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EDM GOES MAINSTREAM: WHILE MONEY ROLLS IN, PORTER ROBINSON, BEATPORT, ONEBEAT EXECUTIVES PONDER THE FUTURE OF DANCE

Posted on Mar 6th 2013 1:00PM by Jesse Ship

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Porter Robinson Facebook

Since electronic dance music adopted its latest moniker **EDM**, a massive surge of corporate dollars from companies hungry to keep up with the trends and demands of an ever-growing digital fanbase have made it as big a deal to bean-counters as glowstick-wavers.

Beatport, the world's largest DJ music store, was just snapped up by the billion dollar SFX Entertainment (headed by Live Nation founder Robert Silverman) while video platforms like **OneBeat** will be exploding onto gaming consoles like **Xbox** and artists like **Avicii** are modeling for Ralph Lauren. EDM, it seems, is transitioning from popular in clubs to mainstream.

Porter Robinson is 20 years old from Chapel Hill, North Carolina. He didn't grow up exposed to the '90s rave scene, nor have access to underground dance parties. He started producing laptop music at 12, emulating what he heard in "Dance Dance Revolution" games.

A couple years ago he was taken under wing by dubstep baron **Skrillex**. "Spitfire," his first release on Skrillex's OWSLA label, quickly reached number one on the iTunes dance charts and on Beatport.

Like many members of the community, he's a bit concerned about the limelight EDM is enjoying. He fears that if it becomes too popular, regardless of its merit, the masses will move onto the next hot thing.

"That's worrisome," Robinson tells Spinner. "I think it's reflective of a cultural insecurity that we always need to be ahead of everyone else, but I think the positive side is that, one, people get to enjoy this very fun music. And if more people are exposed, then great. And two, the underground is 10 times bigger than ever before. For me, it's easy to be cynical about it but over all I think the effect is positive."

The folks at Beatport aren't concerned about EDM going mainstream. As far as they're concerned the genre's already there.

"Almost all music is electronic in one form or another. It's all evolving in a direction and eventually we'll just drop the electronic and just call it music," assured Matthew Adell, CEO for Beatport, who were just acquired by SFX, the world's largest EDM promotions company for a cool \$50 million. "What we call 'electronic music' will just be called 'music' in a couple of years. You know how in bad science fiction movies they'll say things like, 'Hey look, that's the space toilet,' but it's in space? So why don't they just call it the toilet? They're already in space."

OneBeat, run by business-execs Joe Kanellitsas (formerly of **VH1**) and Mikhail Lapushner, is one player banking on the underground not losing its cool. The New York-based media production company has been in talks for over a year with **Xbox**, convincing them to invest in an EDM-based "app," basically a video portal, jam-packed with content.

Gaming portals like **IGN** and **GameSpot** have just recently launched their own **Xbox** apps where subscribers can watch live gaming events, talk shows, reviews and more. Lapushner hopes to fill a content void where he feels a few years ago, the only thing available was what he calls "EDM porn," for lack of a better word.

"It was mostly just sexy girls dancing on tables shot on iPhones. We saw that the character rich environment of the scene is off the hook. From the go-go dancers to the DJs, it's a content makers dream. From a content producing point of view, what you want is rich characters, and then it is about the execution of the content."

OneBeat have yet to launch on **Xbox**, but have already started populating its **YouTube channel** with teasers of things to come with one of their mandates being to elevate their content beyond interviews with DJs on couches.

Some of it seems to be content for the sake of content, presented by vacant 20-something VJs, like their "Top 10 Holiday EDM Drinks" video, or a segment that features bitchy tweets from DJs like **Chase & Status** moaning about lousy steak at the Brussels airport. However, there's some solid material for fans, like in-depth interviews with DJ/producers **Art Department**, a day-in-the-life of a club manager at New York's Cielo, or on the candid side, "Top 10 DJ Touring Tips with **Thomas Gold**."

While Beatport's video platform currently only goes so far as a live bi-weekly **Ustream broadcasts**, where Porter Robinson has also been a guest, Adell isn't bothered. Their new Daddy Warbucks, Robert Silverman of SFX, has the stroke to push things over the edge.

"We've always been the community's first stop train station," said Adell, a DJ himself. "The opportunity we have now is to help direct fans [even more so] to amazing talent. This form of music is near and dear to my heart, so it's only joyful for me to see other people seeking it out. I genuinely believe that house music makes your life better, and I hope it makes everyone's life better as well."

All the Porter Robinson info

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