



WORDS BY DOMINIC DI FRANCESCO

SILENT SYMPHONY

TWICE AS NICE

2008 has developed into somewhat of a renaissance period for Australian Hip-Hop talent, and Twice As Nice have been quietly fueling the movement from behind the boards. The production duo, comprised of Melbourne natives Unknown and Lewis One, joined forces in 2007 after experiencing success [individually] producing for the likes of Scribe, Deceptikonz, DJ Muggs & GZA.

Attracting US-based management in the form of Senior Vice President of A&R at Slip-N-Slide Records, Julian Boothe, Twice As Nice have fast-tracked their international production careers by landing official remixes with Trina and Pilex, while working on the debut album of Slip-N-Slide's great R&B hope, Owove.

Introducing Twice As Nice ...

What are your respective musical backgrounds?

Unknown: I never had any formal training, I always just had a love for good music. I got into music production really by accident and stuck with it.

Lewis: I've been around music pretty much my entire life. I began playing violin at the age of six and by seventeen I was playing at an AMUS level [second highest level] and landing and performing with a variety of different orchestras. Through that time I also learnt and played drums - playing in different funk, rock, metal and jazz bands. As well as that, I played

timed percussion, piano and violin in different groups as well as Ding R&B and Hip-Hop. I can easily say that the classical training that I received has become central to my production style. I wouldn't be doing this without it.

There has been a boom of local urban producers/artists making an impact overseas this past year. Why do you think we are drawing such international attention at this point in time?

Lewis: Yep. In my opinion, the only thing that draws attention is great music and a good work ethic. Although being from Australia may be more distinctive, ultimately the music speaks for itself. With advances in the Internet, national music markets aren't restricted to producers living in that vicinity. In the past few years there has been a huge increase in international producers playing major roles in the US music industry, teams like Stargate and Bloodshy & Avant. Ultimately, I don't think that anything draws people to non-US producers besides good music - and it's just that there's a lot of that in Australia at the moment.

How did Julian Boothe come to be your US manager?

Unknown: About two years ago, a friend of mine got a bunch of US [record industry] contacts and Julian just happened to be one of them. At the time of reaching out to him I didn't know exactly who he was. I just took a chance, reached out to him and told him who we were and what we were trying to

do. He was impressed with our stuff and, over the past two years, we just kept him in the loop with what we were doing. More recently, he was in a position where he wanted to make it official and start pushing our stuff hard [in the US].

How has Julian's counsel advanced your opportunities in the US market?

Lewis: As Senior Vice President of A&R at Slip-N-Slide Records, Julian has a direct in-road to all Slip-N-Slide artists - artists [who are] signed to nearly all of the major labels.

Julian has strong ties with many artists and labels equating solid opportunities to place tracks. Julian also provides legal and business advice for opportunities and ideas that we set up ourselves.

One of the major label acts you're working with is Owove. What other major projects are currently in the pipeline?

Unknown: Yep, we've got a couple joints with Owove for his album, *Owove-Uh-Owove*. We just did the official remix to the new Pilex single, "Please Excuse My Hands" which features Jamie Foxx. The Dream and Owove.

The main project we're working on right now is a new artist from Boston by the name of Masspike Miles. He is a R&B singer and is the latest signing to Rick Ross' Maybach Music imprint. We currently have four tracks done with him for his debut album including two possible singles. And the fact that the boss himself, Rick Ross, is now behind the project in a major way, things are looking good.

We're also working with another artist out of Boston called Smoke Badga. We got a couple joints with the New York underground legends Brooklyn Academy, who are about to drop an album this September on EMI. Outside of those projects, locally we have a track on the upcoming Smashproof album, *The Weekend*. Our track is titled "Back to Work" and has live horns, bass and a full choir. It is definitely one to keep an eye out for!

Is it a challenge to maintain relationships and develop opportunities internationally given Australia's isolation?

Lewis: It definitely is. However, these days it is manageable whereas ten years ago it wouldn't have been possible. We are in daily contact with our team members either by phone, email or instant messaging. The major issue is not being able to work in the studio with our songwriters or artists, which is something that unfortunately can't be overcome.

Collectively, the two of you have produced for the majority of Australia and New Zealand's relevant Hip-Hop artists. Is there a specific piece of work you've produced that you're particularly proud of?

Unknown: For me, it has to be the first song I ever placed, which was in turn my first ever single. The song "Don't F*** With Me / Don't Front On Me" by New Zealand's Deep-Tikonz. Along with that, I think the fact that I was the first ever Australian producer to work with all three New Zealand powerhouse labels [Dawn Raid, Dirty, MITC] on their own shit was a big thing that can never be done again. So I'm pretty proud of that. **R&B**

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