



CRIPtic
2021

CRIPtic Arts Podcast, Episode Eight MC Geezer & Troi Lee

Hello everybody. And welcome to another one of our CRIPtic art podcasts, where I, Mik Scarlet, introduce you to the wonderful artists that will be performing at this year's CRIPtic arts Pit Party at the Pit theatre at the Barbican down here in sunny London on November the 19th, and November the 20th, this year. Also, don't forget, it will be available as of Saturday the 20th online on the Barbican website. So if you can't make it, you can still get to enjoy all of the fantastic acts that we have lined up for you this year.

So who do we have today? Well, we have the one and the only MC Geezer and Troy Lee! Yeah, boy! (laughing) I, of course, can't do any of that stuff because at 56 I can't be street. (laughing)

So, thanks so much for doing this. And what we always do is we get our interviewees to introduce themselves, to tell us a little bit about themselves and what it is they do before I start grilling them about their life and what they make. So could you introduce yourselves to our wonderful CRIPtic audience?

Oh, my name is MC Geezer and I'm basically a sign rapper and a music producer. I love creating all different kinds of music from hip hop to bassline. And I've been working with Deaf Rave for nearly 18 years.

Wow, such a long time then.

Yes, definitely.

Hi, my name is Troy Lee and I'm the founder of Deaf Rave. And also the DJ and sometime a host and performer.

Yeah, definitely.

Cool.

Brilliant! Well, it's great to have you here. I've already worked with MC Geezer in the past on a Drake music project, so I know how excellent he is and how he gets the crowd going.

So (all talking at once)

Even at the gig we did where it was pouring with rain. We're not doing that sort of gig, we're never doing that, not talking. Anyway, what was it that made you want to apply for CRIPtic? What appealed to you about the CRIPtic?

Well, we're about unity and we love working with everybody disabled, deaf, hearing, we are all the same. We are all one. So I'm thinking that this project, when I saw it, it's fantastic to break down, I don't know, that deaf people can't perform, or disabled people can't perform. So our job is to go there and show everybody that we can perform and we have the right to be on the stage, just as everybody else.

And not only that, also in MC Geezer lyrics, he's basically sending out really vibrant and strong messages to all walks of life and how we can engage with them and interact. And basically, we're just sending out positive messages.

Definitely.

Well, that's great. I mean, and it's great to have you. I can't wait. I can't wait for the big day because I watched your Deaf Rave gig online and it was just joyous to the max. I was thinking that's going to be, you know, we get a bit of that at the end of the CRIPtic, because you're the last act, aren't you? So it's going to be big up at the end, it's going to be great. What was it that made you want to get into music? It's not you know, most people don't go, I'm Deaf, music! That's the road for me.

Yeah. It's been such a long time that I had a long history or passion for music. And we started basically from house parties with DJs, and then from there it went to parties, and then parties to events, and then event to festival. So during that journey all the way, my job was to encourage

deaf DJs and performers to carry on with their passion until this day, since 2003. We're still around, still doing what we love doing.

Yeah, definitely. The reason why I'm doing what I do is basically because my mom used to put on the music, when I was a kid, I would love watching music TV, musicals. And then growing up, I got to like 13, and I bought my tape, and hung around with mainstream schools, so all my friends were hearing, and they got me into the early Go Hard, and the bass. And then, at seventeen, my companion said, you've got to come to the Deaf world. So, I went to the Deaf world, met Troy, and he said, "Can you rap in sign language?" I said I can try. So, from that day, all the way to now, 35 years old, I'm still doing what I'm doing, sign rapping.

It's funny, because I used to go to Fabric and to Ministry, and there were loads of Deaf Ravers there because of the fact the PAs were so brilliant and Fabric had it in the floor, didn't it, as well? So it was a whole scene and everyone would be like, Yeah, feel the bass, man

Yeah, big vibrations all the way, all night long.

Yeah, and let's face it, you guys know how to party. So how do you go about writing a track? How do you form your music?

Oh. Well, basically, I just make a simple beat, something that could work with, you know, that structure. So, I make it with Logic and then I just get a nice melody, nice bass, nice kit drum, and then maybe just write a nice song to go with it and then as I go, progress, the drum gets better, and then now I've to find out where I'm going to put the hook. And where I'm going to put the lyrics. So, with my first EP, it was more rapping, and with my second EP it was more catchy hook. And less rapping, and more bassline rather than hip hop beats. So the speed's going a bit more faster. And then I'll go into the studio and I will record my voice onto the track, And then I get it marked to the mid tone.

What makes it so special about MC Geezer is, he's so, so, so, so unique because there is no deaf people really actually recording their own vocals at all. Not what I know of, in this country, or even possibly worldwide, so we have a real, real, real original product, which is MC Geezer doing his own vocals. We don't need to depend on nobody else's vocal, meaning that he the original guy with the original music, original lyrics and original vocals, which is absolutely amazing.

And perfect timing with Strictly Come Dancing, breaking all those kinds of, Ooh, can deaf people dance? And then all of a sudden you go, not only can we dance, we can rap! (MC Geezer and Troy agreeing) Putting my journalist PR hat on here, thinking, Yeah, hey, nice one. Perfect timing in MC G. Right. So, tell us a bit about Deaf Rave, you know, because I've watched it, but if the viewers don't know what it is, describe it to them.

