

DJ Dez & DJ Butter Share A Piece Of The Action (Interview)



DJ Dez and DJ Butter are veterans of Detroit hip-hop having worked with everyone from Proof to Danny Brown. Butter has released over 250 mixtapes and Dez was the DJ for Slum Village. Dez is unique for a hip-hop producer/DJ because he also has a credible background in dance music having released several highly regarded singles for Detroit house legend Moodymann's KDJ label. His discography also includes R&B work with funk/soul/hip-hop generator Amp Fiddler and singer Monica Blaire. Together, Dez and Butter have recently released their 3-years in the making collaboration album, *A Piece Of The Action*. Kurupt, Kool G Rap, Guilty Simpson and Elzhi are a handful of the guests on the 14-song collection. In the following interview they discuss the origins of their current project, Detroit hip-hop and future plans.

"It's something for the gangstaz and the hip-hoppers all in one"

When did you two decide to collaborate for A Piece Of The Action?

BUTTER: about three and half years ago. We started on the first song with Loe Louis. Loe was apart of a group called Laswunzout. They were one of the first groups out of Detroit to go to Cali to record with Davina. Soul Assasins and was on wax with a deal and all that. Dez and I sat back and tried to get a direction after that. Loe is a pioneer in Detroit, We knocked it out at Geno X0 studio off 7 Mile.

What kinds of ideas did you have about the way you wanted it to sound and who you wanted on it?

BUTTER: We just wanted it to flow. The album has a few skits, and it's something for the gangstaz and the hip-hoppers all in one. We just wanted some legends from the city on there as well as some of our favorites. People like B0\$\$ should be celebrated. She's one of the first gangsta rap females to go platinum on Def Jam. That shouldn't go unnoticed.

Dez, you have a background in all kinds of music and your father is a drummer of Latin music. How did you decide on house music and hip-hop as your chosen genres?

DEZ: I'm a product of hip-hop. When I was introduced to it I was drawn to it. As I progressed through hip-hop I was chilling with MoodyMann and he said "I think you should give dance music a try". I find it to be the same level of creativity. I think I have found my particular sound now, since I stayed with it for this amount of time.

[youtube id="TY-64hjlu74"]

Butter, how did you become a hip-hop DJ?

BUTTER: My dad always had a reel-to-reel at home – vinyl, turntables. So when I heard records like "Buffalo Girls" or Seeing Jam Master Jay on the "Rock Box" video blew my mind. Way stronger than *Superfly* or *Scarface*. When I met my homie Illy-Ill around 11 or 12 years old, he said I could be in his rap group C.O.P. (Congregation Of Poets). He asked if I had records and I said "Yeah". That's how we started, with me claiming my dad's albums.

"I'd Rather Be Judged" talks about a lack of unity among Detroit hip-hop artists. Why do you think that is?

BUTTER: The radio stations don't really support the artists properly. In some way I think that keeps us in a bubble, so it

builds up frustration with each other. How can we create moguls in the city like Puffy and Master P without that support? It's crazy, man. So we tend to beef without each other because of being underappreciated. I produced that record at my man KonPhlict of Tha Almighty Dreadnaughtz's crib.

What do you remember most about Dilla or learning from him?

DEZ: I learned from Dilla to care about what you present to the people. Dilla always stayed fresh when he was in public. Dude was a thinker and a mastermind. For him to have all the sodas in his refrigerator looking the same, placed in order, says a lot about a person. Dilla was a fan of Dilla. That's what I learned.

Do you feel like the success of Danny Brown and Dej Loaf has given Detroit hip-hop more of a national identity?

BUTTER: Props to Danny Brown. We've done stuff with him. I'm inspired by his growth. Dej Loaf is doing her thing indeed. 2014 was a great year for Detroit, even with Royce and Primo.

It looks like you had fun filming the video for "Heavy Hittaz". Are there more coming?

BUTTER: It was a big day for Detroit. Even a wedding party crashed our video to take pictures with Kurupt.

DEZ: Riding the wave of *A Piece Of The Action*. I Got Andres #4 coming out on Mahogany Music/KDJ/La Vida. Be on the lookout for D.F.D. (Drummer From Detroit) which is an alias of mine, and some more dance music. KonPhlict of Tha Almighty Dreadnaughtz and I also have a project on the way.

BUTTER: I'm learning how to do films and documentaries now. I'm working on a few projects now, also got some stuff with Dilla's mom under my sleeve. Can't forget about the Boldy James project – the cover art pays homage to Proof, J Dilla, Blade Icewood and Mc Breed. Stay Tuned!

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