



***Photo credit: Ben Hider***

**Phil Moffa** has a pretty full plate at the moment! Between releases on The Corner, Plan B Recordings, (collabs with CGNY fave [Brendon Moeller](#) ) working as a sound engineer with the legendary Nile Rodgers and a live set at **Berghain**, and occasionally trying to catch some techno in NYC, we count ourselves lucky to have snagged this chat with him! Thanks to Go K for the interview.

**CGNY:** So you just released your first solo EP last month titled "Elevation" / "ENO-UGH" on Hell's Kitchen-based Most Excellent Unltd, a new label run by [Paul Raffaele](#) . However, it seems that you are used to working with others since you are an engineer at your studio (Butcha Sound) and frequent collaborator. Did you find yourself approaching this EP differently since you were working alone?

**PM:** I've always favored collaboration. The results are usually richer due to the multiple perspectives. I spent a few years making solo material before I arrived at a place that I can specifically remember as a turning point. All of the works-in-progress up until that point would never see the light of day. This new process was definitely informed through my work with others but also a lot of experimenting alone while the weather was nice and I stayed in the basement making noise. It took some time to develop a sound that I was comfortable releasing with my real name as the artist name.

**CGNY:** Listening to your live sets, it seems as if you have a lot of tracks unreleased to the world. How do you approach your live sets? Do you have some kind of structure beforehand or do you improvise the whole set?

**PM:** Some songs in the live set are finished studio tracks that I break down and re-program with a loose arrangement based on the original. Others are parts that work together that I never turned into compositions but provide a nice canvas for jamming. I approach writing and performing the same in the sense that it is a bunch of parts going to 8 or so faders on the mixing board, and I improvise levels, effects, parameter changes, and sequencing on the fly.

**CGNY:** On your Boiler Room set, you sampled Gang Starr's "Dwyck," if I am not mistaken. You have mixed Kool Keith at [Butcha Sound](#), and you even have a remix on Red Apple 45's Snake Tape for A.G.'s song, "TRUTH". Did your curiosity in music start with hip hop? Has hip hop influenced the way you approach and hear music?

**PM:** I have a pretty wide-ranging record collection; I love it all. Hip hop was probably the first thing that I discovered on my own without the help of my older brothers, whose own records and CDs were a source of fascination for me as a kid. In the early 90s, I went everywhere with a Walkman, listening to things my friends and I taped off the radio from Stretch and Bobbito's show, and also Funk Flex for the more mainstream stuff. Albums from Nice & Smooth, Nas, Wu-Tang, ATCQ, etc. were in constant rotation for me. I still buy rap tapes, records, and CDs constantly. I think the main influence I draw from hip hop production is my appreciation of sampling.

**CGNY:** This year, you have worked not only with Ray West and Kool Keith but also Nile Rodgers, The Martinez Brothers, DJ Spider, Anthony Parasole and DVS1. What about you or your studio do you think make these top-hitters in differing music genres want to work with you? Do you think it's your appreciation for analogue, since it seems that you do not use software that much? Or could it also be because you seem to have a vast knowledge and appreciation for different kinds of musical genres?

**PM:** To be clear, I am mixing the Kool Keith project via Ray West and I had the experience of recording Nile Rodgers as engineer for the Martinez Brothers. I don't think either of those legends would have found me otherwise. Yes, I think the analog/hardware thing is definitely a draw. I'd also agree that being well rounded is something I share with the above people. With Ray, Spider, and The Bros, we spend a lot of our studio time listening to old jazz, funk, and hip hop records. And although you'd have to ask them to be sure, I'd say the main draw of Butcha Sound is the vibe. It's the first thing everyone says when they step in the room.

**CGNY:** Is there anyone in particular you have enjoyed working with and would like to work with again?

**PM:** "I wanna see all of my friends at once – Go Bang!"

**CGNY:** Are you working with anyone else in your studio at the moment?

**PM:** I have group project with Brendon Moeller and DJ Spider called **Destination Void** and our first EP "Between Worlds" will be released this year on

[Cuttin' Headz](#)

. This year, I made a bunch of tracks with Seth Troxler, some as his engineer and also a few collabs. I got to do a little Pro Tools editing and additional mixing on Kate Simko's new London Electronic Orchestra project where she is combining a serious classical ensemble with her beats, a very interesting and successful combination. I also handle mastering for the Hybridity label out of Vancouver, BC who are constantly releasing some great music.

**CGNY:** When did you get into techno? And when did you start producing it?

**PM:** Techno and house go hand in hand as far as I'm concerned. I started going to clubs in '97 and that's when I started DJing. In '99, I auditioned for the music conservatory at Purchase where I have been teaching for over a decade. I was making tracks in those studios with hardware samplers and sequencing software that are archaic by today's standards. Interestingly, my first tracks sound closer to my current tracks than most of the stuff I did for the 15 years in between.

**CGNY:** What is it like to be a professor? Has teaching helped you become better at working with other people in the studio, whether it be with producing a track with someone or engineering it?

**PM:** I love teaching for a lot of reasons. It's nice to be around young people that still have that spark and are not jaded by a tough industry yet. They put me on to new stuff while I school them on the roots of the music they are into. It also keeps you on your toes because it is essential to fully understand the things you are explaining, and there is always new technology and techniques to keep up with. Now that electronic music has become more popular, the students are becoming more interested in it, which is something I've been waiting for since I started. Plus, giving back and seeing your students go on to become professionals is highly rewarding.

**"It's nice to be around young people that still have that spark and are not jaded by a tough industry yet"**

**CGNY:** Do you have anything coming up in the near future whether it is a release from you or something you have engineered? Or any gigs coming up?

<https://soundcloud.com/phil Moffa/midnight-never-ends-phil-moffa>

**PM:** There will be a lot of wax dropping in the next few months. Anthony Parasole and I did a remix of [Esteban Adame](#)'s "Out To Get It" that was released recently on EPM Music. Sci-fi solo EPs "Solar Lottery" on Plan B Recordings and "Attempt No Landing" on

[The Corner](#)

are out in October/November. As for gigs, I'm doing a live set at Berghain in late December and some west coast sets, including the Shuffle Co-op in Oakland, in January 2015.

<http://planbrecordings.bandcamp.com/album/coming-soon-oct-2014-solar-lottery-ep-phil-moffa-vinyl-only>

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## Phil Moffa

Written by CGNY

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Interview for CGNY by [Go K](#)