



The ClubPlanet Interview: Plastik Funk

by DJ Ron Slomowicz
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Coming from the world of hip-hop, Plastik Funk, the duo of Rafael Ximenez-Carrillo and Mikio Gruschinsk were inspired to enter the world of house. While some may see them as an overnight success thanks to their collaboration with Tujamo, "Who," the truth is that they've been releasing quality records for over a decade. They have a knack for updating classics ("Everybody Dance Now," "The Message"), and their original productions have a strong and distinct point of view which makes them instantly recognizable but flexible enough so they don't come off as cookie cutter. And when legendary artists like Grandmaster Flash, Chaka Demus and Pliers, and Fatman Scoop choose to work with someone, you know there is real talent in the mix.

RS: *Where did the name Plastik Funk come from?*

Plastik Funk: That is a good question, we always thought about inventing a great story and telling people something cool but we were just looking for a name that sounded good. We thought that Plastik Funk was kind of fitting because vinyls were made of plastic and we like it funky so the name just sounded good to us.

RS: *Going back to the beginning, how did the two of y'all meet up?*

Plastik Funk: We actually met at a party in the club where I was the resident DJ and Rafael was a guest DJ. The party was super slow and both of us were bored and standing around. We said to each other let's just play some records together because it was boring for us to watch each other. We found out that we fit well and decided to give it a try and do some gigs together.

RS: *This was around 2002, right?*

Plastik Funk: Yes.

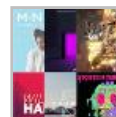
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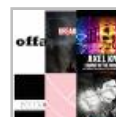
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RS: *The first time that I really heard about you guys was when you did "Everybody Dance Now" back in 2006.*

Plastik Funk: Yes, that was the first time that we released it.

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RS: *You guys have been together for about 10 years but it seems like just over the past few years you guys have exploded massively. Did you have any idea when you did the "Who" track that it would make you so big?*

Plastik Funk: Of course not, we just thought that it was a nice club tune and we just randomly put some stuff together. I came up with the idea for the baseline and we sat in the studio with Tujamo and made the track. We loved to play it so we thought that it may work. After 6 months it started being played by everybody and we slowly realized that it could become a big track. You can't plan that and we were so happy, lucky, and grateful.

RS: *How did Tujamo end up in your studio?*

Plastik Funk: Actually, during that time he was our friend and a DJ touring some clubs in our area. I had heard some of his productions before we met and I really liked what he was doing. We made the track in his studio and the rest is history.

RS: *Of course we all know the Sneakbo rap version which is incredible, but I am wondering what version is your favorite mashup of it?*

Plastik Funk: My personal favorite is a Rumbaton remix by some guys from Australia named COMBO! They did the mix and put it on SoundCloud, we play it quite often. It is downtempo but it is really cool.

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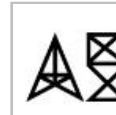
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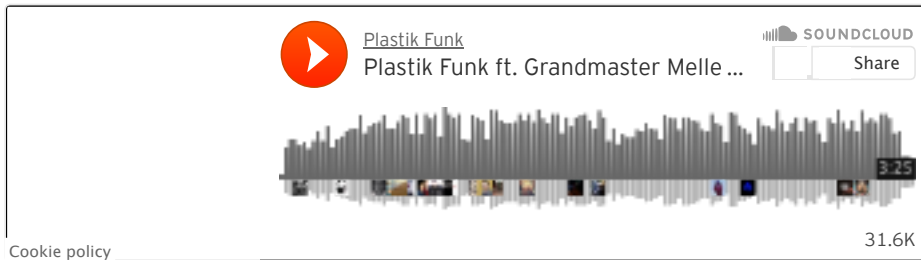
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RS: *Y'all got your start in the hip-hop world, is that part of the inspiration that you used to create or update "The Message"?*

Plastik Funk: Yeah, this track is one of our all-time favorite hip-hop tracks and we have been playing this on vinyl from back in the days in our old school sessions. We always wanted to do something with it and we happened to make a private mix of it and our management sent it to the publisher and it ended up in the hands of Melle Mel. He thought that it was cool and wanted to do it, we were shocked and really happy because we thought it was impossible. I don't think there are any other official versions that used the original vocals and instrumental.

RS: *So you used the original parts, you didn't resample it or get new vocals?*

Plastik Funk: We got the original acapella and the original backing tracks and we were allowed to use them. It's great because it saves a lot of time and money and you don't have to play and redo everything.

