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## Gray Area Spotlight: Harry Romero



## ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

# Harry Romero

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Not many have had the opportunity to witness the origins of New York City's house scene in the early 90s and also play at The Brooklyn Mirage in 2021. Harry Romero is a legendary figure. A house historian, modern legend, and non-stop touring DJ, Harry has been building his resume for decades.

"I really started going out to these parties in the mid 90s. At any given night in NYC there were multiple clubs hosting 3000+ people. Giuliani came in and enforced his cabaret laws which wiped out the scene in Manhattan. It's been seeing BK take the helm on throwing proper events. I was a regular back in the day at the Sound Factory Bar in Manhattan. Louie Vega was the resident and it was a seminal club for me because I just knew I was experiencing something special, Louie is a big reason that I do what I do."



Harry first released music in 1995. The experience of putting out a record back then was nowhere near where it is today. There were not a plethora of small artist-driven labels, no Soundcloud to upload your music for free, no Spotify to add you to a playlist for discovery. “There were two major players in the city at the time. Nervous Records and Strictly Rhythm. I was pushed to Strictly Rhythm. The head A&R was a woman named Gladys (Pizarro) who does not get enough acclaim or credit for being a massive part in the second wave of house. The first wave was the mid 80s in Chicago. Second wave was 88 to early 90s in NYC. I tried many times to bring her music before she eventually signed something of mine.”

Releasing music for over 20 years means Harry Romero has experimented with countless methods of production. Although he lived through the transition from hardware to software, he maintains some of his techniques from the early days. He has managed to evolve his sound over the years without compromising the core of his musical identity which in his words, is based around drums.



### Where Do We Go?

WEISS, Harry Romero



“It’s so much more accessible now than it used to be. Everything I did back then was done on an EPS keyboard. We used floppy discs and an 8 channel mixer. I would sample records and just try and create anything I could. My music was always based around drums. My production is focused on what I say, Dope drums. Todd Terry and Kenny Dope were two of my biggest influences.”

As Harry worked tirelessly to maintain and continue his career, he noticed drastic changes within the industry. Coming up in NYC in the 90s, he was acutely aware of who was important to the culture of house music, and who really owned the underground scene. When the EDM boom occurred around 2008, it was a strange time for him and his peers.

“The mechanism changed. The way of doing business changed. The EDM thing really commercialized the industry and for them to claim that they were house music was just strange. The reality is that it became a business. It was pop music all of a sudden. A lot of people steered away from what they loved. I’m not mad at technology or the times, you just have to find a way to put your own twist on it.”



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HR & SKI, Harry Romero, Joeski



Working through this time was challenging to artists who had been around beforehand. For Harry Romero, the key was always just to try and have fun. When the fun stops, so will his career. But for now, he knows that fun is the name of the game.

“It’s always been a feeling that’s almost physical. I know when it’s good and I know when it’s not. When you’re in the studio and your butt starts shaking and the hair on your arms stands up... When the drum beat is popping people gravitate towards it. You wanna shake asses, make people sweat, that’s just how I go about it... You’re not always going to make a hit but the important thing is to just have fun.”

Harry Romero has no plans of slowing down. He continues to evolve and twist modern innovations and changes to fit his sound and style. He has a collaboration with Claude VonStroke coming out soon and will be playing the Dirtybird Campout in October. He’s touring the country, releasing music, and continuing to make asses shake.

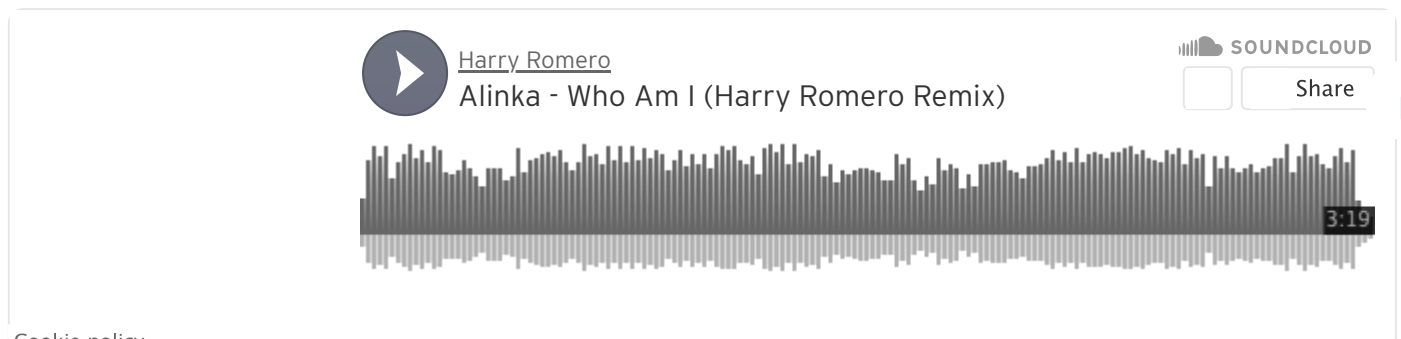
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The image shows a SoundCloud player interface. At the top left is a play button icon. Next to it is the artist name 'Harry Romero' and the track title 'Alinka - Who Am I (Harry Romero Remix)'. On the right side, there is a 'Share' button and a small envelope icon. Below the text is a waveform visualization of the audio track. In the bottom right corner of the waveform, a time indicator shows '3:19'. The SoundCloud logo is visible in the top right corner of the player area.

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