

XLR8R

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Vivian Host

"Ass n' titties/ ass n' titties/ ass ass titties / titties / ass n' titties"

So runs the hook phrase of DJ Assault's Detroit club anthem. Juvenile, vulgar, cheaply made hyperactive electro-bass music to some, irresistible party soundtrack to others. Ghetto tech where an amalgam of urban musics meet at the rave. If nothing else, ghetto tech is causing a stir among it's devoted fans and frowning adversaries alike while shedding light on a maligned form of underground

Detroit DJ and holder of the ghetto tech torch, DISCO D is a whirlwind of words, opinions and fantastic DJ skills. His love for a spicy new underground music has put ghetto tech on the map and blurred genre distinctions in the process. This man likes it raw: whether it's sushi, sex, records or conversation. Unflinchingly, Vivian Host meets the boy with the nasty mix and shakes him down for the hot talk.

Disco D wages war every day, usually at about 165 beats per minute. At that speed, his music—recorded in the 120-140 bpm range—fights to stay on course; his turntables, pitched up to almost +14, try desperately to lock beats together. At 165 bpm, electro pulses, 909 kicks, hip-hop acappellas and freaky 'hos all struggle to keep it together on the dancefloor.

D's style—dubbed ghetto tech—is party fodder for people whose booties have attention deficit disorder. It's perfect for dancefloor freaks who, like Disco D (born David Shayman), like their records fast and nasty. D's latest mixtape, *Ghettronics*, confirms his love of high bpm's and straightforward sex talk, as Eminem and Trick Daddy acappellas and disco records fall together at high speeds, classic electro records get pitched up and fucked up with ultra fast remixes, and tracks like "Dick That Bitch Down" and "Hos Take Off Your Clothes", urge dancers to shake it, bitch. As a sample chant from DJ Assault's ghetto tech insta-classic "Ass & Titties" goes, "If you a freaky dancing ho', keep shaking that shit/Let's see how good you shake it/ on top of my dick."

These kinds of lyrics are vintage 2 Live Crew territory to be sure, but ghetto tech isn't trying to appeal to electronica pundits—it's trying to move your ass. "Ghetto tech is like danceable turntablism," says Disco D. "It combines everything I like about music. It's about sex, and I like sex. (Ghetto tech) can be every kind of music. It's just that we play it at between 155-165 beats pre minute, crazy DMC-style, rocking doubles of everything. The best description I've heard of it so far is from Joe Han, the Detroit rep for Sony Music. He said 'Take a little bit of techno, a little bit of house and a little bit of drum & bass. Then take that shit to the hood and pour a 40-ounce onto it. That's ghetto tech.'"

For DJs like Godfather, Assault, Disco D and Gary Chandler, ghetto tech has as much to do with mixing style and presence as actual music. There's a bit of hip-hop bravado thrown in there as well, as DMC-style battle tricks are essential to the ghetto tech formula. "Ghetto tech is as much a mixing style of music as it is anything else," Disco D says. "You have to hear it and see it to experience it."



