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Eats Everything: Stirring the world's dance floor

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Despite being a “late bloomer” Bristolian DJ and producer Daniel Pearce — a.k.a Eats Everything — is showing the global club circuit no mercy.

Classic house, UK bass, Detroit techno, jungle and early rave — no musical province is foreign to Pearce, whose self-effacing stage name reflects a proclivity to, yes, eat a lot, but also an indiscriminating imbibing of musical styles.

“When I was young, I used to play FIFA all day and would go through a 12-pack in the morning, then go and get more food. My flat mate said ‘You eat everything’,” Pearce confided in an email interview with The Jakarta Post.

“I also play a large variety of music so that is the other reason for it.”

Less than a year into his career, Pearce had scooped an accolade for ‘Best Breakthrough Producer’ in DJ Mag’s Best of British 2011 awards, and was consigned to produce an “Eats Everything Essential Mix” for the BBC’s Radio 1, comprising a mash-up of edits and originals recorded live in Bristol, giving him free reign to vaunt his brand of low bass and stuttered vocals on British airwaves.

While he discovered his passion early on, Pearce didn’t break into the industry until after his 30th birthday. After finding a pair of JB Systems Dis turntables and Kam Made2Fade mixer in his Christmas stocking at the age of 12 had discovered a love of music that he could not suppress, even after reality came knocking.

By the time he was 16, he was off raving at night clubs around Bristol, modeling playlists around the likes of Ellis Dee, Easy Groove and DJ Dougal.

A few years later, he began fashioning break beats (a dance music genre characterized by irregular 4/4 drumbeats) for British DJ Cut La Roc’s label: an illustrious start that to be a short-lived upswing.

The gigs fizzled out and Pearce had to take the high road, taking on a job as a builder and then as a recruitment consultant.

“I worked on a building site and had no money,” Pearce recalls. “The only thing I really did apart was make music and play records.”

Hope dies hard, however, and in 2010 Pearce self-prescribed a 12-month hiatus from his job to find an inroad to his dream. Enter “Entrance Song”, which Pearce produced as part of a demo tape he gave to Dirtybird’s J. Philip during one of their gigs in Bristol.

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“Funny enough, it was Pets Recordings who signed my first track and not Dirtybird. I then released on [the Dirtybird label] after that and it all just happened from there,” Pearce says of the juncture at which his success snowballed with the release of the Eats Everything EP and the old school “Tric Trac”.

“I still can’t get over it to be honest,” he marvels. “Having experienced a not-so-pleasant job before this, I am very aware of how lucky I am.”

Then came “The Size” incorporating booming bass, 808 cowbells and a rhythm that vacillates from lethargic to dance floor-fast using crafty breakdowns. October 2012 saw the release of acid house “Vertigo” whose reverberated synth aptly evokes dizziness by rebounding on itself like a boomerang (how fitting, as Pearce used to suffer from the illness); and the global bookings came flooding in, with appearances across the US, Europe and Ibiza.

While DJing is all about pleasing the masses, Pearce believes that self-styling is fundamental – or what he calls “a mixture of underground tracks and bangers.”

“I think that you can’t play tracks you don’t enjoy; that is the first rule,” he says. “But then you also can’t play tracks that the crowd won’t enjoy. A mixture of both is the best.”

As to how he intuits the musical tastes of his sundry audiences, Pearce says he calls on instinct.

“When I play in new places, I try to mix it up as much as possible, playing old records that I have loved for years while also playing some of my own edits and new releases.”

This marching to the beat of his own drum — quite literally — is the force that has continued to impel him in a cutthroat industry where big names can become has-beens in the blink of an eye.

Of his aggressively mainstream peers David Guetta, Havana Brown and Deadmau5, he says, “I am not one for massive debates about EDM versus underground. They are doing what they do and people love it and I just do what I do and hope that people love it as well.”

Becoming best buddies with Dirtybird co-founder Justin Martin has incidentally been a further spark plug for his still-young career. The duo released the two-track Featherfight EP earlier this year, which Pearce says is one of his proudest projects.

“Playing with Justin Martin at Motion last autumn was amazing. It was a Dirtybird night and we played the headline slot for three hours with a home crowd,” Pearce recalls of another career highlight.

On the 2013 docket is an “Edible” Cardiff-London-Brighton-Bristol tour this May, upcoming releases on six recording labels, a nutrition label-list of club gigs in Europe, US, Toronto and the Snow Bombing Festival in Mayerhofen, at which Pearce was playing at the time of the interview — and one at Stadium in Jakarta.

“[Expect] a mixture of classic house, some of my own production and a fat guy dancing around silly in the DJ booth having a lot of fun!” Pearce warns of his upcoming April 13 appearance as part of a Southeast Asia tour.

Jet-setting career commitments and the lure of big-city bright lights notwithstanding, Pearce’s love of his hometown of Bristol remains unsullied.

“The music community is very small, so everyone knows each other and we all feed off each other’s buzz.”

Pearce now produces at Factory Studios in Bristol, “which is where Massive Attack and Roni Size produced many of their albums – it’s amazing”, he says reverently. “Great place to get away from the world.” — Photos courtesy of Listen Up

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