

“What Goes Around”

DJ Rap Releases Her New Album *Synthesis*

Words by Vanessa Pascale

With her radiating energy and awe-inspiring talent, **DJ Rap (Charissa Saverio)** is the sort of woman you revel in being near. Not only because you will undoubtedly learn a thing or two from the talented artist, but hopefully some of her sparkling presence will rub off as well. A **DJ, singer, songwriter, music producer** and head of two **indie record labels: Propa Talent** (drum ‘n’ bass) and **Impropa Talent** (house), this petite, brown-eyed powerhouse is truly a force to be reckoned with.

DJ Rap, significantly known for her djing skills / music producing and wide-ranging musical talent, wows again with her recently released album, ***Synthesis***. An album she refers to as “smart pop,” it’s a “synthesis” of the music she loves (house & drum ‘n’ bass) with a style influenced by artists like **Coldplay, Pink Floyd, NIN, and Mutemath**.

Synthesis is a follow-up to her 1999 record, ***Learning Curve***. “I’ve done records in between, but this is the second actual real record with full songs. The other records are more like DJ compilations; strictly drum ‘n’ bass albums, house albums—all very underground dance,” explained DJ Rap. A lot of hard work and time went into producing this impressive album. “I wrote the next record and everyone kind of sat on it for two years. I forgot about it and I went back to djing. I ended up writing a bunch of songs and testing them out acoustically. I went and played piano for **Francis Ford Coppola** and went to **Sir Richard Branson’s** island to perform for him. I met some really influential people who heard the songs and thought they were good... I started thinking, *maybe,*



I should actually put this record down.”

It’s been a long arduous road for *Synthesis* to get produced, partly due to DJ Rap’s hectic touring schedule, among other issues, that include her discovering that her agent-at-the-time had embezzled from her. This freed up some time for DJ Rap to write, while she took her former agent to court. “This record should have been called *Blood, Sweat and fucking Tears*, that’s what it should’ve been called,” she laughed. “Nothing is ever easy in my life. It looks like it is and it’s all gleaming and great. But it’s actually tsunami, after tsunami, after tsunami....”

After self-producing the album, she realized that she wanted another person

onboard to help produce “because you lose a bit of perspective if you’re doing everything yourself.” The first producer didn’t work out, but the second producer, **Chevy Bhorntus**, worked out much better than anticipated—and ended up becoming her boyfriend. “Anyone stuck in a room for 16 hours a day for months and months and months, eventually you’re going to end up together,” she said with a smile. Once the album was finished, DJ Rap realized that she wanted to add a live element to it. “After all that effort, we decided to re-do the whole record with a band... so Chevy produced that whole version of it with me and it was *much* better.”

Synthesis turned out beautifully. “It’s exactly what I want. It was such a labor of love to get it to

“Another reason for taking so long to write the record is that you have to wait for a lot of stuff to happen to you to make it interesting, otherwise you’re just writing about nothing.”

the point where I was really happy with it,” beamed DJ Rap. She worked with the best of the best on *Synthesis*: **Grammy-nominated** mixer, **Chris Woods** (mixed the record), **Andy Irvine** (from **Earth Wind & Fire**) on bass, and **Prescott Ellison** on the drums. “These are all people who did it for really super cheap because they just loved the record and wanted to work on an



“I wasn’t the first female DJ, but I was the first one to get paid the same as guys and play in the main room. I was the first one to say, ‘I’m not playing in that little room.’”

electronic record,” she explained.

