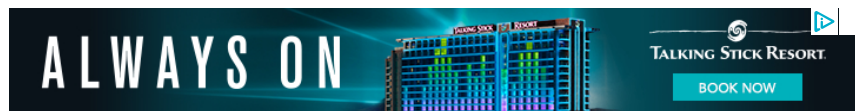


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# BAD BOY BILL: GREAT DJ IN CHICAGO, OR CHICAGO'S GREATEST DJ? AN IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW WITH A HOUSE MUSIC LEGEND

INTERVIEWS . NEWS

**B**ad Boy Bill is a forefather of house music. In Chicago since its inception in the 80s, Bill's list of accolades is as impressive as it gets. He's won numerous DJ battles and placed in many of the coveted Disco Mix Club championships. His first mix tapes played on popular Chicago radio became the gold standard future artists would try to emulate. He was Voted America's Favorite House DJ in 2003 and 2006 by BPM Magazine. He is one of the original founders of Beatport.com, the world's leading download resource for electronic dance music and well-respected top 100 charts. His trailblazing genius behind the decks has shaped house music from its beginning. In our fast-paced, ever-changing world of artists that come and go, he has managed to stay relevant for an amazing 28 years and counting. Before Tiesto ever thought of a hook-line, before Benassi electrified dance floors, in a simpler time when DJs knew the lines of a vinyl record better than they knew the back of their hand, Bad Boy Bill paved the way for EDM to become what it is today.

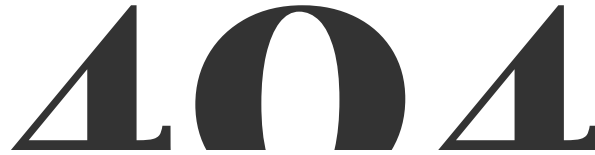


One of the best videos I have ever seen, an amazing showcase of world-class talent, comes from BBB at the 1989 DMC DJ Battle. Stick around for the end:



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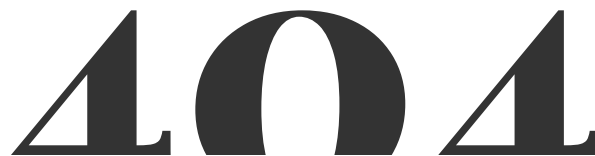




If you already are or have any interest in becoming a DJ or producer, Bill's Music Business Workshop filmed at Scottsdale Community College is something you must watch every minute of. He covers everything from production, to music promotion, how to get signed to a label, to how to actually profit from your craft. He takes excellent questions from the crowd of young artists and gives answers and insight I'm shocked is available for free on YouTube. This kind of knowledge from someone as successful and well-versed as BBB is in the business is absolutely priceless. It's not the kind of information you can even find on a Google search, you can't go to the library and find a book about it; it has to come from someone who's lived and breathed the business for many years and been successful at it. When BBB talks other DJs listen. You should too.



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**You were in Chicago for the birth of house music and played a large part in the propagation of the genre. With this unique perspective, care to make a prediction on what you think the next big thing to come is?**

There is always some form of music that is the next big thing, but what I love most about House Music is that it still remains. It is the foundation and no matter what new style comes along, that style knows that its mother is House Music.

**Was there ever a certain time period or genre/style that really resonated with you personally?**

I am a music lover, so I like many different styles and genres. I don't think I can choose one more than the other, I think each has its perfect time and place to be played.

**The EDM scene is known for its audience\'s ADD. What\'s hot one week can be gone as fast as it came. Other than being a technical badass, how do you believe you have stayed relevant for so long?**

Haha thanks. I think it\'s the fact that I am open to new styles and forms of electronic music and not afraid to change with the times. A lot of DJs get caught in one style and one sound, and once that sound is dead, so are they. I also feel that my years of being a mix show DJ on the radio in Chicago really helped my skill in putting together solid mixes, so whether you are listening to my Behind The Decks Radio Show or seeing me live, I always do my best to play a great set.

**Would you still consider your sound to be Peak Hour House?**

Yes. When I DJ, its 100% lets get this party going!

**Tell me a little bit about the fruition of Beatport. How did the idea come to you guys? Who all is involved? Any hopes for an iPhone/Android app any time soon? I\'m dying to have Beatport in my ears on the way into work.**

Beatport was started by myself and a few friends of from Denver. At the time, DJs were starting to spin with various digital formats and the only way for those DJs to play the latest music was to buy a vinyl record then take it home and record it into a digital file. It was very inefficient so we wanted to create a digital online record store. There are now many partners involved and we all are very proud and happy of how the DJs have embraced Beatport. Many new ideas are coming and we look forward to its continued success.

