

From humble beginnings to an international DJ sensation, Gabriella DJ, has made her mark in the music world. Norwich to Dubai, London to Los Angeles her mixes are heard across the globe, curating sets for some of the most popular clubs and stations in the UK namely, Kiss Fresh and The Book Club, she has her eyes set on becoming the next sensation.

An early morning start, as she prepares for a magazine shoot later in the day, we begin to discuss her beginnings in the music world. She wears a purple hoodie sitting in her cosy London flat, a simple painting of colours in the background on an all-white wall catches the attention of the eye. A seeming metaphor for Gabriella's vibrance and brilliance in the sea of the dance music scene.

She starts to reflect 'When I was 17 I'd go out to this club in Norwich, where I'm from, using older people's IDs. This was at the time when deep house was having a rebirth in 2012. I was just obsessed with it, and wanted to know everything about it and what these DJs were doing. So I saved up and brought a small DJ controller, it was only like £200.' She smiles as she remembers her beginnings, 'I would be playing on that in my bedroom for a couple years and then when I went to uni, somebody that I knew from Norwich, booked me for a proper event.'

She took a moment to remember, then continued, 'I took my small controller, I didn't even use the proper big equipment. At the time I was supporting this DJ, Nightwave, she was from Scotland there weren't many women DJing in that era, whereas Nightwave, was a woman and it made me start thinking, maybe I can start doing it professionally.'

I then ended up running my own club nights for the rest of my time at uni. Bookings started coming in and I started playing all over the country and in London quite a lot. This motivated me to move to London, a year or so after I finished uni. I got to do Rinse FM, which was my favourite radio station at the time, so it was exciting to be going to the places that I've been looking up to for so long.'

Having played sets in Dubai, Los Angeles, Ibiza and much more, the discussion moves from local to international as Gabriella divulges her set experiences abroad:

'I like showcasing the London scene and the UK scene in general when I'm abroad. I love playing tracks in my sets that are by producers that I know. For me, if I've got the opportunity to go further afield, then I want them to have the opportunity for their music to be played there.' She ponders for a moment, then continues, 'I'm not a big set planner, myself. It depends on what the crowd is feeling at the time, I'll often have certain ideas of tracks/sounds that I think are going to go down well. I describe myself as 'genre-fluid', as I don't really like to be confined into any genre or style. You hear a lot of UK garage and house and UK techno in my sets because that's the kind of stuff that I grew up on, but you also here Grime and other genres I didn't grow up on because I like that raw sound.'

As Gabriella represents the UK abroad her talent has been noticed by notable clubs and brands within her home country, specifically The Book Club in Shoreditch, known as the creative district, where Gabriella curates sets for club nights. She details her experience curating for the high-profile club:

‘It has been an interesting experience; I've been really pleased to have the opportunity to do it. The Book Club are really pushing for an equal line-up, so they've often been wanting to discover more women in the scene which is something that's always been close to my heart.’

Speaking on the curation of sound for the nights, ‘You’ll get people who are coming to hear certain music, but you'll also get people who are walk-ins. It's about thinking and planning of time, who do I know that's good at catering to a certain crowd even spontaneously? On a proper club night, where there's a DJ who's headlining people have paid to hear a certain type of music so have the liberty to play a variety of tracks. So, it's challenging to cater for walk-ins. It has been fun researching more DJs in London who are capable of that and have enough variety that they can cater to any audience.’

Apart from playing sets and mixes across the globe, curating for high-profile clients in the music world and producing her own tracks. Gabriella has been introduced into the fashion-world, most notably creating a mix for a runway show at the Jimmy Choo Academy show. A proud moment in the Norwich-native's career.

A smile of pride appears on her face, as she starts to detail her experience in the fashion world, ‘It was the final show for students who attended the fashion school. I had curated a mix rather than performing live preparing a five-minute mix for her runway. You really had to think about it making sure that each track had a solid tempo for the models to walk along, which was eye-opening as I hadn't had to consider that previously. When I was recording the mix for the slot, I had to mix really quickly and learn new techniques to make sure the blends work. The set had tracks that would typically not transition in a seamless fashion, so it provided a new challenge. It was really enjoyable, and I definitely want to do more of that especially with so many crossovers between fashion and music there is scope for so much more to be done.’

Gabriella is a DJ that has taken the London scene by storm, so much so, that her talents are being scouted by the global market. From fashion shows, guest mixes, DJ curation and her own sets – Her musical realm sees no bounds. As she sets her eyes on her next steps in the music world, make sure to find her mixes at a club near you.