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Minutes With

Andy J

RLR recently caught up with Melbourne DJ and music producer Andy J, a legend of the dance music scene. Andy J has enjoyed huge success, locally and internationally, with hits such as the ARIA-award winning “White Treble Black Base” and “Right In The Night”, currently ranked at Number 2 on the Dance Charts.

RLR: Did you find it difficult to persuade your parents that you could make a living out of your Djing aspirations?

AJ: My parents encouraged me to continue with my education as far as I could. I certainly appreciate them doing that because I think that when you're nearing the end of high school, your career goals and expectations may not be fully formed. So I went off to university to do an Applied Science degree and I'm happy I did. But, that said, had I done Sound Engineering I would have been four or five years ahead of where I was when I started producing.

Persuading my parents wasn't easy until they saw I was passionate about it.

You must have passion, desire and drive. There's a lot more to it than just sitting down and bashing something out. It takes a lot of hard work and research. You throw a lot of darts: some miss the board but some hit (and it's great when they do).

RLR: You've had numerous Number 1 Dance Chart songs and mainstream Top 40 hits, made a cameo appearance in the movie “Wog Boy”, won an ARIA award and play to an audience of around 250,000 people on the radio program “Loaded”. What do you consider to be the highlight of your career and why?

AJ: Winning an ARIA award for the track “White Treble Black Base” is a massive highlight of my career. It was one of the first tracks that I ever made. To receive that industry recognition was great.

When I think about the track, how it was made and how quickly it was produced, it makes me stop and think “wow, I put that track together in my lounge room in Richmond, watching trams go by”. For it to go on and be a big club hit here and overseas, and then to win an ARIA, was pretty amazing.

It speaks volumes about the dance music industry as well. In the end, it's what happens on the dance floor which is all that matters. It doesn't need huge publicity and promotion: if it works on the floor and moves the people, you can go a long way.



RLR: Your mixing skills have been sought by some of Australia's most recognised entertainers, including Paul Mac, Kate Ceberano and Delta Goodrem (and international artist Cyndi Lauper). When working with such acclaimed artists what do you try to get out of the experience?

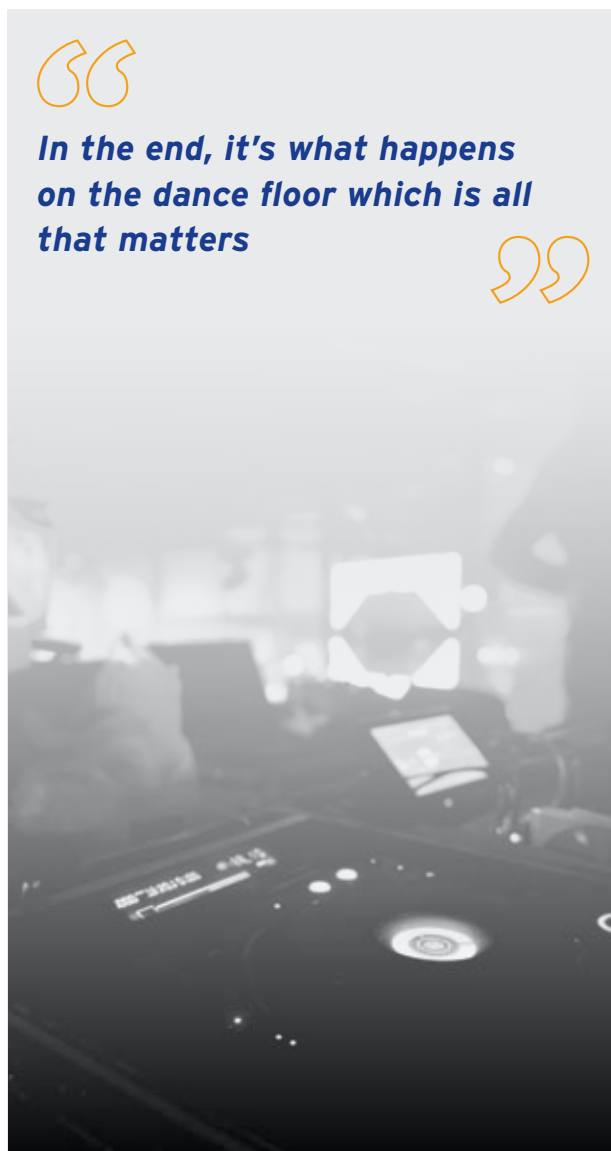
AJ: Well, when remixing, you don't actually collaborate with the artist directly. The artist's record label comes to you with the finished track and you, in turn go back to them with your 'take' on it. It's a really cool experience as you get to see how tracks are put together by artists of that calibre. Being handed that finished product, taking it apart, reassembling it and putting your own stamp on it, is a lot of fun.

RLR: When you look back on your career, which three experiences do you consider have had the greatest impact on your professional life and why?

- AJ:**
- (1) The first time I saw a DJ mixing two records had a massive impact. I'd never seen or heard it before and was blown away hearing two records playing at the same time and to the same beat. I remember where I was, what I was wearing and that I was underage and shouldn't have been there!
 - (2) When I started Djing, the first time I felt energy emanating from the dance floor. That's what you aim for: to set the right vibe in the room and get people to enjoy themselves all depends on your energy and what you're playing.



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(3) The first time I saw my name on a piece of vinyl for a record that I produced and I thought "well, maybe I can do this as a career."

RLR: What have the past few months felt like for you with your current song "Right In The Night" entering the Dance Charts at Number 2 and remaining there for 14 weeks?

AJ: It's great to have chart success. It's great to know DJs are playing my music and that it's hitting the spot in the target market that I'm aiming for.

To be honest the music I make, I pretty much make it for myself, for my own sets. So to have it crossing over and working for other DJs to me is just a bonus.

Being Number 2 for 14 weeks is quite a long stretch. It would be fantastic to take that extra step (and reach the Number 1 spot) but it's not the end of the world as I must have topped the Club Charts five or six over the last eight or nine years. So I'm not missing out there!

RLR: You've played alongside some of the world's most famous DJs. What musician has inspired you the most and why?

AJ: Daft Punk - through their ideas and the way they present their music. I've never actually played alongside Daft Punk, but not many people have because they don't tend to need any support. What Daft Punk produce is outside the box.

Some of their ideas from the early "Homework" album really inspired me to be a producer and affected the way I think about music.

RLR: Over the past two decades, the club music scene has evolved dramatically. What do you anticipate to be the next frontier?

AJ: That's an easy question and the answer is "I don't know". That's the main reason why this business is so exciting because things move so quickly. I don't want to know where it's going to head next because that will take away the excitement.

RLR: Thank you Andy. It has been a great pleasure for us to spend five minutes with you. The team at RLR wishes you every success for your future projects.

