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EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

INTERVIEW: TWRK – THE DJS BEHIND THE BUBBLE BUTTS

Kim Reyes • FEB 12, 2014

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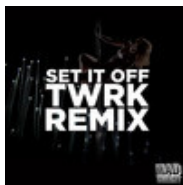
Benzi (<https://soundcloud.com/benzi>) (left) and eSenTRIK (<https://soundcloud.com/dj-esentrik>) (right) make up TWRK (<https://soundcloud.com/twrk>), a duo that has been dominating the trap scene since the July release of their first mixtape, *Volume One* (<http://www.djz.com/news/twrks-volume-one-is-on-fire/>). Featuring seamless transitions between trap tracks and early 2000s Southern rap, *Volume One's* effortless orchestration managed to turn heads and shake rumps.

However, listeners were unsure of who *exactly* to thank for this gift from the trap lords. Google searches didn't help, and neither did their track artwork, since it only featured photos of women's butts. The duo's identity was kept mum, but this was entirely intentional.

"We based it off the UZ (<http://www.djz.com/dj/uz>) thing," reveals Benzi. "At one point we were thinking, 'maybe we should put masks on when we perform'," adds eSenTRIK.

"We've both been around for so long, so to start off with a new identity was cool," says Benzi. "They couldn't pigeonhole us because of who we were. People thought TWRK was Diplo (<http://www.djz.com/dj/diplo>) and Skrillex (<http://www.djz.com/dj/skrillex>) working together."

The release of *Volume Two* (<https://soundcloud.com/twrk/volume-two>) in October set the record straight with the revelation of their true identities on the BBC Radio 1 show *Diplo & Friends*. Although the Mad Decent (<http://www.djz.com/tag/mad-decent>) mastermind was not involved in the project, he was a huge supporter from the start after hearing TWRK's remix of the Diplo and Lazerdisk (<http://www.djz.com/tag/lazerdisk>) (formerly appended with 'Party Sex') hit "Set It Off":



TWRK

(<http://soundcloud.com/twrk>)

Diplo & Lazerdisk Party Sex - Set It Off

(TWRK Remix)

(<http://soundcloud.com/twrk/setitoff-twrk-remix>)

0.00 | 2.45

Before making any waves as TWRK, Benzi and eSenTRIK were simply two friends who had previously worked together on remixes. After hearing DJ Snake's "Bird Machine" (<https://soundcloud.com/maddecent/dj-snake-bird-machine-feat>), Benzi cooked up an idea to make their stake in the burgeoning genre. He called eSenTRIK from a Walmart parking lot, and it was there that TWRK was born. "We thought of so many stupid names and came up with TWRK, which is kind of our blessing and curse, but at the time was revolutionary," admits Benzi.

Paired alongside catchy music was a name suited to draw attention and establish credibility within the genre of trap, but an introduction from the Ying Yang Twins in *Volume One* most certainly helped validate the duo as twerk experts. When asked how they got hooked up with the rap legends, Benzi explained that back in 2005, he distributed his mixtapes to whoever would listen -- "the Ying Yang Twins and Mr. Collipark were the first people to ever respond."

The crunk crew recorded an introduction for Benzi, which he still uses to this day. He kept in touch with the rappers, who reached out and asked for help on their songs. Although the idea was scrapped, the rappers were happy to do a favor and introduce *Volume One*. "We were talking about maybe, in the future, doing a tour and having them join us," reveals Benzi.



Mad Decent

(<http://soundcloud.com/maddecent>)

Diplo - Biggie Bounce (feat. Angger

Dimas & Travis Porte ...

(<http://soundcloud.com/maddecent/diplo-biggie-bounce-feat-2>)

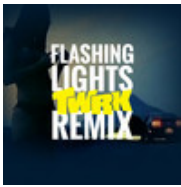
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It's obvious that TWRK has an affinity for rap, but their appreciation for the genre is simply a manifestation of their early music tastes. "In an ideal world, we would play and remix all old-school songs," says Benzi. "But with kids being so young now, when you do play some of those songs, they have no idea what the hell is going on, or they think it's a new song."

"With 'BaDINGA!', the younger crowd didn't know it was an old song," eSenTRIK confirms.

Unfortunately, their penchant for the golden era of twerk wasn't the only thing that Millennials misunderstood about TWRK, who had embarked on a small club and college tour in late 2013. "These kids thought it was a *twerk* party," laments eSenTRIK.

"Our name was our biggest pitfall in the beginning," continues Benzi. "People would see a picture of a girl's butt with 'TWRK' and they'd want to do dance contests with us. We did a show once where they did the contest first, and once it ended and we were going on, the whole crowd left."



TWRK

(<http://soundcloud.com/twrk>)

Kanye West - Flashing Lights (TWRK Remix)
(<http://soundcloud.com/twrk/flashing-lights-twrk-remix>)

0.00 | 3.54

It seemed that their online success hadn't translated as well in real life, but Benzi notes that their second and current tour has gone much more smoothly: "These are actual shows. No more contests. People are there to see us and they know our songs."

With TWRK thriving, it's clear that they're an act to watch, and all this attention is well deserved. In 2014 alone, the duo has received support from Skrillex (https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?v=570504226367941&stream_ref=10) and released their collaboration with Just Blaze (<http://www.djz.com/tag/just-blaze>) via *Volume Three* (<https://soundcloud.com/twrk/volume-three>). They've received offers to produce for rappers, but for now, the duo is busy with plans for a larger-scale tour, a forthcoming EP on Mad Decent, and an official release of "BaDINGA!", adjusted to accompany rap vocals.

TWRK, who dream of working with Nelly and Pharrell, will continue to work within the parameters of trap, but intend to revolutionize a genre whose popularity ostensibly rose and fell within a year. "There's an influx of shitty twerk remixes that all sound the same because people are copying what big trap names are doing," says Benzi. "We've got some interesting stuff coming out, and hopefully we'll be the ones to take trap in different ways."



TWRK

(<http://soundcloud.com/twrk>)

TWRK - BaDINGA!
(<http://soundcloud.com/twrk/badinga>)

0.00 | 3.29

"Trap is accessible because it's hip hop-based," continues Benzi. "We listen to old hip hop songs and it still sounds good to us, so maybe trap will still sound good to us five years from now. But who knows -- trap may be the worst thing ever."

One thing is for sure, though: TWRK doesn't play house. "When we started, we got booked at this Sunday brunch event in Chicago, and everyone was like, 'What is this shit? Play house music!'" says Benzi. "We caved in and we weren't expressing our brand. From then on we're like, 'TWRK doesn't play Avicii' (<http://www.djz.com/dj/avicii>)."

"But it's not Avicii, per say," comments eSenTRIK. "It's just house music."

"When I say Avicii, I mean 'Levels'," clarifies Benzi. "We play the fun trap remixes of house, though. The last thing we want to do is get up there and pump our fists."

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