

NU-MARK AND POMO

DJ NU-MARK, ALONG WITH FELLOW JURASSIC 5-ER CUT CHEMIST, HAS BEEN A LOS ANGELES MAINSTAY FOR THE LAST DECADE. HE'S BEEN IN HIP HOP BASICALLY SINCE GROUND ZERO AND HAS DEDICATED HIS LAST 20-SOMETHING YEARS TO THE ART FORM. AS AN AVID RECORD COLLECTOR AND SAMPLE DIGGER HE'S HELPED SHAPE THE REMINISCENTLY "OLD-SCHOOL" SOUND THAT J5 IS KNOWN FOR. HIS CURRENT RELEASE WITH CHALI TUNA, "HEY," IS MAKING WAVES, AS IS HIS SOLO RELEASE "HANDS ON." SEEMS THE GUY CAN'T WAIT TO RELEASE ANOTHER PROJECT; "BLENDCRAFTERS" (A SURE FAVORITE ESPECIALLY FOR DJs AND PRODUCERS) IS SETTING THE STAGE FOR HIP HOP BACKED INSTRUMENTAL ALBUMS—THINK JAZZ FOR HIP HOP HEADS.

I HAD A CHANCE HOOK UP WITH NU-MARK AND POMO AT COUNTERPOINT RECORDS AND BOOKS IN NORTH HOLLYWOOD TO CHILL AND TALK OVER DRAGON ROLLS, A NUMBER 22 COMBO AND A SALAD AT A SUSHI PLACE A COUPLE DOORS DOWN. THERE'S NO DOUBT ABOUT THE FACT THAT THEY CAN DEBATE ABOUT HIP HOP'S PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE. BUT THE THING I LIKE ABOUT NEW "MAINSTREAM" ARTISTS THAT BUILT THEIR REP FROM THE UNDERGROUND CULTURE IS THAT THEY ARE A HUMBLE BUNCH WITH TALENT THAT THEY SLANG AROUND WITH MODESTY.

NU-MARK AND POMO ARE HOPING TO FORGE YET ANOTHER DIRECTION FOR HIP HOP. YOU MCS HAVE TO TAKE A BACKSEAT—THIS TIME IT'S FOR THE DJ'S, THE BEAT-MAKERS, AND THE B-BOYS.







2NR: Is this going to be Nu-mark, Cut Chemist, and Pomo now?

N&P: No. We've known each other since we've been listening to hip hop. This Blend Crafters project is just the two of us. I met him on a street corner after I went record shopping with a friend. He was like, "What record is that?" I was like, "It's UTFO's 'Roxanne, Roxane.'" He got the record, but then it fell out and got scratched. I still have that copy and that scratch is still there to this day. Since then we've kept in contact and we have therapy beat sessions where we play beats for each other. It wasn't until recently when we agreed to just

put this stuff out and not worry about the MC being on it. We wanted to capture that beat bedroom vibe where it was just fun listening to as is. Cut Chemist and myself will always be doing stuff for J5.

2NR: What is it that you contribute to the project?

N&P: Depends on the day and the beat. We just bring a bunch of beats to the table and pick the best ones. I can definitely say that I bring it when it comes to knockin' drums. We tracked and mixed the whole record ourselves. We did the whole thing at Pomo's crib—that's a big contribution in itself. Production is a big part of it. The

recording time was free, and importantly, stress free. Plus he has a good ear; we didn't need some rock engineer that didn't know the sound we were going for messing with the record.

I just went out with my man Mike-III to go look for a Boss-303 and ended up playing with all the new digital equipment. It was definitely not like that back in the day—much less 5 years ago.

Back then it was about the sounds. Roland was at the top because they had the sounds—the sequence capabilities are garbage; they're just not user friendly. That's when Akai came with a mini pro-

duction center. But back then you had to do the best you could with the sounds they gave you. Now they have all this editing equipment and to get the sounds now you have to go crate digging—but then again everything's available now.

2NR: Does a person actually have to go out and dig anymore?

N&P: If you want to be different with your sounds you should. Pomo goes to thrift stores and digs for high-quality recorded soul or classical records. I like going record shopping because I'll always see something I don't own or haven't seen before. Digging for records is an endless maze. It's a beautiful hobby. If I hear a guy say that he knows everything about records, I can say that he's full of shit. Although I did hear that DJ Shadow is set out to get every rap record ever pressed. Also because of all the people out there that know how to dig, I have to search through the "new arrivals" section first—you gotta get it first or find the thing the store slept on. For the most part I know the value of a record.

Most prized record:

The Meters.

2NR: Are you an elitist beat digger?

N&P: No. I like to share my music. Although, I like to find records that people haven't sampled before, hit them, and put them out before anyone else has, but if people ask me about the sample I'll tell them unless I didn't clear it.

2NR: About samples, can a person sneak one in there?

N&P: You can if you want but I'd be careful on whom you distribute through and how large it'll get when it gets out there. You can still get caught and the repercussion of them getting you for as much money as they want should keep most producers legit. Samples are the most daring thing out there. A lot of the times the artists are flattered but it's the publishers and their lawyers that get you. I had this guy that I was going to use on my last CD but EMI wouldn't return his calls and the publishers weren't having it. There was a time where I couldn't clear my one of my own songs—even offering 15 grand—but since they downsized there was no one around to handle licensing. The clearance never went through. Another thing, I think payment should be set up like a grid. If you sample one bar of music you should be allowed to ask for a certain amount for the master side—the record company, the publishing side—the owner of the music, and the sample clearance agency—the people that make the calls.

