

Darude on life as a meme: “I was weirded out at first”

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“*song name???*” Usually that’s an innocuous question, but if dropped in a YouTube comments section any time in the past few years, you can expect one response, and one response only: “Darude – “Sandstorm””.

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Initially released as Darude’s debut single back in 2000, the track has climbed back into pop culture consciousness thanks to its newfound role as an internet meme, seeping into IRL dancefloors as a jokey crowd-pleaser. Such is the immensity of the *Sandstorm* revival, Darude has also landed on the [stacked](#)

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(http://www.inthemix.com.au/news/59297/Here_s_everything_you_need_to_know_about_getting_tickets_for_Future_2015) alongside the likes of Avicii and The Prodigy. Currently on tour in Canada, Ville Virtanen

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aka Darude, spoke with inthemix about the staying power of *Sandstorm*.

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It's easy to forget that 'Sandstorm' and 'Feel The Beat' both enjoyed mainstream success when they were released. Do you feel like you helped pioneer that transition of dance music into the mainstream in some way?

Well the thing is, I don't think I can say that myself but if someone feels that, and says that, I'm honoured, obviously. I didn't aim to do anything like that. I just made music, and was lucky enough to get signed and get it released around the world. Looking back, *Sandstorm* especially, and *Feel The Beat*, they are some of the few instrumental tracks that have made it on the mainstream radio. At the same time, I would never claim anything like being a pioneer. It's just a chance thing to me, it wasn't planned like that. I'm grateful that I've had a good run and I'm still going on.

When you were writing and recording 'Sandstorm', did you have any idea it would turn out to be as big as it was, even in its initial response?

I honestly can say I had no idea. I was a hobby music maker. I was a DJ at the time, making music for myself. There were a couple of buddies who I worked with, and it was just my tiny little home studio, if you could call it that. I burned CDs and gave them to my DJ buddies and just wished they would play a track of mine one day, then being there seeing people dance to my music. Then at one point I gave a CD to Jaako Salovaara, also known as JS16, who became my producer and first signed me, getting *Sandstorm* to the form everyone now knows it. I call it a series of happy accidents. It just snowballed and it's incredible, still.

There's obviously been a resurgence of interest in internet phenomena; when did you start to see that happen?

It's a thing, wherever I go and play somewhere, it's usually requested, or the promoter asks if I'm going to play *Sandstorm*. I understand that people do come to my shows because that's what they know best. I've seen the chatter on these boards for games like League Of Legends, and gamers are a lot of the reason there has been this renewed interest.

I don't know when it started, but seeing it online where someone asks "song name?" and now somebody always replies "Darude - 'Sandstorm'" or all these variations, I see it all over my YouTube pages. I was weirded out by it at first, I didn't understand what was going on. It was strange. Now I've actually played a couple of gamer conferences, all related to that kind of stuff. I'm cool with that, I'm not going to be pissed off about someone spreading my name and the name of my track around, whether it's a joke, or a meme, it works for me.

Why do you think it's been 'Sandstorm' specifically to take off like that?

