



FEATURES INTERVIEWS

The Disco Fries: School Ties

By Jim Tremayne | September 1, 2012

In the past few years, we've had a front-row seat for The Disco Fries' rise up the EDM ladder.

During its appearances at the DJ Expo's annual "Remixer/Producer" panel, the New York-area duo—Nick "Piklz" Diti and Danny "Danger" Boselovic—has dropped valuable dollops of studio wisdom for show attendees. Whether it's detailed tech talk or sage advice on getting your music heard, The Disco Fries always offer something useful that aspiring studio jocks can use in their careers. (And you can catch them with Mr. Sunshine on this year's "Remixer/Producer" panel, set for Aug. 15 at the Trump Taj Mahal.)

And each year, their list of accomplishments grows. A quick look: In 2008, while attending Boston's esteemed Berklee College of Music, the Fries connected and, on the strength of their thumping re-rub of Flo Rida's "Sugar," quickly became a go-to remix team. DJ offers and remix work—for the likes of Katy Perry, Steve Aoki and Britney Spears—came pouring in.



Now working in the studio and (occasionally) the DJ booth with fellow global DJ/producer Tommie Sunshine—billed as Fries & Shine—Diti and Boselovic have scored with the "Don't Look Back" single. Additionally, they've become regular DJs in faraway places like Las Vegas, China and beyond.

So, coming into this year's DJ Expo, we reconnect with The Disco Fries' Nick Diti and Danny Boselovic.

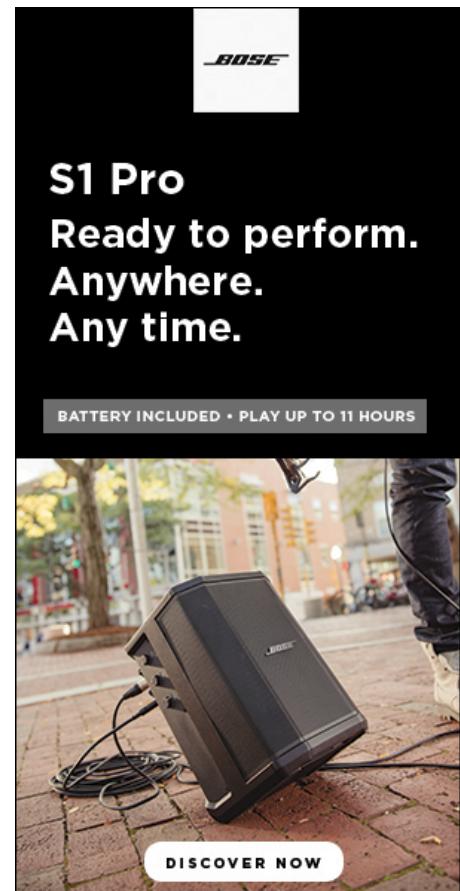
DJ Times: When you two went to Berklee, were you already interested in EDM? What kind of music got you two going?

Nick Diti: I went into Berklee a hip-hop kid into everything, like going to Jedi Mind Tricks shows to listening to Sean Price records. But in addition to all of that, I always had a guilty pleasure for house records. I remember buying my first Armand Van Helden vinyl and listening to a ton of the New York underground mix CDs growing up.

Danny Boselovic: Going into college, I mostly listened to indie rock along the lines of Radiohead, Sigur Ros, and Air—and wasn't too familiar with anything in the EDM world. The closest I came to that realm was guys like Aphex Twin or Squarepusher. For me, one of the biggest draws to that type of music was its use of technology and synthesis to create unique sounds that I hadn't heard before. As I went through college, I eventually began listening to more and more club-oriented music, starting with guys like Trentemøller and Booka Shade until eventually I got to where I am now.

DJ Times: Were you clubbers at all?

Ditri: We weren't old enough in the '90s to get into the New York club scene, so it was tough to really experience the music—unlike the weekly all-ages hip-hop shows that were going on in the area. Danny and I definitely found common ground between our tastes eventually, but because we grew up with such opposing influences, it's helped inspire our music tremendously.



DJ Times: What did you learn at Berklee that you bring into remixing and production in EDM-world?

Ditri: I think I came away from Berklee with a much better sensibility of “the song.” Over time, I’m sure a lot of the things we learned would’ve been figured out, but it really helped avoid the pitfalls of songwriting and production techniques, arrangement and melody that make the creative process much more efficient. If you listen to our records, I think you pretty clearly hear definite choices of chord changes and melody that are 100-percent rooted in our background as musicians. One of our biggest challenges is deconstructing what we make to “break the rules,” but we’re working on that.

Boselovic: The education I got in production, mix and synthesis techniques all come in handy on a daily basis. Before Berklee, I didn’t know what a compressor was, had never heard of FM synthesis, and had no sense of how to construct a track on the computer, really. So pretty much everything has come in handy at one point another in our productions.

DJ Times: Who brings which strengths to the duo? Who’s better at which talents?

Boselovic: I’m more of the sound guy who obsesses over the synths and getting everything sounding a particular way. Nick focuses more on arrangement, orchestration, melodies, etc. But we both stay involved throughout the process so, in the end, it really is a collaborative effort.

DJ Times: How do you two find DJing?

Ditri: DJing is by far one of the most rewarding experiences for us. It’s amazing to see a reaction to the projects we sometimes spend weeks on fine-tuning and really only getting to test in our cars during the week. More and more we find ourselves going back into projects to fine-tune drops that may not have had the impact we wanted or arrangement choices that the crowd may have not understood. Sometimes it’s easy to over-think tracks in the studio, and playing them out is always the real test.

DJ Times: What kind of gear do you prefer in the booth?

Ditri: In the booth, we use two CDJs with Serato on one laptop with Ableton connected to the Novation Launchpad and Akai MPD24 on the other laptop. The second laptop is used to run one-shot impacts, drums and special effects with the Novation Launchpad running the software we developed for Max for Live [a tool kit for building devices for Ableton Live] called KÖNVERSATE. It’s available on our website (discofriesmusic.com) for free download.

DJ Times: How have the Vegas gigs been going? What’s that environment like for you?

Boselovic: Vegas is a great spot for us because it’s such a party atmosphere. People are open to all kinds of music and there’s a lot of freedom in that sense.

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Nick: In Vegas, people let go of any inhibitions they have—and, as our sets are all energy, it's a perfect fit.

DJ Times: In the studio, what's your main platform? Favorite sounds?

Boselovic: We predominantly use Logic Pro running off of either my Macbook Pro or one of our Mac Pro towers. We occasionally use Ableton Live for certain elements of our productions, but Logic is definitely the main component. For sounds, we use a lot of the same stuff that everyone else does—NI Massive, FM8, Sylenth. In general we have our own banks of presets that we've developed as part of our “sound,” but we also draw pretty heavily on traditional sounds like piano and strings as well. For anything like that, Kontakt has been our go-to for quite a while.

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