using software mostly. I wish I could use more hardware but I live in Tokyo, it's a bit tight in space. So naturally my hardware equipment became less. But I currently mainly use Logic, as well as Native Instrument's Monark. I also have sounds I have made and I use those and put them into plugs-ins and create new sounds from that.

**CGNY:** So I read that you were born in Saga Prefecture (located in southern Japan)?

**Hiyama:** Yes, I did in a city called Chiyoda. There isn't anything there really. (As of 2003 the population was 11,924) Then we moved to Tosu. It was from there that I went to Europe. It's only been about 5 years that I have lived in Japan.

**CGNY:** How did you get into techno?

**Hiyama:** At first it was through the influence of my older brother Jin (who is also an established DJ). When I was in middle school or high school, I heard club music coming out of my brother's walls. I never heard anything like it before and I asked him what it was. He said this is techno. This is what's going on right now. He made me listen to 4 or 5 Kraftwerk albums, forcefully, lol. That was my beginnings.

When I graduated high school my brother happened to graduate from college as well. He told me, "Get all of your graduation money. We are going to buy equipment." So we bought a Mac, a Korg keyboard, a Juno, a Yamaha DX1. We bought it all at once.

**CGNY:** So that must have been some shopping you guys did?

**Hiyama:** Hahaha yes it was. We gathered quite a lot of money. I just bought whatever my brother told me to buy. And that's how I got into producing. I wasn't Djing at the time. But I was making tracks and sending out demos. The first response I ever got from a label was from a record label called Frogman Records based in Tokyo... It's no longer around...man, that was such a long time ago, but when I got a response from them, my brother told me that in order to become a famous techno artist you need to be able to DJ. So I quickly learned to DJ. While in college I was throwing parties but it wasn't until I graduated college that I started to DJ in front of people. I got my friends from back home and we gathered some money and rented out a club for the night and that's how we used to throw parties.

**CGNY:** So you started to produce once you graduated from high school?

**Hiyama:** I was making tracks from my freshman year in high school but I released my first track in 2002...I believe I was in college at the time. I wasn't able to get my tracks out when I first started making tracks.

But you know right now, everything is digital and you can start your own label and everything is speedy but I was sending out my demos by cassette tapes to London at the time.

**CGNY:** When did you have the feeling that you want to make a living with music?

**Hiyama:** I had some thoughts of wanting to make a living out of techno when I first started producing but then I had a desire to want to tour overseas and to do it as a job, as a goal, you know, and by the time I graduated college I was determined to make this my living.

**CGNY:** What is your current DJ set up?

**Hiyama:** I use Ableton Live and I try to make my sets to be able to do things that you can't do in Traktor or on vinyl by using different kinds of transition to tracks and the way I use effects.

**CGNY:** And do you have anything coming out soon?

**Hiyama:** Yes I will be releasing a remix on Genesa Records. But I have a very strong desire to get my label [HueHelix](#) growing bigger.

**CGNY:** I believe HueHelix just recently released an EP by Nil titled "Double Tide" on 9/30/13. Do you have anything else cooking up?

**Hiyama:** Yes. In fact, it's almost finished and I want to release that on Hue Helix. And I want to release it on vinyl.

**CGNY:** Why vinyl?

**Hiyama:** With HueHelix, we have been releasing only digital and to put it simply, I wanted to make a tangible thing, to be able to touch it. Also, I may be affected by the scene in Tokyo but it seems that there are many more DJs spinning vinyl these days. I wanted those DJs to listen to my tracks. There seems to be a resurgence of vinyl in Japan.

**CGNY:** It seems the same in New York as well.

**Hiyama:** Oh really? That's interesting. People were saying that vinyl will be gone soon. With companies shutting down. But compared to 20 years ago I suppose things are different. But I think the desire to "touch" the music hasn't gone away.

**CGNY:** Will your vinyl EP be available throughout the world? In New York?

**Hiyama:** Yes, I am talking with a distributor who can do this for us. You know, all four of us who are co-owners of Hue Helix are not artists who play out in Japan exclusively. We all first released tracks in Europe and play there regularly. I want to keep this position. In fact I met Ryuji Takeuchi at a festival in Holland the first time. We are both Japanese but the first time we met was in Holland. And that is how we got along and eventually started the label.