2NR: Back in the day when vinyl was the standard you'd be lucky to have 10 or 12 cuts. Now it seems that people would be a little upset that they missed out on the other 8 or 10 cuts you didn't put on there. Your project reminded me of an old school setup where only the best cuts were released.

N&P: Wow. That's really cool that you saw that. I think that you're the first person that's mentioned that info. I think J5 undercuts by doing 15 tracks. Eric B and Rakim's "Paid In Full"—with 8 or 9 songs—was one of the most potent records ever made. Everybody gave leeway to Chinese



Arithmetic but the rest of the tracks are legendary status. I think "Chinese Arithmetic" was one of hip hops first skits. It was designed for a New Yorker's walk to the corner bodega. Enough for a "wussup"—just long enough to say your peace and bail out to catch the next track. I like skits as long as they don't go overboard and go to long. They're a great way to bridge tracks. I like concept albums too, but a lot of people diss them. A lot of my favorite records are concept albums. Public Enemy's *It Takes A Nation of Millions* was amazing. One side you've got samples that went forward then you got a track with the same sample going backward. They had a message. People ain't doing that shit any more.

2NR: Who is?

N&P: J5 tries to. But everyone is trying to be more dynamic these days because the listener isn't as patient as they used to be. They need that jiggy track or that "off to the left" dance club hit. I can't front; I try to be dynamic. I contradict myself all the time though. Some days I want to go into the studio and do a concept album with one sound. It'd be so much fun!

2NR: Would you go under alias?

N&P: No! I'd go under my name!

2NR: What's the lead single on *Blendcrafters*?

N&P: "Melody." We're gonna do something different with it. Instead of releasing a 12-inch instrumental we're going to release it with an MC. I just got off the phone this morning with Large Professor and I'm trying to get him to do the cut. We're doing the opposite of a remix release. I'll see if I can get producers to be the MCs for this project.

2NR: Is there a sound that's difficult to recreate?

N&P: Horns. It's hard to re-create good horns on the computer. It's tough for a drum machine to emulate a real drummer.

On some albums, and because I can hear actual instruments and the hype to go along with it, I can tell that they would have a great show. But a lot of times their music works better live rather than recorded.

It's tough to be a really good performer on stage and dynamic in the studio. It comes down to time. Time and concentration level go hand in hand. J5 tries to do both but it's very tough.

2NR: I remember shooting pictures of J5 during a performance with The Five Footaz back in '95. The impression of their golden-age hip hop style was infectious even back then. That's almost 10 years ago. How do you feel about you being one of this age's old school artists?



N&P: It's weird. It saddens me in a way because I know that time is slipping. All good though—times have to change. I wish that there weren't any seventeen-year-olds talking about getting tipsy. They're too young. No diss, but he's not even 21. It'd be interesting to see it go back to the late 80s and early 90s.

Three rules of business:

1) Timeliness & punctuality, 2) Try to not undermine your own talent; treat it as steak not tuna fish 3) You have to remember to get paid.

2NR: Any tips for producers?

N&P: A lot of hip hop producers don't know how to produce. They're good beat makers but you need to know how to vocal coach. There's many a time where I hear this banging beat and would love to hear how he works the MC. When they get to the studio they're just chillin' in the corner talking on the phone or smoking a joint. Get off the phone and get on the talk-back and tell the MCs what you want. I'm sure Tupac knew what he wanted even before he went into the studio, but the average guy needs to be coached on things like inflection, style and cadence. Sometimes lyricists will even put too many words in a rhyme that they don't even need. You gotta help boil it down and make the rhyme more potent.

There you go. If you haven't been schooled you're lying to yourself. Look forward to a Volume 2 because as long as they have the talent they're gonna keep going.

Names: DJ Nu-Mark & Pomo

Height: 5' 9"; 6'3"

Weight: 180; 210

DOB: 6/10/71; 11/5/70

Sign: Gemini; Scorpio

Represents: North Hollywood, CA

Years producing: 22 years; 17 years

Dj-ing: 21 years; I don't DJ

Official years in music: 27 started at 6 on drums; Same

First type of music: Monster Mash was my first record but I liked rock (Def Leppard and rush); Soul/R&B, Stevie Wonder, Sly and Family Stone, Steely Dan

First taste of hip hop: Sugarhill's "Rappers Delight" is the earliest I could remember; Same but Run DMCs "Daryl and Joe" was the one that got me.

Website: Jurrasic5.com; Blendcrafters.com

DISCOGRAPHY

JURASSIC 5 *EP* (1997)

JURASSIC 5 *QUALITY CONTROL* (2000) INTERSCOPE

JURASSIC 5 *POWER IN NUMBERS* (2002) INTERSCOPE

DJ NU-MARK *HANDS ON* (2004) SEQUENCE

DJ NU-MARK & POMO *BLENDCRAFTERS* (2004) UP ABOVE