Okay. That's a really, really good question. Okay, let's put it this way. Imagine you arrive at the venue and you see all kinds of people there, especially Deaf community, everybody's signing away, heavy bass, heavy music, pumping out to the max, everyone is basically communicating crystal clear with each other. From A to across the room, or from here to the bar, or whatever. So, but hearing people, it's impossible to communicate in a real loud environment, in terms of communication. So you'll get definitely struggled, but with the Deaf community, it's crystal clear. It's everyone's on the plane, man. So that's what's so unique about Deaf Rave.

What else is unique? Yeah, we basically put on club nights just for deaf performers and deaf DJs, basically creating a platform and give them opportunities. Because if we don't do this, they ain't going to get much opportunities elsewhere. So it's very vital that the roots of Deaf Rave is to encourage deaf people to take further on in their passion in whatever they do. And my job is to create the platform for them to do it.

Brilliant. And what, you know, when you're writing a track, what inspires you? MC Geezer, when you're writing your lyrics? What drives you to write them? How do you come up with your words?

Well, I write lyrics basically based on Deaf culture. Every day, deaf life. And sometimes I write about my view, my life, what I've been through and the good and the bad about being Deaf. So I try to get the hearing people to understand what it's like to be deaf, how hard it is. It's not easy for us, and it's not easy for everybody. But I just want to show the world that we're deaf, we suffer, we have battles.

Lots of battles, forever ongoing battles. So we want to send out a message that this is the reality that we live in. And we just have to keep going.

It's funny. Because that's one of the questions that I ask all the artists. As artists, what barriers do you face trying to get out and get your art performed? And don't worry if there's too many, you can just name the top three. Because most people have gone, I'm never gonna answer that! That's just too long, man. (laughing)

And the battle that we're facing is that there's a blockage getting into the mainstream music industry. And we want to break that. We want to show that we can reach the potential. And reach

the peak of the same artists in the hearing world, no matter. If we put in the hard work, ethic, passion, dedication, we can do it. And same for disabled people. We need to break that barrier, and reach to the top.

And establish a foundation, and hopefully more young future let's say, inspire the young DJ generation. That if we can do it, they can do it. Yeah, again, another barrier would be, there's a lot of misjudgment by hearing people when they look at us, thinking, we can't do this or we can't do that. Or it's a situation we get that misjudgment or that kind of vibes every now and then, it's always there.

Discrimination.

It's discrimination, man.

I completely understand. I mean, obviously I do music. I was doing it in my youth and you'd go to record companies and they'd just go, Well, can a guy in a wheelchair do gigs? And you'd be like, yeah, I've just been on tour. Oh, can you get in a recording studio? Yeah. Well, I'll just recorded this demo. I think every time you thought of something, something else would come along that they said, oh, you can't do. I'll never forget the funniest one. Was like, Well, no one's going to want to put a poster of a bloke in a wheelchair on their wall. I left that meeting and came home and signed a load of posters for my fans and sent them out. And it was like, I can't win. So yeah, and it's scary to think that that was, what, '92? And here we are, nearly 2022, and people are still saying the same thing to you guys that they said to me back then. This whole, "You can't do it, it's not possible. No one will buy it." Rubbish. And we know that it's rubbish. So henceforth, we want to put you on at CRIPtic! To show the people the truth, which brings me nicely, he says, putting on his professional hat, to: tell us about your performance for us at the Barbican. What's it going to be?

Oh, I'm going to perform two tracks from my first EP, which is really more in depth about Deaf culture. And then I'm going to perform two tracks from my new EP which is not yet to be released. Though, should be released in time before CRIPtic. And then we're making a really, really special song, but we don't want to give it away too much. But it's a CRIPtic song.

Ah, it's like this original! You're going to be busting out an original track, for us. Nice one.

Yeah, and it's going to be very bass y. And we're going to be doing something which is a little bit of a twist, I'm going to be creating a sample and Troy is going to do the video.

VV, he meant, visual vernacular. Which is kind of like British sign language storytelling, but in a visual sense, so like poetry or visual motivated performing, basically.

Oh, wow! So, I was going to ask you to sell it, but you've already sold me, but then, you had me sold at the start. But we'll ask you that one at the end. So we've done the barriers. We know what we're going to do, but are you ready? How ready are you?

Oh, we're ready, man. We're going to smash it. When MC Geezer say about the bass, you guys are going to feel the vibration. Barbican will feel the

[Both] vibrations!

I can't wait, I can't wait. So, we're nearly at the end now because I've run out of questions. So, what I want you to do is, to all the people that haven't seen Deaf Rave, that don't know what MC Geezer's about, can you sell it to our audience? So they go, Well, I don't know what else is playing, but I've got to see and hear and be part of this experience.

You're definitely going to feel the bass.

You're definitely going to have a full vision and insight of what Deaf culture is really about. Not just alongside Deaf culture, but also disabled. So, you know, we are together as one and that is what we're all about. This is the one of the main purposes of this project. We are one and we hope that you guys are in it too. We are the voice for the voiceless.

Yes. And there's lots of audience participation, isn't there? Because I know that you've got that all lined up to get the whole crowd signing.

Yeah, we're going to invite the whole Deaf community to come down and check it out.

Definitely. We need all the support until we can get all the bands and, you know, let's get together as one unity.

Yeah, love, peace and unity.

Smashing. Well, there you go, everybody. That was MC Geezer and the wonderful Troy Lee, part of the fantastic Deaf Rave, they will be there at the CRIPtic Pit Party. So don't forget, you can get your tickets now online for both the 19th, the first night and the 20th, the last night, it's a short run and you can get us online. But for now, I'd like to say thank you very much for watching us. So bye from me, Mik Scarlet and bye from MC Geezer and Troy Lee!

Thank you.