**I saw a video on YouTube where you have done an hour long music business workshop. Can you tell me a little bit about how you got involved with that? Will you ever do something like that again in the future?**

My friend DJ Rob Wegner from Arizona was one of the pioneers in teaching classes on the art of DJing. We had been talking for a long time about me dropping by and talking with his students, and with the help of DJ Ruthless Ramsey, Candyman, and DJ Tranzit, we finally made it happen! I had a lot of fun, and it felt great to pass along as much of what I know as possible to the future generations of DJs.

**Here\'s a situation: a young, talented DJ is out on the Chicago scene trying to get themselves noticed, but they don\'t want to play a top 40ish set at Club X on a Wednesday night, they just want to play their set at the better Club Y on a Friday night. How much giving in does an artist have to do nowadays? How much do they have to placate the audience to be able to finally get to where they personally want to be? Would you advise doing this? Playing that game?**

Listen, every DJ wants to headline some huge festival and play in front of 100,000 people, but that\'s not going to happen overnight.

When I first started out, I played at teen clubs and 21+ clubs, most of which only wanted to hear top 40 dance music. I didn\'t care, I loved to DJ. I would DJ from open to close, and I thought of it as a challenge to be able to mix records with different tempos and different genres and make it sound smooth and get people DANCING! That\'s the key, your job is to give people what they want, and hopefully play some stuff that they didnt even know they wanted but they still enjoyed. This is the time to hone your craft and learn how to read a crowd. If you don\'t

want to go that route, I suggest stay home, work on your own original music until you have a few hit tracks on Beatport and hope that you start getting booked at the cool clubs that you want to play where you will have much more freedom to play whatever you want.

**How would you describe the current state of turntablism?**

I will always love it, I'm not sure of its current state, but you have to respect it as a true art.

**Do you see a revival of turntablism in the future despite the advancements of technology?**

I have switched to doing tricks with CDJs that I used to do with turntables, and even do some things with the CDJs that I couldn't do with turntables. Doing tricks with two copies of the same song and scratching is what really got me excited about DJing so I will always keep that part of me no matter what.

**Do you have any advice for young turntablists out there?**

Practice, practice, practice. Then practice some more. When I was competing in DJ Battles like DMC, you have to be on top of your game because there are so many amazing DJs out there.

**What kind of DJ and Production equipment do you use?**

For DJing I use 4 Pioneer CDJ 2000 nexus players, and a Pioneer DJM 900 nexus mixer. For production I use Ableton Live 9 and a bunch of 3rd party plugins.

**If you could make a song with any artist, dead or alive, who would it be?**

Sting or Sade. My two favorite artists.

**So often DJs are at the mercy of the club when it comes to the sound system. So often they are subpar, taking away from the mood you're trying to create. Is there anything you as a DJ can do to help make sure the vibe you're going for reaches the audience in the intended way?**

Always do a soundcheck and try to work out any issues with the sound during the day. So many DJs I know never do soundcheck (even ones that are making huge \$\$), and I find that mind-boggling. We catch so many problems, from bad mixers, to cd players that aren't working properly to speakers that need to be repositioned. Always ask to do a soundcheck because you don't want to be dealing with issues when the club is packed and everyone is looking at you.

**Do you have a favorite place to play in Chicago?**

The MID and Studio Paris.

**What can we expect from BBB at the all night Lunar Massive party in Atlanta, GA?**

You never know what to expect, I don't even know what to expect, just be ready to dance!

**I've noticed a recent influx of SKAM Artists to ATL lately. Nathan Scott, Tony Arzadon + others played an all SKAM Artist show at Piedmont Park's Park Tavern, now you're coming in for Lunar Massive. Does this have anything to do with the budding scene here in ATL? Will we see more of you guys down south?**

Hopefully. Atlanta has always shown me so much love and it's one of my favorite places to play because the people are always up for it and into the music.

### What's the next big thing for you?

I am constantly working on music and touring. My latest track with Steve Smooth called "Mmm Drop" did really great on the Beatport charts and we have a follow-up called "Get On The Floor" that's dropping this month. My Behind The Decks Radio Show has been getting a great response. I'm on episode 23 right now, and it's great because it's once a month, and it's a mix that I play all the latest music that I am into. It's downloadable [on my SoundCloud](#) or on iTunes podcast.

