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Jan 12 2015 **Dj Marcelle**
Interviews

Posted by Vito Camarretta



Djing can really be a form of art when there are no real stylistic limitations and it can also get closer to a language that listeners can understand and that is entertaining for them. **Marcelle Van Hoof** aka **DJ Marcelle** seems to be aware of this simple, but rarely applied "wisdom". After we listened to her fourth installment of the double album series "Another Nice Mess meets Most Soulmates At Faust Studio DeeJay" on the German label [Klangbad](#), we decided to have a chat with this gifted and really nice Dutch, and not at all ordinary, DJ!

Chain D.L.K.: Hi Marcelle! How are you?

Dj Marcelle: I am very well. I feel healthy, my personal life is going well and I love the DJ-work that I am doing. Through this I get to see the most beautiful places in the world and meet lovely and inspiring people from all over the place.

Chain D.L.K.: Regarding your biography, you reasonably (and proudly) clarify that sometimes bookers, journalists and members of the audience initially get confused because Marcelle is hard to pigeonhole????... how come?

Dj Marcelle: The music world is a quite conservative one, even in the so-called "progressive" circles. Lots of people like to stay in their comfort zone, don't like surprises and enjoy knowing what they are getting. Sometimes, in the beginning of my set, people who don't know me get a bit confused because they can't make out what I am doing. I use three turntables and play records simultaneously. I fuse styles; you might hear industrial techno together with some African voices and some weird noises on top of that. Five minutes later, you might hear Syrian beats merged with dubstep. For me, it's not so much about individual styles but about the whole concept, an attitude of surprise, of creating one entity out of styles that seem unrelated, at first sight. I like to create something new; I like to transmit a sense of freedom and liberty. I believe that anything goes well, as long as you like it and, very important: use some imagination and creativity. Often, after half an hour, people suddenly get the idea that the mood can change from bewilderment???? into a total euphoria. These are the best moments for me. These days, in some circles, people know my style so they are, from the start, open to the unexpected. I do everything on my own terms; I never compromise; I am not an entertainer who does what the audience wants or expects. For me, it's very important to always stay one step ahead of the public. I consider myself to be more of a musician than a DJ.

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Silent Auction: Before the summer ended, Nilaihah Records offered me the opportunity to interview three bands on their roster. Since there was no big pile of CDs that needed to be reviewed waiting me I said "Sure, why not?" I decided to start with Silent Auction, a light/dark synthpop/futurepop duo out of Rochest...



TenHornedBeast: Chain D.L.K.: The name you chose is taken from "Revelation"17:3 and 13:1 ("And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness; and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns", and 13:1 "And the dragon stood on t...



think that DJ's who focus on just one genre are somehow narrow-minded or do you think it's their audience?

Dj Marcelle: I think both audience and DJ hold each other captive in narrow-mindedness. Obviously, there are some very good DJ's out there who are very successful in their one-style playing – I love a good dub or techno set. But for me, I still find it a bit boring after a while, because I think that

music is more than just a ritual where the artist and the public do whatever is expected of them. People move and dance in the same way and the DJ plays following the audience's expectations. Music has become a ritual, almost a religion, with strict rules. You don't have to think about your own role. With me, it's often different because every single member of the audience has to make up his or her own mind on how to react, to dance or not, to stay or to leave; and if you stay: how do you dance? I like it when I see the audience all over the place, going in all directions, behaving wildly and dancing, or even leaving!

I am not about escapism, about forgetting, about getting drunk or stoned in order to handle life. For me sadness, happiness, and every emotion in between are part of me and I like to reflect that in my music. Sometimes you feel happy, sometimes annoyed, afterwards you feel silly, or in love. It varies and changes all the time, with hopefully one result: you feel alive and free, and, hopefully, a bit liberated from conventions.

Chain D.L.K.: I know it's not so polite to ask the age of a woman, so I'll ask you something else... How many years have you been a DJ for? Have you ever begun by "once upon a time" while speaking about your first steps?

Dj Marcelle: I was into music from the glam-rock era of the early seventies, but I got really interested during the first punk era, in 1976/1977. I was still very young then, but punk was a total liberation for me. Not so much in the musical sense, but in the idea of anything goes, anyone can do it, the "do it yourself" attitude. For me, punk also meant going forward, being open and not sticking to conventions. A lot of early punk bands were already "proper" musicians who started off by playing punk. The Sex Pistols and the Clash still sounded like conventional rock bands, in a lot of ways, although their attitude and some of their lyrics were inspiring. But for me the big breakthrough came when non-musicians started to form bands, like The Slits or The Raincoats. These female bands stayed away from the male posturing and developed their own, individual, style. I like to think my songs fit into that tradition. Go on stage and just do it! Sometimes, I like to mix in something from my 'roots', by playing some old Lee Perry, Delta 5 or Specials single, but it's very important for me that I am contemporary in my sets. Most of the records I use are new. I hate safe, retro, DJ's. Having said this, I don't mind doing a theme-based set every now and then, as a surprise. I have done '1976 – 1982 punk/reggae' sets, for example, as a warm-up to my 'normal' set played later, but I only do this as a one-off. What I also do is avant-garde sets, with hardly any beats, although most of the records I use then are contemporary too.

