

Q&A Interview with DJ Irie on Scratch DJ Academy MIX!

Q: Tell us a little about yourself.

DJ Irie: I have traveled all over the world. I tour in Europe, in Asia, in the Caribbean. The club circuit is my main business. But outside of that, I play in one of the greatest arenas in the country, the American Airlines arena with the Miami Heat, being the official DJ for the team. I also tour with Jamie Foxx and his concerts and tours all over the world.

Q: How did you get your start?

DJ Irie: When I first started, it's funny because when everyone that has an interest in DJing, you probably look at other DJs. So we all have someone that you looked up to that you've been able to say, "Hey, how do you do this? How do you do that?" In my personal case, one of the big challenges for me was mixing. I knew what songs sounded good, at least to me. I didn't really figure out, okay, wow, you got to catch it on the one. You got to hit that snare. That's what I didn't know. Luckily for me, I had someone, I had a friend that was a professional DJ at the time that literally took me under his wings and said, "Hey, you know what? You want to do a scratch like this, and you want to beat mix like this and like that." And then I took that knowledge and pretty much practiced on my own. But my biggest challenge was probably getting that whole beat mixing part. I didn't really get it at first until I started breaking music down into bars and into the notes. I mean for any beginner out there that is looking to get into DJing and scratching and mixing and all those things, there's a lot to understand when it comes to the keys, and harmonies, and really just figuring out what sounds go with other sounds.

Q: Tell us about Scratch DJ Academy MIX!

DJ Irie: It takes a lot of the guesswork out of DJing. Not only is it doing the work for you, but you're getting to understand how it works because it's not just happening. You're seeing how it comes together. Once you see the songs that are picked out for you and you get to hear them for yourselves, you get it. You get why this song goes with this song because of the same BPM. You get why this song goes with the other song because they're in the same key. It's the same harmony. Scratch DJ Academy MIX! definitely is that program that will help you do that.

Q: What separates a good DJ from a great DJ?

DJ Irie: It has to go beyond just an interest. It really has to become a passion. It's one thing to listen to music. It's another thing to really understand it and really be able to break it down, and know about bridges and know about intros. Really in terms of a

program like Scratch DJ Academy MIX!, what is so cool about it is you're gonna learn all these essentials, and it's going to break it down to you in a way that anyone can understand. And you're going to need to understand about bars and intros. You're going to need to understand about snares and harmonies and keys and all these different things that go into really knowing about how to pair and mix music together. Scratch DJ Academy MIX! is gonna break those essentials down for you. All it is is about following that passion and applying yourself.

Q: Tell me about what "Performing" means to you?

DJ Irie: It's about taking that crowd on a musical journey. It really is. You want to bring them up; you want to take them down. You want to take them on this whole musical ride that at the end of the evening, they're saying, "Wow. What a ride." The only way to do that is to really understand your music. You want to understand what music is going to be climactic. You want to understand what music is gonna really give them that chance to kind of like catch their breath, and kind of like chill for a little bit before you take them on that climax again. And of course, when I say a journey, a journey has to begin and a journey has to end. There's certain music that's proper for the beginning of the journey, in the early part of the night. There's certain music that's appropriate for the end of the night when it's time to close it out. To really understand how to control the crowd, you have to understand your music. And to understand your music, you need to really be able to break it down and learn the essentials of music, which is what a program like the Scratch DJ Academy MIX! will help you do.

Q: Where does technology end and art begin when DJing?

DJ Irie: You should embrace technology. This whole music experience is constantly involving. Technology is playing a bigger and bigger role each and every day. And if you don't embrace it, you're never gonna really understand what you can really unlock, and truly experience it to the full extent. So it's important to embrace technology. Another thing too in terms of technology, technology will help you really understand how to navigate throughout the genres. The music that's popular today wasn't really music that was popular five, ten years ago. Music is trendy. You have to stay on top of the trends to understand the trends. You got to be able to navigate within different genres, and embracing the technology is a very important key to being able to do that and have that longevity.

Q: What about those people who have no interest in becoming a professional DJ. How would they use MIX!?

DJ Irie: For people that music is their hobby, music is something that they want to take it to the next level than just sitting in their car listening to the radio, they want to kind of get their hands dirty and interact with it a little bit -- a program like Scratch DJ Academy MIX! is perfect. Not everyone is destined to go out and be the next huge worldwide tour DJ. But it takes you to a whole new level on a personal scale, understanding the music. In anything in life, it's one thing to experience something, but it's another thing to

understand it. Because when you understand it, your level of interest and engagement goes to a whole new level.

Q: What about pros? Why would they use MIX!?

DJ Irie: Well, at the professional level, any performing DJ out there if they are serious about their craft they are always looking to expand and grow that art form, expand and grow their performance. Everyone's always looking for that new angle. Scratch DJ Academy MIX! can be that new angle. As seasoned as we are and as much as we know, we can always learn more. And it's always about technology opening that door. We should all look at ourselves and look what technology has done for us thus far. Well Scratch DJ Academy MIX! is that technology that's gonna do for us even more in the future. So it's all about taking a vested interest in your career, taking a vested interest in your performance, in your art form, and exploring and identifying new angles to really make your show that much better.