

Beats of Intolerance

by Carolina Gómez López aka DJ k-RoL-

A decade ago I my brother introduced myself involuntarily into the hard style music. They were that kind of bits my mum used to hate (and still does) so much. He used to mix at home. He had two decks and a mixing table. It was all precarious stuff but good enough to feel like a professional deejay. The only thing he needed was his love for the style he listened to at all times. This is probably what most distinguishes hard stylers from the rest of other Spanish music listeners: the passion for our music. We feel deeply every track, every melody and every mixing a deejay makes. Moreover, it is not only the professionals who feel this intense feeling but also the crowds. The audiences get amazingly involved in parties supporting the deejay. We want our music to be more popular than it is nowadays. From my point of view our involvement in promoting our style is due to the disrespect we have been suffering from more famous styles since ours became "out of fashion". Unfortunately, like many other makina listeners, my brother stopped mixing and listening to it to start following house music bits. I remained "loyal" to makina music and replaced my brother's role in the support of the style. That was when I became an amateur dj.

Although I had already begun mixing without my brother knowing, my hobby went beyond the mere pastime. Moreover, almost accidentally in a famous radio station in Barcelona I met two famous makina deejays. From then on I went on meeting the most famous deejays of my favourite style. I went to see them to their gigs. I got to know most of them and had a good relationship with them. I used to admire

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them so I was brimful of joy when they considered me one of them. What is true is that being a girl helped to be extremely well-treated everywhere I went. They used to get impressed by seeing a female makina listener so much up-to-date with everything dealing with the style. As a consequence and thanks to my consistency at those years, nowadays I not only know all the big names of the scene but also understand how this world works. I learnt a lot from them and from a very early time I understood what the troubles of being a professional were. Being a professional dj is not as easy as everybody thinks.

Nevertheless, makina music was born in Valencia around the late 80s and early 90s. It used to be called at that time techno, but some time later real techno evolved in its own way using different speed and drums. By the late 90s makina music was the style all clubs in Catalonia and Valencia played in their sessions. There were plenty of djs and producers supporting the style. However, when Operación Triunfo came in the scene in 2002, pop music became a hit in Spain. Clubs substituted makina music for the pop songs that came out the TV show. At the same time, house music came into the Spanish music scene and this also contributed to reduce the number of makina followers. Therefore, most makina discos either shut down or changed their style. Djs and producers saw their finances increased with these commercial styles. Makina did not provide half the income of house music. As a consequence, nowadays the founders and great promoters of makina are now producing and playing commercial styles such as house and electro music. In addition, the situation has not much changed since then. Few makina producers from that time still fight for their original style and still play makina or evolutions of it. It is true that it is very difficult to live out of makina

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nowadays. A little number of makina deejays and producers have the privilege working only out of this music. The rest (I include myself here) have to combine the deejay life with another job and/or studies. This makes your degree of involvement even more difficult to carry on. It is extremely difficult to be able to prepare sessions for the weekend late at night when you are exhausted from a tiring day at work and at university. What is more, it is terribly disappointing spending your time and money to see the dance floor half full because there is a house party near the club. Nevertheless, your efforts are rewarded when you play for these party people that do not mind dancing with fewer people. They just devote themselves to your session because they go to the club mainly to enjoy the music. The best feeling a dj can experience in front of a crowd is being connected with them. It is like working as one: both sides have to play their part. They sing the songs, go crazy with powerful mixings and adore their djs. They even want your autograph although you are not an international dj. They do not care. They just want your stamp because you are promoting something few people does. They know the precarious status of the style and they are grateful for that. At the end of the day, it makes it all worth it. When you reach this point you forget all the kilometres you have driven or the exhausting week you have been through.

Nevertheless, I no longer play makina music. I gradually changed my style into an evolution of makina. It is called newstyle. However, I still stick to a hard style which inevitably gives glimpses of my origins. In fact, I still play some old school makina tracks. I have not changed my music style like so many others that even lived out of it. Yet, I dare not criticizing people that change their hard style to another "softer" one. Everyone is free to

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listen/producing what they like most. Changing is inevitable and with the passing of time their likes evolve into newer ones. What I do disrespect are these people who used to be so mad at makina and now look down at the jumpers because it is "a childish style". "You will eventually stop listening to this when you get older" they tend to say. Well, the great references of hard styles are over 40. They must live in Peter Pan's Never Land then. Their opinions are so invalid for me as their criterion for music. This is our burden. We are constantly judged by the music we listen to. We are discriminated because we listen to some music people are no longer able to understand. Although in the last decade makina was the most popular music in Catalonia and Valencia, today it is shameful and childish to still listen to it. How can they disrespect the music that introduced them to the night life? Have they forgotten how much they used to vibrate with their deejays? I still vibrate with every drum, bass and bit of it. Am I to blame for this? Unfortunately, it is even sadder to read articles of ex-makina deejays claiming openly how ashamed they are of having devoted their early years to this style. Their lack of tolerance is directly proportional to their lack of personality.

Notwithstanding, I am not one of the great references of Spanish newstyle. I am working hard to be somebody in this little world. Since there are few girls that play hard styles I am being booked to play in clubs more and more. In fact, I am gradually being introduced to the European hard style scene thanks to the club I work in, Set4Dos (Lleida). I am one of the club's djs' team. Each of us have a different style related to a hard style. Our function is to promote our musics among other clubs and parts of Spain, so we are in charge of the gigs. The resident dj is one of the

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great names of makina music, Dany BPM. He is my best referential. I used to go to see them in every session many years ago when he was playing in another club. Now I work hand in hand with him every Saturday night. He is not only one of the most important djs in Spain but thanks to his latest jumpstyle productions, also in Europe and in the US. Thanks to the variety of djs that play in Set4Dos, we offer sessions which combine newstyle, makina, US hard house (a US style) and jumpstyle music. The latter is now a hit in Belgium, Netherlands and Germany. Jumpstyle tracks are among the top ten most sold singles in those countries and it even has a dance on its own. We are producing jumpstyle and newstyle records that are being exported to Europe and the US. What is more, foreign jumpstyle djs love coming to our club because they like Spanish crowds with their devotion to the music. Our "beautiful weather" helps a lot also...

It is true that we are working hard in order to keep the Spanish hard style scene going on, but there is still much to do. We do not have an easy path to follow since in Spain it is very difficult introducing anything "new". Fran TRAX, the greatest Spanish techno dj/producer for me, once said: "Spain is the country with labels par excellence." He was absolutely right. He is one of the world's best-known techno djs, but in Spain he never achieved the fame he has abroad. In Spain nobody backed him up because the Spanish audience is quite reluctant to adopt new or hard styles. This is basically the major problem of hard style djs. We cannot make a living out of the music we adore. Instead, we stare open-mouthed at foreign music cultures we would wish someday to see established in our country. 13.000 people jumping with the bits of makina, newstyle or jumpstyle is something impossible to see in Spain but the reality in the

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rest of Europe. However, we have learnt by heart this saying: "Spain is different". We understand that Spain follow other steps that we do not, so as long as we live here, we will have to keep on working to get back the 90s hard style fever. For the moment it is a dream which is quite impossible to achieve. In the meantime we enjoy our loyal little crowds. After all, although we have little audience we are proud they are not as superficial as others are. They are moved by and only by music not by the surroundings of the night life. However, we are misjudged for it, but just do not listen to them. We know what we feel and we like it because it is different and unique. Fashions come and go but our music remains always with us. Then... Who is stylish?

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