

Hello & welcome

HELLO to the World Wide Web TODAY w/ HAUSU MOUNTAIN's DOUG KAPLAN and MAX ALLISON in conversation with M Mehlan



CHICAGO ARTISTS RESOURCE



Alright hello

Max and doug here

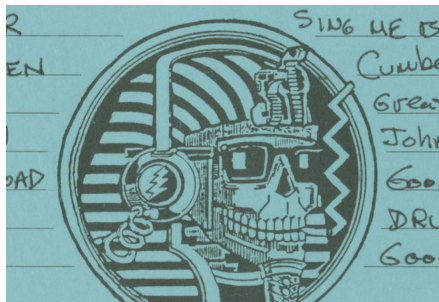
HEY GUYS! It's Matt. I'll be in red? **ROBOTO** font

I'm purple (Max) -- all text must be comic sans. Sick. so fun, much new

I'll just stick with classic Black --
Doug. **WOW.**

SO this is a new thing - mediated conversations between people in the arts in CHICAGO - documented via the media within which the conversation happens. In this case we got a nice PRESENTATION Happening....

We're ready to jam!



ed ... Now tell your friends!



Insane Clown Posse

I just got tickets to Insane Clown Posse at The Portage Theater in Chicago.

Max and doug - the road to valhalla

HOW DID YOU COME TO BE in Chicago?

How / why did you start making recs and releasing them via HAUSU MOUNTAIN?

Yeah we both did WNUR. doug was the general manager for a period, and held various other positions. I was a DJ on various programs

Born & raised in the burbs. Max & I met in Evanston at Northwestern and have never considered leaving. We started HausMo when some of our projects - The Big Ship & Good Willsmith were ready for album releases & didn't have any chance of labelig it up



Which burbs?

What did you do at Northwestern?

And you were involved at WNUR?

I was the general manager, programming director, and fundraising director at WNUR

Lake Forest, IL. At NU I studied film and music technology and was heavily involved in the radio station WNUR. We started a band called The Earth is a Man which was our first sort of underground band.

NEXT SLIDE???

DID you play shows in Evanston? Or was it always in the City?

Yes we tried to start playing shows a lot, from various like northwestern related events and also various opportunities in chi, like the ridiculous pay-to-play kind of circuit. We played at REGGIE's and it was some kind of hell. The sound guy insulted doug at length. Classic times.

We played in both zones. Some of our first Chicago gigs were at shitty venues like Ronnie's and the Bottom Lounge. LOLOL the sound guy at Reggie's also stole my guitar! Insult is underplaying it, I'd go with SLUR.

Ha - I was in emo bands and ska bands of course

Nice nice. Dismemberment plan is cool. SKAWALKER. Lol sick.

We'd see Joan of Arc, there was a band called NYMB, I remember like a Sidekick Kato show... Dismemberment plan once at Fireside I saw... I have a memory of a band called "LUKE SKAWALKER" who played at the Arlington HTS Knights of Columbus.

I am also from the BURBS - Hoffman Estates - when I was in high school there was a real scene of like Knights of Columbus punk & emo shows in various burbs - of course also Fireside Bowl... SO we'd drive all over once we were 16 to scope those... BUT moved to NY after college. In NY our first shows were totally pay to play style places. The kinda place that would poll the door.

That's pretty sick! I was never a punk for any moment of my life, but as a teenager we'd come to Chicago to see random all ages shows at the subteranean. And i was always seeing big jamband shows

Our band The Earth is a Man was a sort of post-rock / math-rock thing / (w/ jammy vibes). So we had an emo streak, but decidedly POST

TAPESSSSS? Did Hausu Start w/ Tapes? Why

TAPES?

I mean, were tapes a thing for you before you started wanting to put things out?

Hanson records, American Tapes, Gods of Tundra (all three of these are labels run by members and past members of Wolf Eyes).

Stunned, RRR, human conduct, pizza night, bizarre little ohio and NY based labels, things that we would find randomly online.

Nautical almanac is tight for sure.

Aaron dilloway is the master of the garbage art loops vibe.

