



KRISTINA SKY'S JOURNEY HAS TAKEN HER FROM FLYERING FAN TO FESTIVAL BOOTH

Sky's the

BY DEANNA RILLING

A 90-year-old man channeling Moses in a toga handed out dried cranberries inside a strip club. The light of the Ugly Duckling used car lot sign glowed across the street. On that night in the mid-1990s somewhere in Van Nuys, Calif., mini Adidas backpacks and furry things abounded, while a volleyball-playing skater chick that usually felt more at home with bands on the Sunset Strip surveyed the scene. And then she began to dance.

"I remember thinking, 'This is weird—but it's really, really cool and I like this music!'" says DJ/producer Kristina Sky, only a teen at the time. "I had no clue about the music at that point, so I can't even tell you what I was hearing. All I knew is that it was dance music and I immediately started going to more events after that."

Sky was initially doing her friend a favor by tagging along to the aforementioned rave. "I didn't even want

to go to," Sky says. "She has no idea she changed the entire course of my life by taking me to that party."

But that doesn't mean Sky immediately jumped into the DJ booth—far from it. Instead, her initial interest in EDM led her to throwing her own events, complete with Sky's supportive mother helping out on ticket-booth duties. "She's the only one that I trusted to take money!" laughs Sky. But promoting parties was a risky investment, as Sky found out.

"I had a partner who didn't speak the best English," she recalls, "and, unfortunately, he did the info line and nobody understood what the hell he was saying!"

By the time Sky found out there were ravers with the wrong directions wandering downtown L.A., it was too late to save the party and she was in five-figure debt to a friend that now had a gaping hole in his trust fund. Says Sky: "I kind of separat-

ed myself from the promoter side of things because I was so upset about what had happened. I just needed a break and I need to pay back my friend."

In the downtime from pushing parties, Sky further cultivated her love for EDM. Collecting vinyl and compilation CDs, she wished she could work her favorite tracks together instead of simply listening. At first, she was discouraged when a hip-hop DJ friend attempted to share his skills.

"I was thinking, 'I really love music, but this mixing thing is not my thing because I clearly can't do it!' I was getting really frustrated with it."

Thankfully, another friend had experience spinning her preferred genre of trance, and then it clicked. "From there, it was obsession," she affirms. "But I never got in it to do this for a job—that was never my intention at all."

Fast-forward to 2012 with Sky

holding down residencies for Giant at Avalon and Insomniac Event's Awakening at Exchange LA. Throughout Sky's 10-year career, she's been on the Tranceaddict poll of top 250 DJs for five years in a row, coming in at No. 77 in 2011, was handpicked by Armin van Buuren to play ASOT 550 in The Netherlands and her *Trancelate* radio show is heard 'round the world by the dedicated #TranceFamily.

Sky has become a seasoned pro on the nightclub circuit and, though gigs at massives such as Electric Daisy Carnival 2012 in Las Vegas (where *DJ Times* caught up with Sky) have been few, the journey has been memorable in a major way.

Take, for example, Coachella 2006—or, as it's known, the year Madonna took too long during sound-check in the dance tent. For Sky's first festival behind the decks, it wasn't looking good when her opening set was cut short thanks to the ultra-

particular Madge.

"I went on," she recalls, "and Gabriel & Dresden showed up for their set, heard I had been cut short by the soundcheck and said, 'Hey, we're gonna give you 20 or 30 minutes of our set.' I was so flattered that they would do that for me; it was their first time playing Coachella and they actually unselfishly gave up some of their slot for me."

Coincidentally—and unbeknownst to Gabriel & Dresden—their booking was a result of Coachella organizer Goldenvoice President Paul Tollett asking Sky for suggestions on whom to book. There must have been good EDM karma working because from there, Sky's luck got even better, being asked to do an impromptu second set later that night at the Oasis Dome... at the same time as Madonna's set.

"I'm thinking, 'Oh God, OK. Well, screw it, because they said nobody has ever really been asked to play two sets!' I was just lucky—it's not because I was important, but they really liked what I was doing," Sky says. "It ended up being rammed to the brims, people couldn't even fit in the Dome, people were trying to get in and it was amazing. Of course, Madonna was packed all the way back, but there was still people that didn't really care, wandered in and it was

Kristina Sky's Top 5

Calvin Harris ft. Florence Welch: "Sweet Nothing" (Tiesto Remix) [Sony]

Menno de Jong ft. Kristina Sky: "Signals" [White]

Orjan Nilsen: "PhireWorX" (Original Mix) [Armind]

Kristina Sky & Randy Boyer ft. ShyBoy: "Welcome to the Future" (Jason Mill Sunset Mix) [EnMass]

School Of Seven Bells: "Reappear" (Thomas Datt Remix) [White]



Limit

amazing."

Fast-forward to June 10, 2012: At EDC in Vegas, Sky was on stage at the Circuit Grounds (also known as the A State of Trace or Anjunabeats stage) working her recent collaboration with Menno de Jong, "Signals," and "Welcome to the Future" with Randy Boyer featuring ShyBoy into the set—quite a long way from when she'd attend EDC as a fan. And that experience includes flying at EDC 2000 where, ironically, BT was a headliner—at the 2012 event, she was opening for him.

So, looking back, how does Sky explain her success and the respect she's earned from colleagues, amidst today's EDM boys club, not to mention the socialite wannabe-spinners?

"I just do me and hopefully people like it," Sky says. "I think that talent and passion is what matters. DJs should just be true to themselves, do what they want to do, not worry about gender and just play music." ■