A powerful sound, united with lyrics that are intense and expressive – these are songs that people will definitely relate to. **“Wouldn’t Change a Thing”** really means a lot to me because it was a particular experience I went through, certain things I’ve done where I’m just like, *I’ve completely fucked that up. Would I go back and change it? Nah, probably not.* Like certain billionaires asking you out, and you’re like, *D’oh! Should’ve done that — didn’t— ok.* Just all kinds of things I went through. Another reason for taking so long to write the record is that you have to wait for a lot of stuff to happen to you to make it interesting, otherwise you’re just writing about nothing.” DJ Rap’s music has been showcased in feature films. “My last record got synced to 5 major movies: *Thinner*, *Mission Impossible*, J Lo’s *Enough*, *Run*

Lola Run, and *Go*, which was a huge raver movie. Hopefully *Synthesis* will sync and people will like it. It’s about people hearing it and getting it out there,” DJ Rap expressed.

DJ Rap and her band are getting set to go on tour. During this time, she is still sporadically making djing appearances around the world—from **Dubai**, to **Spain**, to **Florida**. She recently spun some hot house music at **The Gryphon at Seminole**

Hard Rock Hotel in Hollywood, F.L.

Extremely well-traveled, DJ Rap has lived all over, (her stepfather used to run hotels world-wide) **England, Africa, Indonesia, Greece...** **London** is where she first started djing. With the djing, “I just had an ‘ah ha’ moment. This is what I want to do. I started making music (the music producing came first). First record did really well (1990). I signed it to **Paul Oakenfold’s** label. Then I started playing on radio. It just all blew from there. It happened very quickly once it happened,” recalled DJ Rap.

She stole the spotlight by playing very, very aggressive music. “There was never a girl before that did it, produced those kind of tracks. It was just very heavy,” she shared with a smile. **SheJay** named her **#1 Female DJ**, a title she’s held for five years now. “Truthfully, the reason I think that I keep getting that title is just because I produce. There’s only a handful of women in the world who can produce electronically, work they’re way around a studio and genuinely do everything themselves. Now, there are other female DJ’s who are definitely learning. I’ve always said, ‘Don’t just DJ, produce. Learn how to do it in a studio. Do it

all yourself.” In this business for twenty years now, she’s proud to have come so far. “I wasn’t the first female DJ, but I was the first one to get paid the same as guys and play in the main room. I was the first one to say, ‘I’m not playing in that little room.’”

Since February of this year, DJ Rap streams her own web series **DJ Rap TV**, bringing in 6,000 viewers each week. “I wanted a forum that I could just do whatever I want every Wednesday for an hour,” said DJ Rap. The show features the classically trained beauty either in an acoustic performance or djing different styles of music—sometimes with guest DJ’s (**DJ Irene**, whom she toured with on **Chicks with Decks** was with her for the show I attended). “I can have a show that is constantly different and no one else can do that in our scene. There’s isn’t another DJ that can do that.” Viewer’s can check out her show on her website **DJRap.com**, just click on the TV button on a Wednesday 8 p.m. Pacific Daylight Time. If you missed it Wednesday, it’s on repeat. Another cool feature is that fans can interact with her live via chat room. “It’s really cool. We have a donate button and I give people an exclusive track they can’t get anywhere else. We have a lot of laughs on there. It’s more about just having fun, but also showcasing the label’s new material and my own music,” she said exultantly.

Pick up DJ Rap’s CD *Synthesis* now. It truly is a beautiful compilation. Check it out! For more information on the fabulous DJ Rap, visit her website **DJRAP.COM ML**

FUN TIDBITS ON DJ RAP

CALLING DAVID BOWIE

She’d love to work with **David Bowie**, again. “I’ve played with him... I’d love to do some drum ‘n’ bass with him. I’d really like to work with him because he’s adventurous enough to do something different.”

FREE TIME

“I take the dogs to the park. I hang out with friends. I cook dinner for my friends—I love to have dinner parties here.”

AN ACTRESS AT HEART

When she was younger, she wanted to become an actress. Her debut role was the lead character in the movie, **Isolation**, due out next year. “I really enjoy acting—actually, that’s my first love. Believe it or not, I’m way better at that than music. I just never had a chance to do anything. At least I can say, ‘Before I died, I did one movie.’ I would love to do more.”