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THE BIRDHOUSE 093: HARRY ROMERO INTERVIEW (/BLOG- ENTRIES/2017/6/21/THE- BIRDHOUSE-093-HARRY- ROMERO)

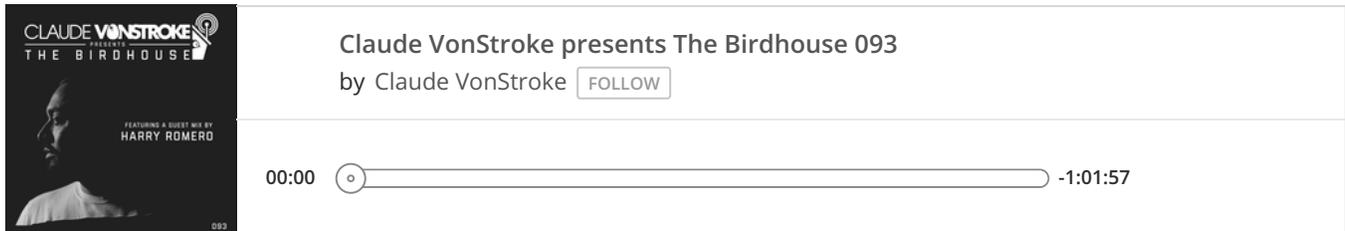


(<http://mixcloud.com/ClaudeVonStroke/>)

Harry “Choo Choo” Romero has been in the game for a long time – almost a decade longer than me! – and has definitely earned his “house legend” status. He put out his first record on Strictly Rhythm in 1995,

co-founded Subliminal Records alongside Erick Morillo and Jose Nunez three years later... and he's been at it ever since.

Whether he's releasing music on his own Bambossa imprint or, more recently, on labels like Circus, Ovum, Relief and Play It Down, Romero specializes in feel-good house with a steady groove and lots of funky sounds and instrumentation (chalk it up to his Colombian roots!). Read on to learn more about this OG and check out his guest mix for this week's show.



THE REAL

How did your music career get started in earnest?

Believe it or not, I started out making Latin freestyle. I messed around with it for a minute, and somehow switched over to that 4/4 beat. I was hooked. I was in college at that time so I'd come home from class and bury myself in vinyl and created what I could on my Ensoniq EPS 16+. I got some demos and made the rounds at all the NYC-based labels at that time. Strictly Rhythm is where it all started for me.

Where are you from and does it have an influence on your music?

I'm born and raised in New Jersey. NJ had its thing going on with DJs like Tony Humphries and I definitely checked him out, but NYC is where I went. I'd hear DJs like David Morales, Louie Vega, Danny Tenaglia, Roman Ricardo, DJ Animal, Keoki and the list goes on and on. So much inspiration in one borough, and great times for sure. Chicago was a huge influence as well. There music was just so dope. It blew my mind and still does. "French Kiss"

(<https://www.beatport.com/release/french-kiss/133297>). Need I say more?

How many times did you want to quit trying to make this your career?

There are those days when you wake up and say "Man... this industry is such a damn joke now. Shit has become a 'likes' game. I'm done!" But there's still that track that is stuck in my head that I haven't made. So

for the most part I still have lots of music to bring to life. I have a lot of inspiration and creative ideas that I still have yet to tap into.

What was one piece of equipment that helped define your sound early on?

Although my first sampler was an Ensoniq EPS, it wasn't until I got my first Akai S-1000 that I really started to cook with gas. I learned all about LFO and filtering with that sampler. And that really set me off to create bigger things that would define my sound.

When you were getting started, which artists did you try to emulate (both musically and careerwise)?

I was always a fan of Kenny Dope and Louie Vega so I always studied their music and tried to understand their choice of sounds, especially K-Dope's drums, and their arrangements. A bit later, in the mid-'90s I was heavily into Derrick Carter and DJ Sneak; DC had a very unique sense of groove and his tracks always stood out because of it, and Sneak taught me to really be creative with finding and using samples.

When you have a tough week or a rough tour, how do you get yourself back on track?

I have always been drawn to nature. When I feel stressed and off-balance I like to take a nice long hike to bring me back to base. Works every time.

Where and when are you at your most content/happiest?

I feel the happiest when I'm putting my two girls to bed. Knowing they are safe, sound, and happy is all I need.

Do you have any secret hobbies or hidden talents?

It's no secret I'm a fishing nut but some people may not know I love me some archery. I can consistently hit a tennis ball at 50 yards all day long. Maybe it's in my blood. Who knows?

THE REST

Favorite and least favorite colors?

Favorite is red.

Favorite animal?

Any kind of raptor – hawk, falcon or eagle.

Favorite guilty pleasure food?

Oxtail Cuban style. Rabo Encendido.

Favorite guilty pleasure song?

Fleetwood Mac, "Landslide".

German or Detroit techno?

Detroit all the way.

Biggie or Tupac?

Biggie, but really Rakim is the one. *[Good answer! -CVS]*

Star Wars or Star Trek?

Star Wars.

Exercise or Netflix?

A little of both.

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