RS: *Your new track updates another hip-hop classic, "Be Faithful," how did you meet up with Scoop for the track?*

Plastik Funk: This is also a story that started with a mashup that we made with his biggest track "Be Faithful." Our manager was friends with Scoop and sent it to him and he was down to do it right away. It was funny; it was another quick hip-hop, house track that we did.

RS: *On the track it's obviously not Faith Evans doing the singing, who is the singer that sang the new topline?*

Plastik Funk: We did a new singing part and with a talented girl named Christine that lives in Berlin. We wrote the song and we recorded it in Berlin and put it together in our studio.

RS: *After "The Message" and "Be Faithful," are there any other classic hip-hop dance tracks that you would like to get your hands on?*

Plastik Funk: Yes, and actually we were just in the studio with Chaka Demus & Pliers from Jamaica that had a very big track back in the days called "Murder She Wrote." We recorded some new vocals and we are talking about redoing that track but we haven't started doing that yet.

RS: *How was Ibiza this summer?*

Plastik Funk: It was great; we were residents at a brand new party called Neon Splash at Privilege. We didn't expect too much because new brands on the island suffer quite a lot in the beginning. They had a super crazy start, though, and the August gig was incredible. They had more than 7 thousand people there and we managed to get them all to sit down and do the sit down thing, it was insane.

PLASTIK FUNK FEAT. POLINA - One Of These Days



RS: *Sounds like it. Going back to your music, one thing that I really like about you guys is that you definitely have a sound but it is not like a template. You can tell a track that is done by Plastik Funk but they are not identical, like the "One Of These Days" song that you did with Polina. How did y'all collaborate to bring her song writing into your world?*

Plastik Funk: We sent her a backing, hoping that she would have an idea of what to sing and write and she came back with that track and we loved it, it was perfect.

RS: *I also really like your mix of "In Your Arms" by Michael Woods, how did that mix come about?*

Plastik Funk: Michael was playing after us at Pacha in New York and we played a remix that Blaxx did. He really liked it and he asked us to do a remix of him in the same style. We did it and he was happy with it.

RS: *Just some random questions from your history. On the "Rock Bitch" track, who is the "white boy" singer?*

Plastik Funk: The "white boy" singer is a multitalented guy doing vocals, playing guitar, being a really fantastic photographer who does our promo pictures and he happens to live in our hometown. He is a really crazy guy, aka Frank.

RS: *It's a really cool track and I love the way that you guys used the BodyRockers elements in that. That was really sick... I am kind of confused about the mix of JCA "I Begin To Wonder," it was from 2002 and then one day on Beatport in 2008 I saw a new mix from you guys. Where did that come from?*

Plastik Funk: We did the remix, we always loved the track, and JCA is a good friend of ours. He asked us to do it and we said sure, it was a great track.

RS: *One last random question, I also loved the remix that you did of "Freak" by Estelle. What was it like working with such a great vocalist and doing such a sleazy track?*

Plastik Funk: To be honest, we didn't know who Estelle was. We were just asked by Atlantic Records to do it and we liked the vocals which inspired us to do what we did. After we did it, we found out who Estelle was and is, it was a great surprise afterwards.

RS: *Aside from "Be Faithful," what else is coming from you guys?*

Plastik Funk: We've finished a few tracks that are club tunes and not full vocal tracks but more for DJs to play out. We are waiting for the release dates and finalizing some deals with the right labels. We have a collaboration with Pink Floyd and Mr. V coming out on Tiger Records at the beginning of October, the track is called "The Life." We are still working on some more collaborations, and we are just starting one with Cristian Marchi and Maurizio Gubellini from Italy. We are preparing and starting a collaboration with Lunde Bros from Sweden. They are great producers and it was obvious that we should do it because I play at least 3 or 4 tracks from those guys in every set.

RS: *If people want to follow you online what is the best way to do that?*

Plastik Funk: We do a little bit of everything, you have to these days. 50% of the time we spend in the studio and the rest we try and keep in touch with people through Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, SoundCloud, and YouTube.

RS: *What would you like to say to all of your fans out there?*

Plastik Funk: Thank you very much for the support and love. Let's stay funky! If you want to have a Funk You Very Much t-shirt you can buy them online.

Interview conducted September 2014.

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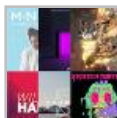
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