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Written By Ministry of Sound



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(/) RAVE ESSENTIALS: AN INTERVIEW WITH DARUDE

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Finnish producer/DJ Ville Virtanen, better known as Darude, has literally been 'partying like it's 1999' ever since the release of your favourite techno anthem, *Sandstorm*. Playing festival stages for over a decade, *Sandstorm* was a number 1 hit in 1999 and sold over 2.5 million copies as it brought inebriated crowds all around the world into the new millennium.

Sandstorm along with Darude's tech-heavy discography of uplifting bangers (cue *Feel The Beat*) has been used in countless games, movies and TV ads since it came out which along with a little help from Peking Duk has contributed to its re-entry into the iTunes Dance Charts in the US and Australia in 2014, a whopping 15 years after its release.

The good news is that Darude is heading back down under for the 2015 Future Music Festival and will be joining the likes of Avicii, The Prodigy and Drake! In celebration of this news, we re-enacted the entire *Sandstorm* video in the Ministry of Sound office. Speed dealers and all.

Yeah, we didn't actually do that. But we did get on the phone to Darude to ask him the hard hitting questions about new music and his rave essentials.

Mr. Darude, where are you right now?

I am in Ottawa, Canada. Today I have a free night, but tomorrow I am playing at Gatineau and here in Ottawa on Friday, then I head to Portland, Oregon for another show on Saturday, and then I'm heading near Atlanta, Georgia in the US for the holidays, I'm going to be spending time with my wife's family who live around there.

Sounds busy. Take us back to 1999 when you were working on *Sandstorm*. How did it come about?

Well, I was basically not a DJ at all, and wouldn't have called myself a producer at that point. I was just tinkering with some different software and I was originally dissecting a track that was one of my favourites back then. I was basically looking where the high-hats were, where the kick drum starts, where the melody starts and how to do different parts and then backtrack. As I was doing that I was sort of coming up with my own parts to add in. I came up with the melody and nothing came out of it at that point. So a year and a half later I found the project files on my computer, and I exported it to another software where it came to life as the melody you know now. I built the rest of the track around that and got it done in just about a week. A lot of local DJs started playing the track but it didn't become the *Sandstorm* that you know until I gave it to a guy called JS16 aka Yaakko Salovaara, a great producer and friend of mine helped me create the final sound and arrangement.

Darude - Sandstorm



With the song back on the Australian and US dance charts, did you think it'd be so successful? Especially 15 years later?

This new thing now - it's ridiculous. It's awesome. I mean, initially when *Sandstorm* was released, I wasn't planning or dreaming on any kind of success international or otherwise. Obviously I had pretty good success back then and the track has been played at sports events and all kinds of stuff, and DJs use to play it at the clubs. But now this craze that is restarting is obviously great but rather strange. I'm taking it with a smile on my face, because it keeps me on my plans of bringing new music out. I am an artist and it's my track so I am very proud that people still want to listen to it and play it. Nothing about it bugs me, but it is pretty strange though.

You have just been announced for the Future Music Festival 2015, are you looking forward to heading down under?

Oh hell yes! I've been to Australia several times and I've always loved it. The crowds are pretty crazy, the girls are very pretty, the guys are friendly and that's a pretty good combo. And yeah, it's been way to long and now with Future Music Festival, the lineup is crazy good. I think I'm most excited to see The Prodigy because they have been my all time favourite and now I'm sharing a stage with them so that should be petty cool.

We can't wait to see it! Last year we saw DJs drop *Sandstorm* at massive festivals and a Pozible fundraiser generating over \$2000 to get you to come here. Are you excited to see people's reaction after the recent boost in popularity?

Yeah, I'm very much looking forward to it. I've played hundreds of gigs over the years and played in over 50 countries. I've seen a couple of my own gigs, but especially now with **that Peking Duk video**. Even with all the hype, I am very interested to see how it all goes and what's going to happen.

Stereosonic 2014 Sydney Main Stage - Peking Duk group jump to Darude S... ⌚ ➦



You released a few albums over the last 15 years as well as starting your own record label, Enmass Music. How do you balance producing and DJing with running the label?

Well, it's sort of a natural thing. I haven't been able to put too much time and effort into the label at the moment, but when I'm on the road or online I get a lot of promos all the time from up and coming producers and some even long time producers. They are trying to find their own avenues. What we do on our label is release stuff that we play in our sets and now I'm just checking out promos and demos and when something good comes up I pass it to my business partner. We have such good relationships with many big DJs so we can basically hand songs over directly to their inboxes.

Any artists or future Darude's we should be keeping an eye on?

Well, at the moment my main man and label partner is Randy Boyer, he has a project called Boyan and Boyer. Boyan is a guy from Bulgaria and he is doing some dirty electro house/big room which I have been playing in my sets for a long time. Also Lope & Katola. They released an EP about a year ago and have had releases on other labels as well. I've been playing their stuff all over the place.

[boyanandboyer](#)

Boyan & Boyer - Trumpet Track

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How do you manage to innovate your music and live sets over the years to capture the evolving dance music scene?

Good question, I think DJing for me, originally I wasn't a DJ, I did live shows. But becoming a DJ was more natural. And being a DJ and playing out other peoples tracks for your sets, its always a combo of your own taste and then tracks that you know will just work for the crowd. Although I will never play a track that I don't want to play, sometimes you do a bit of compromise here and there and you find out that some tracks work really well, or this style works really well, and its very easy to kind of mix some of that into your own style. Over the years it evolves your direction, when I play, its not always the same but it does reflect on my sound. I mean as a producer, the best thing is to be a DJ as well, that way you get to road test your new tracks and if a track works well then you are just pointing at yourself like "yeah that's my new track" and if it doesn't work you can just quickly mix it out and play another track and get the crowd going and never mention it to anybody.

Darude - Feel The Beat



What are three things you need at a rave?

Ah that would be a face mask, you know... to cover the sandstorm. Glowsticks are definitely a must because in case of a sandstorm you don't want to get lost. And I know this is not as much fun but you also need to have earplugs.

What natural disaster do you fear the most?

I am fine with sandstorms. To be honest and serious for a second, I would not want to be in California when the earth starts shaking. Definitely earthquakes.

What is planned for 2015 besides the Australian tour? Can we expect some new music?

We don't have any dates to give you but I'm planning to release new music hopefully and a new album in 2015. Also a couple of Enmass releases coming out in 2015. I've seen my gigs picking up so I think 2015 is going to be pretty busy.

And last but not least, can we expect to hear *Sandstorm* in your sets at Future Music Festival 2015?

Aha I think at this point I will have to play Sandstorm. Of course.

Enter the Sandstorm at Darude's set at this year's Future Music Festival. Tickets on sale now.

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MINISTRY OF SOUND AUSTRALIA

Opened in 1991, Ministry of Sound was one of the key locations in the development of house music and super-clubs in Britain in the early 90s.

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