

DJ Duvet uncovered



By [Ruth Cooper](#)

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Internationally recognised and respected SA DJ; Shaun Duvet chats to us about how to make a name for yourself as a DJ, how he manages to juggle the many aspects of the music industry he is involved in and how he literally can bring down the roof when performing.



You seem to be quite the busy businessman and musician what with running your own marketing and advertising agency and the Bang Bang club as well as constantly gigging locally and internationally. How do you fit it all in and remain sane?

Well you know when it all started, entertainment was always the focus for me and the plan was always to platform as a DJ and then to promoting, making my own music, doing night clubs. I was always interested in advertising and marketing and then it was around then I basically started an agency that focuses on events, design, media and video. That's kinda where I am today. I've been doing it for so long; it's my day to day living I must just make it happen.

And what would you say is your favourite part of what you do?

Well I love it all I must say. It's an interesting question but I truly love what I do. I try and take all the elements of what I love and try and put it all together in one package. The DJ'ing has always been a big deal because that's where I started. It's watching the whole process from start to finish.

What is your biggest priority at this point in time?

Money, that's the common thread and as much of it as possible. It's music but it's the money and the music. And in order to make money out of any industry you need to understand all facets of it... Please don't make me look like a scrooge.

What do you think is the biggest challenge for anyone in the music industry?

Breaking in is a big thing. Today things are a lot easier and more difficult at the same time, from a DJ'ing perspective. Ten years ago only 100 maximum records came into the country and only the top shelf DJ's would get these records. It was difficult for the smaller guys to break in they had to work really hard and network well. But today you have got digital downloads which is a good thing because it is easy to access the music but at the same time you have a billions times more competition. Now it is all about branding and identity you need to view yourself as a brand and get in touch with the online world. Network with the right people and stay humble. So breaking in is a big thing and then once you in it's maintaining it. It such an ego driven game and sometimes it's easy for people to get caught up in the lights and glamour. To find the balance and make a living out of that is hard work. Does that answer your question?

How did you get into music industry what was the starting point?

Like a lot of DJ's I just fell in love with music and club culture round 12/13 years old. I got fascinated with my dad records playing Motown and Jackson 5. I would just put records on and stare at them and think wow this is awesome. And then when I was 14/15 years old I bought myself my first belt driven turntable and would make my own mixed tapes. And then I got more into dance culture started my own dance records and then started DJ'ing at a club called 206 in J' burg which closed about 8/9 years ago. I became resident there and started throwing my own parties. And just fell in love with it and pursued it as a career.

How do you feel about old school turntables vs. laptops?

I think it's all bullshit to be honest with you. You need to embrace technology and current culture and embrace everything. It's nice to have a balance, it boils down to selection it doesn't matter if you're playing off a laptop, tape deck or singing a song if you are not playing the right tune at the right time to that crowd it doesn't matter. It's all about selection. It's about taking it to the next level. But in terms of keeping up with technology it's very important... But there is something cool about watching a DJ pick a record up and play it to the crowd as opposed to a guy, if they don't get their performance right, looking like someone checking their e-mails.

What has been your craziest rock star DJ moment?

There have been a lot of crazy moments I can say that for sure. Just the adrenalin rush of playing festivals to thousands of people it's absolutely fantastic. One moment I will never forget this, I was playing in J' burg and the roof there was something wrong with the building and the actual roof fell down.

Seriously you brought the roof down?

Crazy ja exactly I can say I brought the roof down and it was such a crazy moment cause I was into the music and I remember some guy tapping me saying "Dude the roof has just fallen" and people were running off the dance floor and I was thinking what have I done.

Where are your favourite venues to play?

I love playing at the Bang Bang club I must say not to be biased or anything. The truth is it is my home and also the one thing about the club is we really focus on the music. Other than that... well it's more about the crowd as long as I don't have people requesting Brittany Spears?

Does that happen often?

No not really but there have been a couple of moments. There was one girl once who asked me to play a track from Delite (which is a great record) but I was playing the track at the time and I was like seriously I'm playing it right now are you joking.

How are your plans going for throwing outdoor music festivals, when can fans expect that to happen?

I don't want to let the cat out of the bag just yet but I am pencilling it for Valentine's Day next year it's going to be a one day festival to start. All local talent and a couple of international acts too. It's happening. But talking about events there is another event which I have just bought into called Pro X which is an extreme sports festival. This year we have 3 shows one in Umshlanga at the Wave House then the Coca Cola Dome in J' burg and the Waterfront again in Cape Town.

What makes a successful DJ?

Like I said before hard work, treating yourself like a brand, behaving yourself. Being humble working with the right people always trying to further your career. Add elements to your shows that make you stand out- like audio visual elements. And

get the online community behind you as much as possible.

Who is your favourite DJ?

There really are so many, it's an interesting question really because there so many different elements to take into account and there so many styles of music that I love. Somebody like Gilles Peterson he's like a God to me. I once brought him out here and had to pick him up from the airport and I couldn't even talk to him I was just standing there white as a ghost. Regarding selection he is one of my heroes he has always been about discovering new world music. Like stuff from Lagos that nobody has heard from before.

Can you narrow it down to just one who would be your dream collaboration?

Shoo wow...No. You're asking me a very difficult question.

How do you think the SA music scene (especially the dance scene) could be improved?

I think the SA music scene is amazing in fact I know we have one of the best scenes in the world. I mean from a house music perspective I would say we are in the top 5 of the world. Particularly our black house music audience is huge. The one thing that can always been improved on is integration on the dance floor. In J'burg it happens sort of. But in Cape Town you still see the segregation (between black and white). But everybody loves dance music who likes to go out and party so it's a good universal language.

What are the best and worst things about being a DJ?

Look the best things are doing something that you love, travelling the world, meeting amazing people. It's having fun socialising just being out there. Potential problems are when you don't feel like socialising the late nights it's about keeping yourself balanced. Sometimes the problem is when you out there gigging doing what you do and your best mate is with you and is out there tree standing right next you and grabbing you and saying "I love you" or "Play something else". You have to be a diplomat. So warding off drunks is one of the problems but other than that it's cool.

What do you do for fun, as in hobbies?

My life is pretty much my hobby I love what I do, so sleep maybe.

What are your views on the death of Michael Jackson and the whole media frenzy?

Michael Jackson was my hero, growing up he was it for me. I used to play and dance like Michael Jackson in front of my family. And with regards to the media, after all the drama and stories and allegations at the end of the day there was never and never will be another musician like this, who changed the world and that is the most important thing.

Which Superhero would you be and why?

Shoo. The Joker; Jack Nicholson as the Joker.

Aaah so not the hero but the villain?

Ja he's just much cooler.

Future plans?

Right now the focus is to consolidate everything I'm doing. From event perspectives; the Pro X is a big focus as well as the outdoor festivals. International tours. Really consolidating everything,

Message for your fans?

Thanks you for the support. Keep coming to the gigs.

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ABOUT RUTH COOPER

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