We collect tapes for sure. I buy tapes all the time. Labels like NNA, orange milk, haord, etc. will always have our love.

We def both collect. Max definitely skews towards buying new stuff and i buy mostly used stuff

In a lot of ways we were just kind of getting into it right when we were starting off. We definitely weren't like collecting tapes until after college.

Were you collecting / do you collect tapes now?

What were some of those labels you liked - yess totally Hanson / American. Ah RRR totally killing too.

We had friends who moved to Baltimore - and the Nautical Almanac vibe was really inspiring - which was probably around the same time - but it wasn't tapes - it was like homemade objects that related to sounds - exactly lathe cuts, tape loops, kind of like ... garbage art... I mean art made of things that came around.

Thats the kind of stuff that we respect but don't willfully collect or propagate. Our main goal is to help spread the music as widely as we can and don't try to F with having stuff be an unplayable novelty. .

My co-worker Erik got us into Stunned Tapes early on. That's an early one I remember that was totally a zones label



TAPES CONTINUED

Yeah i feel that. But also i appreciate the fact that the self-directed label / production model allows you unlimited freedom - and to show your weird wares outside of a museum kind of space. That's just not quite the model that we follow - we def want to get our things out there and release tapes and digital albums that people can easily access.

Ah man that was totally the limitation - handmade art objects aligned too heavily with art world / gallery mindset of single objects - which I think limits music's inherent ability to be shared widely

Yah, I feel that! We definitely don't view our releases in any sort of gallery context. We've entirely abandoned having things be in limited editions, actively seek distribution, etc. We want to get the things into the world of humans

In some ways tapes are prohibitive, we meet so many people that are like "i don't even have a tape deck" but for the people that are in the know so to speak, tapes are super easy and convenient, small, cheap, and fun to look at and handle.

Also we always unify a single album with a tape release and a bandcamp, along with stuff on soundcloud, etc. so people have many ways to access the music outside of popping it into their tape decks

Do tapes offer reach? For the audiences you cultivate?

Probably not when we started in 2012, but definitely now. Pretty much every facet of the industry is back in the cassette game at this point with Paul McCartney getting back into it on record store day as a good example of that... But it's the digital zone that has the real reach. The attitude of the music press has changed in a lot of ways such that they can put a J-card JPEG into a zone an it's like COOL now or something???



MACCA LOVES WOLF EYES. actually Neil Young literally loves wolf eyes



NEVERMIND - who does the art for HM?

I (max) do the art for most of our releases. I do 100% of the layout, but end up working on probably 65% of the actual art content myself. All of the tripped out pixel collages that look like LSD SNES games are my designs.

Doug handles the business side and the shipping, social media

Max handles the artwork, writing press blurbs

We both do PR stuff.

From time to time one of the artists already has someone else in mind or wants to do it themselves and that's totally cool with us. We really just want the artists to be happy with the final results. The only other artist we've worked with repeatedly is Sam Nigrosh who's designed several of our LPs like Quicksails, Grasshopper, Form A Log / Moth Cock

Every night before bed i wash doug's feet in a giant basin made of pure resin. And he falls asleep in my arms.

Even tho it's just the two of us i don't find that to be limiting. I think that people these days kind of expect artists and labels to be more personable in a way, and like have a twitter presence and seem like real people. That humanizing element is actually really key to kind of having a "personality" that people get into as a label. All artists are real people in the world. That being said, we don't share all of our lives with everyone. There is much that the average social media follower who we don't know IRL doesn't know about us.

Is it just the two of you? Can u give me a breakdown of duties?

Yep it's just the two of us, much like the song of Will smith

DO you ever get vibes / feel a limitation to being artist / admin / pr / etc - i mean bridging the artist / real person in the world divide.

Since we don't have any sort of bossman, we can take things at our own pace. When I start feeling those bad or cluttered vibes, I'll generally just slow it down

I think that Max is much more natural at doing the public facing sort of stuff in a natural way. I get a good amount of social anxiety at shows these days and kind of shut down when people I don't know are like "aren't you that guy from that band/label/clown"

HOW DO YOU FIND people you want to work with?

