

“GOOD VIBRATIONS”

KASKADE RIDES HIGH ON THE HOUSE MUSIC WAVE

Words by Vanessa Pascale

His sound is so smooth it emulates the cool water flowing from the beach club's ornate shower poles, and seduces the bronzed, swimsuit-clad crowd into moving, jumping, and dancing to the bass-pumping beats. It's like a sexy scene straight from a music video. At the helm of this extravagant **Memorial Day Weekend** pool party is **world-renowned music producer / house DJ Kaskade** — creating waves in a sea of rapturous guests.

This epic performance occurred opening weekend of the Las Vegas **Wynn's** latest addition, **Encore Beach Club**, a decadent 60,000 square foot pool area that also serves as their nightclub **Surrender**. To say the venue was packed would be an understatement. Patrons paid \$200+ to attend, while cabanas, day beds, and lily pads went for thousands. One thing is for sure, Kaskade draws a crowd—who went wild as he played his 2-hour set.

The globe-traversing DJ committed 15 weeks to Encore Beach Club as their resident DJ every Sunday from MDW weekend until Labor Day. During this time, he will continue to tour. “This summer I’ll do something like 60 shows. 5 or 6 shows in **Ibiza, Spain, Portugal, London, Asia, Canada, US, South America**... a lot of places in between,” said **Ryan Raddon** (Kaskade's real name).

A **Chicago, Illinois** native, Ryan grew up where house music originated. Seeing it unfold first hand certainly influenced him. “I was a spectator for sure,” he expressed. “I bought my first records at **Gramophone Records**, which is widely known as the first house music record store in the world. I started visiting there in 1986-87 and started buying a lot of music. I’d go in there, ‘Hey, what’s the newest tracks? What’s the hottest records?’”

House has been around for over thirty years now, but not until the last few years



has it become more mainstream, showing up more and more in nightclubs, music festivals and pool parties. Why the recent pick up?

“Everything’s been done. It’s electronic music’s time. I feel like it sounds fresh and current and it’s been bubbling up in the underground for so long...” Ryan explained. “People are ready for that.”

Kaskade released his sixth album, **DYNASTY**, (all 12-tracks are incredible!) this May, as a follow-up to **Strobelite Seduction**, featuring global hits “**I Remember**” with **Deadmau5**, “**Move For Me**,” “**Angel On My Shoulder**” and “**Step One Two**.”

I had the pleasure of meeting the down-to-earth and chill (think surfer/

snowboarder—he’s both), did I mention handsome?, Ryan Raddon, while he was filming the music video for his latest album’s first single, “**Dynasty**.” In between takes, costumed in a powder blue tuxedo, Ryan answered questions for **ML**, and enthusiastically provided conversation-reenactments, which regularly began with ‘Hey man’ or ‘Dude,’ illuminating just how disarming he is in-person. Even his manager, **Stephanie LaFera** commented, “You know how they say, he/she gives good face? *He* gives good interview.” I have to agree.

WHAT IS HOUSE MUSIC TO YOU?

When I was growing up it symbolized the street. It was very raw and had all this energy. Over the last 20 years, it has become more sophisticated and it’s cool because it still kind of captures that energy and still feels very urban to me.

What influenced your new album DYNASTY?

I think it’s kinda a lot of experiences leading up to this point. I’ve been touring a lot over the last 7-8 years, all those experiences—being exposed to all this different club culture, different environments, different countries, different people. Meeting all these people really changed and influenced me as a person. This is a collective of all that stuff leading up to this point.

What characterizes your music?

My sound, first and foremost is song, strong lyrics and melody—a hook that will grab you when you listen to it.

Do you write the songs?

Yes, I do. I’ve collaborated with a lot of

people over the years. On this record, **Tiësto** [“**Only You**”], **EDX**... People come to me and they’re like, ‘Hey, do you have any ideas for lyrics on this? Do you have an idea for the melody?’ I help these people formulate words, put stuff down to whatever music beds or music textures that they got going on. I think people really kind of associate my sound with songs that hopefully mean something to them and resonate with them and become a part of their life.

What comes first the lyrics or the music?

Starting out, I was coming up more with just beats, coming up with a rhythm... and I’d write over the top of that. I always use “**4AM**” as an example. I wrote that song after a show here in L.A. after this really successful night. There were a lot of people at the club—it was a very big moment for me. I was sitting at a diner at 4AM and came up with the idea about flying over the city and enjoying this euphoric moment. I came up with the concept first and wrote the music later. Now, I don’t feel like there’s any kind of perfect recipe. I just go with whatever works.

What was your first big single?