**CGNY:** What does Hue Helix mean?

**Hiyama:** About 8 years ago we were all into hard techno. But that was when there was not much hard techno. It was all minimal. It was just kicks and high hats and sometimes there won't even be a snare in the track. So instead of hard techno there was minimal. And when we heard minimal, we were like we really want that sound when we first started hearing techno. It may be that at that time you could only produce that distinctive techno sound because of the equipment. But we had this idea. Now that there is this minimal and the advancement in music production technology and hard techno from the past and all these other different kinds of music, we all felt that these elements were getting compressed together and finally when it all exploded what was left from all this was minimal. With this idea in mind we all thought that this is all like a spiral. If you look from the top things may look like it is not changing but if you look at it from the side you can clearly see the changes that things are going up. That is when we found the word "helix." And since there are four of us who have four distinctive sounds, or hues, I like the Berghain-style hard techno, Ryuji likes the heavy beats, Sakae is about noise, noise. We may

be in the same genre of music but we all acknowledge our distinctive sounds, or hues, and that is how we came up with the name Hue Helix.

**CGNY:** What are you listening to these days?

**Hiyama:** Well, let me think about it. (Goes into iTunes). Well, Warp Records is in my play list. I am still listening to the old releases.

**CGNY:** Yes, I read you are strongly influenced by them.

**Hiyama:** I can't seem to get out of it. I am still rebuying the old tracks by them. I also have Ryuichi Sakamoto's "Thousand Knives" also Shigeto. Monocle. You know, whatever is techno I will be listening to it. I just keep on listening to it.

**CGNY:** Can you tell us what you think about the Japanese techno scene? People in the States, both by artists and fans, seem to have interest in the scene over there but I don't think there is much information out there.

**Hiyama:** I believe that slowly there is a distinctive Japanese techno scene that may be born here. At one point we were just waiting for international acts to come over here. This lasted for a long time. But recently there are more Japanese artists. There was a time when these Japanese artists didn't come out to play in the clubs. This seemed to have lasted a long time but recently in Tokyo and Osaka, there are slowly more Japanese artists performing live or Djing. In other words, once there are more "Japanese" techno artists playing in Japan, I think things will get more interesting.

**CGNY:** I see. So you feel that at this moment the "Japanese" techno scene in Japan is just at its birth and not at its end?

**Hiyama:** I think you just mentioned that there are a lot of international acts wanting to come to Japan to play or have an interest to play here or they already have. I think there are plenty of instances like this. But since there is that, the international acts coming to Japan, to the Japanese artists it means that the international acts are coming in here, and by the international acts coming in here that means that the time slots at clubs and festivals are filled up by the international acts. That means that play time for the Japanese artists become less. I think if the Japanese acts and international acts have a little bit more balanced playing time, things will get more interesting. I think recently this balance is shifting more towards the Japanese artists.

**CGNY:** I've heard that Osaka experienced many of their parties shutting down because of laws that were passed there. Do you think the scene there has revived?

**Hiyama:** My Hue Helix label co-founder Ryuji Takeuchi does events in Osaka called Hagane. But at some point in time he was not able to write down the location or time of the event...It had to be like somewhere, someplace. It was then that the scene really went down. It is now that you can write the location of the party. This is a really recent happening.

**CGNY:** Have you ever played in the US?

**Hiyama:** Actually, no, I haven't. Not once.

**CGNY:** I think there are plenty of people waiting for you to play over here!

**Hiyama:** Oh really? I don't seem to be popular over there. lol

**CGNY:** I think these days, the people here are wanting the harder sound, such as yours. For example Planetary Assault System played here the other week. I think in New York there are plenty of hard techno fans.

## Go Hiyama

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**Hiyama:** In the beginning it was interesting to see the LA scene from Tokyo. Like Drumcell, we thought he was doing some interesting stuff. That was my impression of the US scene getting harder. I'm hoping things will get harder. lol.

**CGNY:** I hope so too! So lastly, what advice would you give to a budding DJ or producer or record label owner?

**Hiyama:** That's a tough question, hahaha. But I would say, for producers, I can think of one. If you are able to bring out your own sound by the time the kick comes in, I would say you are going in the right direction. That is something that is always in my head. But I suppose it is a bit hard to explain in words.

<http://huehelix.tumblr.com/>

<https://soundcloud.com/go-hiyama>

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