100% OF OUR ARTIST ARE FOUND THROUGH SOUNDCLOUD MESSAGES BLINDLY SENT TO US

Jk jk jk

We really only work with people we know in real life and have met usually from playing shows. We like to see people capable of playing their stuff live, and to convey their personalities and musical styles with confidence in different settings. Not just like pumping music into the void of the internet and hoping someone cares.

In the earlier days, we would often use our tours as like informal scouting seshes for the label. Now we aren't in as much of a hunt-mode because we have a solid roster posse. We've only accepted a handful of artist from demos and a lot of those were mediated through friends.

One of the funniest things about music journalism is that people are always like. WHAT IS IT? Is it rock? Is it drone? What is??? The artists we like to pick don't care about those questions.

The local scene in chicago is so wonderful. We don't necessarily work with that many artists, relative to the overall percentage of our artists, that are chicago based, but we constantly play shows and attend shows by many friends in chi, and the scene is close knit. Our entire "practice" would be a lot lamer if we didn't have great people to play live music with and see and chill with.

HOW does the local (whatever: scene, community, feel) play in to what you do?

Some random examples: bitchin bajas, matchess, fire-toolz (hausmo artist), hogg, brett naucke (hausmo artist)

There are def some labels out there that are like "WE ARE STRICTLY MUSIC FROM ____ CITY" and wear that as a kind of badge of local solidarity, and that's cool, but we just release what we want.

So many amazing friends and inspiring musicians in our town -- and we try to work with lots of them -- but I feel like in a lot of ways we're more of a globalism-core operation. I feel like it's so rare now that a city has like it's own sound. Everyone is pulling from a million billion different places, mostly from the corners of the internet.



It's interesting - because I think you're right - locality in music is not necessarily the THING that it once was - at least in terms of it being this thing that hangs around on an artist's neck... BUT there's still much to be said for the ways that an artist's environment effects the sounds they make - do you think?

We're no longer in a world that must overcome isolation, from scene to scene, so there's less of an incubation factor - like "all the hardcore music from the west coast is so distinct, SST, blah blah" - right now people can access a million styles and traditions and just choose what they want. And it doesn't matter where they live.

I think... honestly i make music personally to kind of escape the world and transform, say, my bedroom, into a weird zone that's separate from any considerations of earth / the scene. But then after that phase, the act of introducing that music into the scene is something that has to happen - to create a dialogue or a multi-logue with buds.

When all of the artists spend all of their time on their laptop, then what is their real environment??

I think that at the same time, everything is everything. If you're a barista or something, that might not be reflected in the music you make, but it is part of the conditions and the world that led to that music being created. Nothing is separated, but the actual reality of the music tends to probably diverge, on purpose, from the day job.

But the artist, when they present the work to the world, isn't like "I work at whole foods here's my music" - they're like "I make space techno to blow your mind"

Right, so the local environment is somehow distinct from the technological environment - like the artist (as artist) exists and makes work on their computer and the Internet and the artist who sits on the bus or makes someone's coffee for their day job - is separated out?

Maybe it's just because I'm feeling really weird / depressed at the end of school, but I feel like there's not separation. There is full digi/physi integration. If you're reading about an album on a website, listening to it on bandcamp, and then talking with your friends about it in some facebook group... the whole experience is online.

Then the live music event is promoted online, happens in real life, but can only be preserved in the digi-space.

Well maybe the separation is purposeful - the computer is a means for separating oneself into the creative zone...

For sure, BUT i think we also have to take the idea of "the computer" with a grain of salt. There are many machines and devices that can provide this transport to the creative zone. I don't use a computer to make music - i do use a computer to record music, but never to generate sound. So to me, the drum machine or the synthesizer serves this purpose of transporting to a creative zone. But at the end of the day, i guess a drum machine is just a computer that is designed to do one specific task. Technology, for sure. Yes, like an acoustic guitar can provide that transport just as easily for some people.

Totally - replace computer with "technology" but maybe then replace "technology" with apparatus, which could also be something made of wood..