Chain D.L.K.: What's the most common mistake made by younger DJ's, in your opinion?

Dj Marcelle: Anyone can be a DJ these days because of digitalism and downloads. On the one side, that's a good thing, but I'm afraid most DJ's just follow stale rules, have no ideas or creativity (I don't like the playing CD's or mp3's, anyway). New vinyl is still available in huge quantities! These digital formats have no heart, you can't 'feel it', the sound is inferior to that of a vinyl and they stand there behind their laptops looking like they are filling in their tax forms. I would say: don't rely on one-dimensional mixing or on the conventional ways of beat mixing. Think first why you want to be a DJ and, if you really want it, follow your own path, think not that much of expectations and rely on your own feelings and ideas. Don't copy anyone else, or listen to anyone else, not even me (haha).

Chain D.L.K.: One of the most classic characters of a party are the "harassers" who always ask for a hit... I'm pretty sure you met many of them over these years..What's the most silly or bizarre request you received?

Dj Marcelle: Yes, those people are awful. Over the years I have developed a talent in spotting them from a



Arkane: Chain D.L.K.: Arkanum, let's talk a little bit about your country. I think that we don't really know what's going on over there... what's the social situation like? Arkane: The situation here is utterly dramatic beyond recognition - Hellas (Greece) is trapped in the maze of torment of the "upper"...



Aidan Baker: Chain D.L.K.: Do you improvise your songs live or play them pre-recorded (by whatever means) during your gigs? Aidan Baker: Usually I improvise, with solo and ARC performances, at least. Nadja performances are a bit more structured, but still we usually leave space with...



Cinema Strange: (transcribed by Brette Young) Chain D.L.K.: Symbolism of band's name? Cinema Strange: Not too deep. The idea was to do more silent movie soundtrack, then it turned into a post punk project. Chain D.L.K.: Does it have anything in common ...

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distance so whenever they make a move towards me, I already nod my head and say 'no requests' before they even open their mouths! The Rolling Stones, Madonna, Linkin' Park, these kinds of things they want. On several occasions, I've thought of calling the police! (just joking) Also, it's very disappointing when people only want a specific part of my set, like dubstep, they don't understand that it's the unity that makes it special, and where the individual style is irrelevant. These people don't 'get' me.

Chain D.L.K.: Are you resident in any club at the moment?

Dj Marcelle: Yes, in Helsinki Club in Zurich, Bei Ruth in Berlin, Rhiz in Vienna, Hirscheneck in Basel, Stadtwerkstatt in Linz, among others. And in a lot of other places I play at least three times a year.

Chain D.L.K.: You've been described as the best post-Peel DJ and I agree with that opinion. How do you feel about that?

Dj Marcelle: A big mistake a lot of Peel-inspired radio shows make is that they copy Peel's individual taste and/or rely on music styles he liked a long time ago, generally. So, for example, they keep on spinning indie guitar music, which in my view is totally predictable and safe these days. Peel's influence on me was to follow your own path and don't copy anyone, not even him! Surprise your audience and challenge conventions! As a live DJ, Peel was very different from me. He didn't do any creative mixing, just played one track followed by the next, so there's no influence there, except for putting radically different styles of music next to each other. I am convinced any musical style sounds better when put after something different, it makes the whole atmosphere livelier and makes the listener pay more attention.

Chain D.L.K.: I've read you took part in Peel's funeral... as an experienced DJ develops an acute sensitivity, I think, at least, can you describe that moment? How did you feel?

Dj Marcelle: Obviously any funeral of someone you love is utterly sad and this was no exception, of course. And, to be honest, Peel's style was something 'different'. The moment his coffin was carried out of the church whilst Teenage Kicks was blasting out of the church speakers was both totally surreal and heartbreaking. I was also invited to the private gathering afterwards and what I remember of that was not only the huge amount of well-known people present, but also the abundance of nice drinks and variety of food available, including lots of chicken pieces, although Peel himself was a vegetarian. But he was never dogmatic about it, luckily.

Chain D.L.K.: Your collection includes more than 15.000 titles. I'm not interested in knowing if there are some of them you like to re-listen as I can foresee your answer... until now, I haven't found a good method to organize them – even if I have less records than you -, any piece of advice?