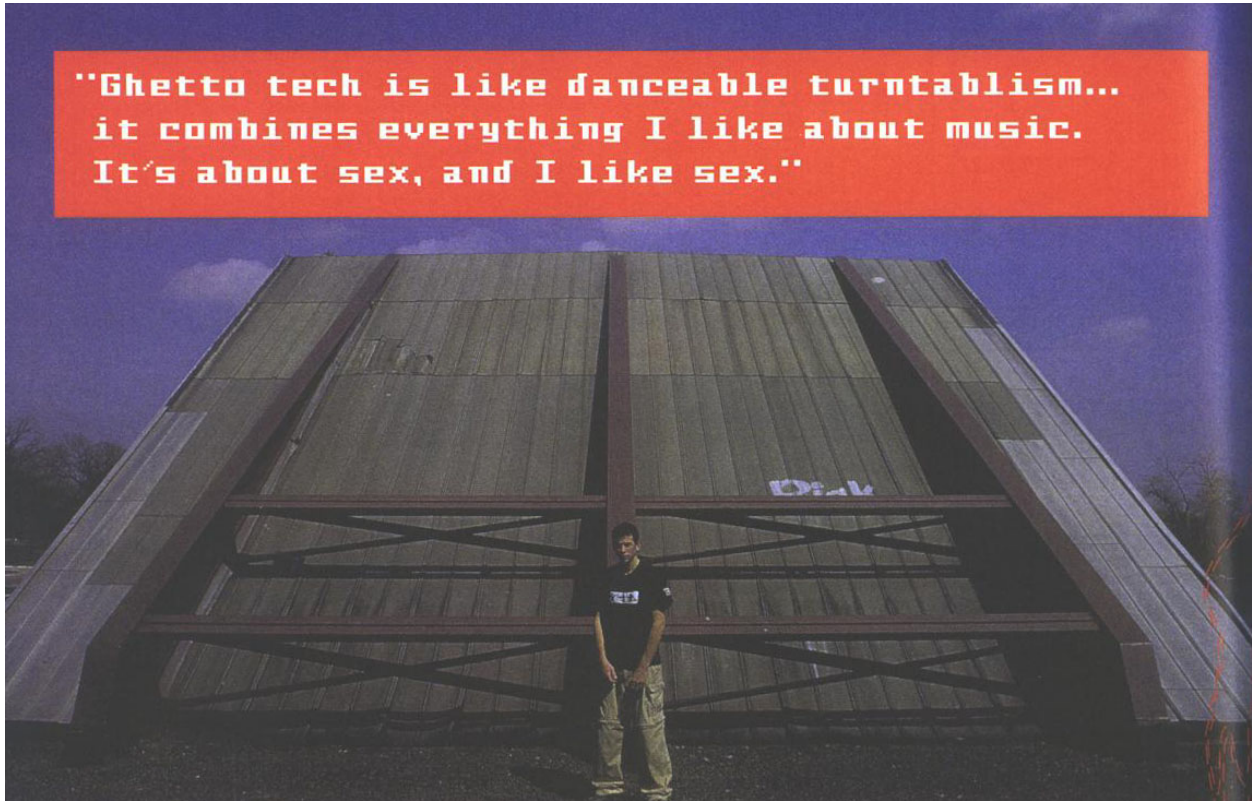
Though Disco D is a fan of scratch DJs like the Invisibl Skratch Piklz, his breakneck mixing is derivative of the style of quintessential Detroit DJ Jeff Mills, as well as popular radio jocks like Chandler (97.9 WJLB), DJ Zap, DJ Fingers and Wax Tax'n Dre (105.9 WDTJ). Although Disco D fell in love with ghetto tech at his first rave—he was enraptured by a tag-team set between Godfather and Chandler—his main inspiration has been commercial mix shows.

"I fell in love with the art of DJing before I fell in love with the music," Disco D says. "Before (I saw Godfather and Gary) spinning, I had never seen a DJ live before. I didn't know shit about electronic music so I had no clue what was supposed to go together. Then I started to listen to the radio every week. I was 15 and I was a fucking nerd. I would literally lock myself in my room eight hours a day and spin and try to figure out how all the radio DJs were doing all this crazy shit."

While Disco D says that Detroit DJs in general could "blow the pants off DJs anywhere," his favorite DJ is sometime collaborator Chandler. With reverence, he describes the experience of listening to one of Gary's shows: "The shit is so fast and so ballistic, it really has to be heard to be understood. It's like Juan Atkins back to back with techstep jungle and a DMX acappella. And it all sounds perfect together."

With its mix of music, ghetto tech might sound like it would have mass appeal; surprisingly, though, the sound hasn't really moved very far out of Detroit. Disco D is trying to change that, releasing records on his GTI label and collaborating with rap artists—notably Detroit rapper Paradime—to create ghetto tech tracks with original rap

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vocals, rather than just samples.

"People are ripe for something new like this," he enthuses. "Everywhere outside of Detroit that we play is a ravey-type club crowd, but I don't think that means that there couldn't be more than one market for it. I mean, Busta Rhymes raps fast. Why can't it work?"

Typically brash, Disco D says he refuses to compromise his DJ or production style, even if he isn't successful. "I don't want to compromise that just because the crowd is different of just because they haven't heard music in that realm of speed."

The biggest challenge to overcome in breaking ghetto tech might be racial barriers. In Detroit, the music mainly attracts black urban crowds who go to house parties or private clubs on the weekend. Although Disco D has found favor among the rave crowd, his first gigs were at cabarets, which he calls the "black inner city equivalent of a rave." A cabaret, he explains, is when "a group get together to rent a hall and a photographer, and get someone to cook. Then they'll have DJs and you bring your own alcohol. I was usually the only white person at these things, but nobody gave me any shit."

Though he has mainly been accepted by the Detroit crowd, Disco D says he and his music do get some flack, though not directly. "People think I'm some little white kid whose rich daddy paid for his turntables. Fuck that, this is me doing what I'm doing. I'm not getting up there and pretending I'm from the hood. I'm not the Vanilla Ice of ghetto tech."

Like many others, D notes that classic Detroit artists like Kevin Saunderson and Juan Atkins don't like what he's doing. "Ghetto tech is the only Detroit-made music that people listen to. I think the techno guys hate us because of that. They think our music is the lowest common denominator and shit like that, not realizing that some of the production on our tracks is unreal."

Although Disco D knows his history and wouldn't mind respect from Detroit's old guard, at the end of the day, he's more concerned with whether or not the dancers get off to his arsenal of tricks and saucy basslines. "I've played places where people just rip off their clothes. I think people just have this primal sex instinct. When I play, they're either appalled or they go ballistic."



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