It is both a creative and destructive zone. I have been making a lot of work that is all on the computer and inside of tabbed browsing -- and some of it is like willfully un-creative - just sort of showing the banality of the whole situation. Like when you're forced to see a notification from GMail while you're making music, it takes all of the transcendental-ness, magic-ness out of the equation. It can be a means of separating yourself from that sort of unknowable magic place that art can take us.

I'm going to go on a tiny rant here. And that is that ... people that frame their music within a personal narrative to generate the kind of human interest appeal - like "they work as a firefighter during the day, and then make indie pop at night" - this always seems kind of exploitative to me. It's like... playing on the idea that people don't care about the music itself and need a frame to



But it's interesting to me - the way the communication means (and even like "local representation") are brought into a space of blurring - like you describe - it's all part of the same thing.

"It's like... playing on the idea that people don't care about the music itself and need a frame to process it."

I think about this A LOT. The thing I've been thinking about lately tho - is that the way that I, and/or my community of artists think about the music is completely distinct from the way like my aunts and uncles or my in-laws or whatever think about it - which means it's as much an outgrowth of PR necessities as is it "explaining oneself to others" ?

Of course this frame is also generated very specifically by PR writers to get people snagged and hooked and interested. Without that, literally so many people can't step into the music and create their own sense of taste or interest.

Yeah that's def true doug. But then it's like... does knowing that _____'s album is informed by their cat and their job in a forest preserve generate any additional meaning? Maybe.. I guess it does. true.

But at the same time -- here we are -- three musicians talking about nerdy nerdy deep stuff. Someone who doesn't have the hundreds of thousands of hours of listening might need a little extra something to understand it. A lot of this has to do with this sort of attention economy we've found ourselves in. How do we communicate a lot of information about this person/band in a very dense way because we might get 30 seconds of someone's attention.

Getting people to listen to music these days is a lot like online dating...

I wonder how much biographical information our older relatives know about like... Zeppelin or Steely Dan. Probably not that much, but they have a built-in narrative of FM radio and like... omnipresence with these groups that make them seem like they've been a part of their lives forever.

Whoa interesting parallel - let's bring that to the next slide!



Yes totally! But that's why it's worth talking about trends in how people perceive locality, the self, communication?

SO HOW IS GETTING PEOPLE TO LISTEN TO NEW MUSIC LIKE ONLINE DATING? (AND HAVE YOU ONLINE DATED)?

How do you feel about that part:
“people only need 3 seconds to
judge”?

^^ I honestly don't judge people for thinking this way. That's kind of how i approach music in a way - like... if i'm scanning through something new to listen to, i can tell if i'm going to dig it immediately. And i'm not going to fault people if they don't want to listen to a 20+ minute ambient drone track that goes nowhere on purpose for the sake of going nowhere. People who are more casual listeners want something to grab onto instantly and want to be entertained throughout an entire track or album. I tend to only listen to music that does this for me.

For the 3 seconds of judging -- that's more for like demos than bands that have already won my heart. We both love it when people get to the point quickly!

Yes I think there's a lot of value currently in the succinct.

But that also opens up possibilities for things that defy that value, no?

I found my favorite band on Pitchfork... I found my wife on Plenty of Fish.

I've been on a few online dates in my life, but was never super serious about it. A press campaign just has all of the same components -- pick multiple flattering pictures of you, write a story about yourself that draws people in and contextualizes you in the world, have an element of mystery... it's just that instead of trying to get the person to swipe right, you're trying to get them to hit play on that soundcloud button.

Totally - ^^ makes sense to me - changes the game in that the context becomes equally important - as does the platform? Like people choose the dating platform that seems to best align with how they want to be viewed?

I think because, like attraction between people, people treat listening to music like a very passionate and like intuitive process... they only need 3 seconds of listening to something to judge if they like it and want to continue listening, just like people can tell at a glance typically if they're attracted to a person. Then the whole spotify algorithm playlist kind of thing comes into play, where songs are chosen specifically because they engage with that “INSTANT LOVE” kind of feeling, they trigger the love in someone that is used to a certain style or genre.



“Entertained constantly all the time

We definitely gravitate towards music that is like.. ADD overloaded with information and ideas.