“**It You, It’s Me**” was my first one that people from the UK started emailing me about with, ‘Who are you? Do you have any more music? Or a label? Do you have an agent?’ All of a sudden, I started meeting people. That’s when I met her [motions to Stephanie] she’s been my manager for seven years. She’s like, ‘Did you make this record?’ I was like, ‘Yes. That’s me. Hello.’ That’s kinda when the ball started rolling.

During college, you ran a record store in Utah, where you sold your own music, how did you go from the record store to really blowing up?

I think a really big part of it was me moving to San Francisco. I saw the whole Chicago thing blow up and become this huge international thing. When I went to San Francisco, I saw the writing was on the wall... It was getting bigger.... I’m like, ‘I love this music. I should try my hand at making it and do my own slant on it.’

I think part of it, is being at the right place at the right time and being associated with the San Francisco sound and west coast, Deep house and New Soul. That helped me out initially, because people lumped me in with that group of producers that were coming up at the time.

Then it was just writing a couple records that resonated with a lot of people. After that, it was just kind of like keeping with it, not just being satisfied, continuing to make

more music and tour and expose people to what I was doing.

I heard that the name, Kaskade, came from a nature book—is that true?

[Laughs] I should’ve lied and made up a better story. I was working at a label at the time, I had sold them some music, and they were like, ‘What’s the art? What are you going to call yourself?’ I told them I don’t want to use my name. The night before I was leafing through a nature book and it said cascade in there. At lunchtime, they were like, ‘Dude! You *have* to give us the name. We have to finish the artwork.’ I was like, ‘Uh, what do you guys think of cascade?’ They’re like, ‘Yeah, whatever, that’s kinda dumb, but sure, why not?’ [laughs]

Did you decide then to change the spelling?

A guy was like, ‘That’s a dish detergent.’ I’m like, ‘I’ll just change the spelling, it’s cool. I’m just going to use k’s instead of c’s and that’ll be fine’ [he says light-heartedly with a laugh]. I did kinda feel it represented my sound as a very flowing euphoric sound.

You’ve remixed songs for tons of artists, including Justin Timberlake and Lady Gaga, how do you end up remixing their songs?

Sometimes the artists themselves request that I remix it, but most of the time, it’s one A&R person at a label talking to a person at another label and they say, ‘Kaskade’s hot, man! You should have him remix it!’ I imagine this is how it goes [laughs]. I dunno. It’s like their manager reaches out to my manager. I just continue doing my thing and it’s kinda like, phone call, ‘Hey, do you have time to remix Justin Timberlake? He needs a remix immediately. You have 2 weeks. A lot of times it has to do with time restriction, if I can do it, if I’m not on tour or in between cities.

Who would you like to work with that you haven’t yet?

Uhhh, wow, long list. Um, probably **Sade**, first and foremost. I’ve written a lot of songs that I think, ‘Ah man, she would sound so awesome on this song.’

You have fans all over the world, is there any particular country or crowd that stands out?

I have lots of memories. I played **Carnaval** in February and it was definitely the largest crowd I’ve ever played in front of [three million]. Definitely, the wildest thing I’ve ever experienced. It’s not like they were all there for Kaskade. I’m standing on top of this humongous semi-

truck and it’s a sea of people in front of me. I knew it was going to be crazy, but when I got there, I was like, ‘Whoa, this is really completely out of control.’

Is that one of the moments when this all feels surreal?

Yeah, but I have those all the time. I was just in San Francisco and played to my hometown crowd and it was crazy. It seems like I’m getting those more and more lately.

How often do you come down to Miami?

3 or 4 times a year. I go out for **W.M.C.**, of course. I played **Mansion** a couple times last year. Miami is awesome because they have this long history of loving house music... You guys have been riding the wave for a long time, whereas everybody else is maybe just catching on. Playing Miami is a treat. When I’m ready to play **Mansion** I’m just like, ‘Ahhhh, alright!’ whereas in some of these cities I’m like, ‘Uh, what do they want to hear?’ In Miami, I can do what I want to do. I know the crowd will follow me.

Any spots that you just have to go to while you’re here?

I always have to go to **Nobu** and **Sushi Samba** because we don’t have that here in Los Angeles, or do we? If we do, I don’t know about it. **Setai** is awesome too. **Setai** might be my favorite...

And when you’re not busy touring and making music, how do you like spending your free time?

Uh, hanging out on the beach—trying to be a better surfer [laughs]. **ML**

WHAT WOULD FANS BE SURPRISED TO FIND OUT ABOUT YOU?
Umm [laughs], I’m fluent in Japanese. A lot of people are like, ‘Wait, what?’ One time we were in a green room and a Japanese guy walked in and I started talking Japanese and **Alexandra Greenberg** (his publicist) was like, ‘What? What are you speaking?’ I’m like, ‘Oh, I speak Japanese’ [smiles]. I lived in Tokyo for a couple of years 20 years ago.