Follow me, [Sydney @ EDM Chicago](#), on SoundCloud for the latest tracks you need to be listening to. Also, be sure to check out Bill's latest Behind The Decks Episode 23 mix here:



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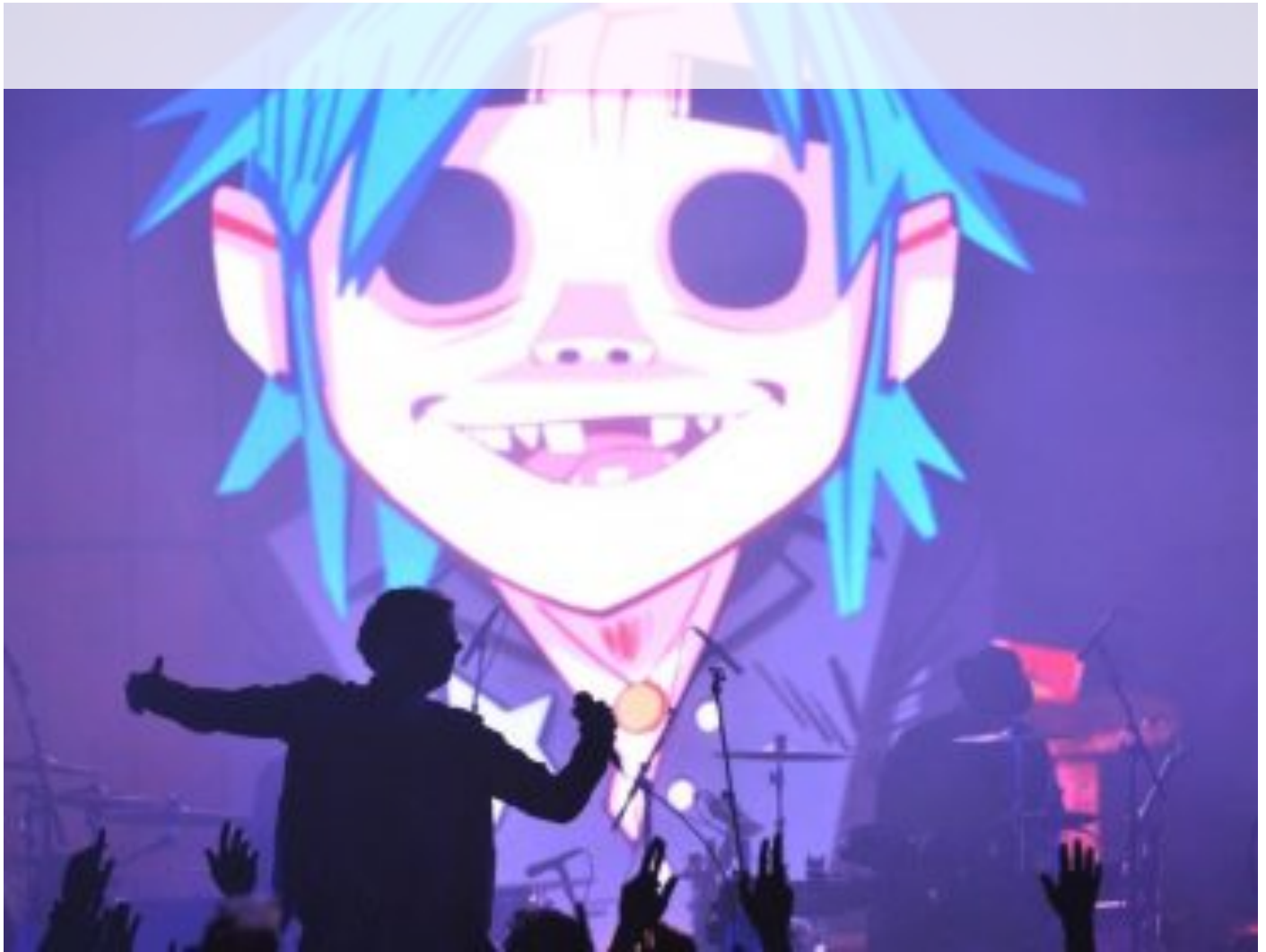




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