Dj Marcelle: Well, as long as it's not a public music library, the only important thing is that you can find the records yourself! I've always filed the music according to its style, so all dub records together, or breakcore, or punk etcetera. Other criteria I use are countries (I have a big section of German music, going from Faust and Can to the latest techno releases). Also it's important that new records (and new records I buy/get all the time!) can be filed away quite easily without having to shift thousands of records to make space! There are sections in the house where there are only the latest records, as I obviously use them often on stage. Having said that, every few years I have to do a big make-over because I need more space in the house!

Chain D.L.K.: Can you tell us more about the latest Marcelle sessions on Klangbad?

Dj Marcelle: The first three sides are three turntable mixes where almost all of the time you hear three records played simultaneously and something 'new' is created/composed. For example, on side 1 free jazz is mixed with techno and avant-garde into one new unity. Most of the things are created/improvised on the spot, but obviously my live experience helps me in the creative process. Also, roughly all mixes have a kind of beginning and ending, they are like small stories. I've worked as a freelance journalist before, so I like storytelling.

Chain D.L.K.: Did the location ever have an influence on the choice of the tracks?

Dj Marcelle: No, not in the sense that recording the album near the Danube (where Faust Studio is located) makes it sound different than when I would record it in hectic Berlin or Amsterdam. I am very concentrated and in my own world when I record. It's very important to have a good engineer who understands my way of thinking and recording, and Andi Schmid, with whom I've recorded all four albums, is brilliant in that respect! I love working with him. After recording, Faust's Hans-Joachim Irmeler has always prepared a brilliant meal, as he's a great cook!

Chain D.L.K.: You also gave us a hint on your collaborations... can you introduce them a bit to our readers?

Dj Marcelle: Fodderstompf is a project with Cologne-based percussionist Holger Mertin, which has been going since 2009. Every now and then we play live, we improvise, react to each other's music. It's very nice to see Holger live, as he's a very physical, intense percussionist.

Quiquoiou is a project together with Berlin based Guido Moebius; he has released a great number of records over the years. After the recordings, we couldn't tell anymore who did what and where so we called ourselves Quiquoiou.

Lianne Hall is a British singer/songwriter living in Berlin. We also jammed together in her house and the recordings were also edited afterwards. It sounds very out-of-this world and she has a great, great, great voice. With all projects it's important that the outcome is always a surprise for us, as well. We go with the flow!

Chain D.L.K.: You keep on recording broadcasts in your house in A'dam... how can people listen to them?

Dj Marcelle: My radio show Another Nice Mess is broadcast live every Tuesday between 20.00 and 22 hours CET on www.dfm.nu. It's also possible to buy a subscription to the show and get to download the link and track list sent to your mail box every week. For info on this, people can contact me on [djmarcelle \(at\) upcmail \(dot\) nl](mailto:djmarcelle(at)upcmail(dot)nl); and for all other info as well, of course!

Chain D.L.K.: I particularly enjoyed side C as it could be the best answer to all those puritans who keep on refusing to consider clubs and DJ's as an environment of civil awareness, as well... can you describe it in details?

Dj Marcelle: That one is quite a 'political' side, using quotes from records I've got from Kennedy, Lenin and Golda Meir – I have a big collection of political records (music, speeches etc.). I mix it together with Muslimgauze who was obviously very political in his pro-Palestine stance, track titles and interviews. Also, Ghanese singer King Ayisoba puts the politicians in their place by stating that if you want to be a leader you have to be a good leader. But I see all these voices also as instruments, the different tones blend in very well, I think. We also have radiation sounds from the Fukushima nuclear disaster on there and near the end of that side I play a track by Dubmonger and LXC. They use a sample of British reggae band Misty In Roots and that particular sample (on how to be a 'good' person in life) was also on the order of service of John Peel's funeral. I doubt whether Dubmonger and LXC were aware of this, but, for me, this was a reason to mix it into the recording. It's now been ten years since his death.

In general, I could say I consider myself to be also a political DJ, by working and mixing together different cultures and styles, without considering one culture (our 'Western') as being superior to others.

Chain D.L.K.: Aha! There's a funny anecdote behind this exclamation, isn't there?

Dj Marcelle: Sometimes people throw notes on my turntables during a set, with compliments written on them. This one time, in Halle, I suddenly found two notes with just 'Aha!' written on them. I hadn't seen who threw

them. But obviously that person had taken some time to 'understand' me. I found these notes very funny and put one on one of the labels of my record and named a mix after it.

Chain D.L.K.: Any predictions of forthcoming sets or releases?

Dj Marcelle: All my forthcoming sets can be seen on my rejuvenated website www.anothernicemess.com. You can also read and see articles, posters, track listings of my radio shows, photos and even soups I've eaten, on there. A new vinyl album is not yet planned as there is a new one now (!), but sometimes I release CD's myself, for the poor souls who don't have turntables...

visit Dj Marcelle online at: www.anothernicemess.com

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