E.g. FIRE-TOOLZ. If you take a 3 second preview of this album at any moment, you can get an idea of what Angel is working towards... and how fully dense and overwhelming her art is.

I've been thinking about this more and more, and art school has made me realize that entertainment is SO much more important than people want to give it credit for. If something can succeed in both a conceptual && entertaining/fun manner, then that thing wins.

^^ yes - I've appreciated this kind of thinking in hanging with you Doug - refuting the push toward that kind of art school one-sided criticality?

Well I appreciate that! Thank you for tuning into my zone. I think a really good example of my favorite sort of zone is something like Star Trek. Something that can entertain on a very surface level - that kids and grandpas can enjoy together. But underneath the simple lots, there's an incredibly complex value system, set of symbols, and hidden meanings.

Quick Q tho - how does one qualify the bullshit or non-bullshit? That's been one of the Qs that the sort of “Democracy of the Internet Is the Best Thing” or Democracy of Music Tech is the best thing - like the ease of making conceptual Internet Art or the ease of making ambient music both have put pressure back onto the contextuality of whether someone is “qualified” to make that kind of conceptual work... NEXT SLIDE

YES -- preach it Max.

Another quick rant: i definitely have grown tired of the kind of... for lack of a better term... Basinski syndrome of music making, where people embrace a kind of static long form concept whose individual moments or movements are indiscernible from each other... this definitely engages with the “conceptual” vibe... like “oooo this music is trying to embody silence, or stillness, or... something” but listening to this music, made by someone that isn't basinski, is truly an exercise in putting up with someone's bullshit... like, spending time in their wanky ambient stasis just to hear one tape loop repeating forever. This is not to diss Basinski and his contemporaries who do this kind of thing like prototypically



The Residents' (our personal heroes) motto has always been to “entertain and challenge” their audience. I think the “challenge” comes from a kind of conceptual engagement or a feeling of confusion or surprise, of unfamiliarity. And the entertainment comes from the kind of... spontaneity and willful goofiness and atypical approach to songwriting.



If boring ambient music requires a "context" to be judged adequately by society, then i don't want anything to do with it. My brain isn't like engaged by thinking about the artist's life while the one ambient loop plays. The reality of the music itself will always take precedence. Yes, la monte young is hella boring, but his vibe of boringness is so much better than the people that came after him. I think the content of la monte young's music transcends history - i don't think about his personal life when i jam his music. It's not necessarily a matter of like "who did it first" or their place in history, i think LMY has staying power because his work actually cannot be matched by artists who would try to imitate it, in terms of the instrumentation, the recording practices, the ideas, the duration. I think from certain listeners' and historical movements' perspectives, the context is so crucial - but for others, it might only be a footnote to the power of the music.

The wading through the bullshit has to be an entirely individualized process. I've come to the conclusion that there's no such thing as good or bad // there's just what you like and what you don't like & anyone who tries to tell you otherwise is a conman.

On the subject of "boring ambient music" I think that we're just kind of jaded about it, having sat through hundreds of sets, fully digested the 70s classics, etc. It just isn't engaging to us at this point. SOME of LMY is boring AF, but most of it is pretty active when compared to modern laptop ambiances. Think about The Black Record -- it's moving around a lot, but staying centered. Or like Poem for Chairs Tables and Benches which is like harshity harsh noise. Peopole want to act like LMY is just one thing, but he's alllll over the place. Also, in his music, in Terry Riley's music, in Eno's music, there's this sense of wonderful discovery - the discovery of getthing their first. And you can hear their excitement.

I don't hear that as much in the sort of stuff that Max and I are deriding at the mome.

I'm not disputing the fact that there is boring music being made all the time, especially in the style we're talking about - just saying that it has a lot to do with context...

I tend to think, particularly in the current moment, that it's really hard to pull a kind of "pure music" out...

And that could be because the internet is forcing us to be so GD self aware all the time?

Well I dunno ^^ isn't La Monte Young's music kind of boring? But it's context in history made it valuable?

Really I'm just trying to complicate the "inherent power of music" idea because it does get tricky...

<< yes - it is individualized



OK LAST SLIDE! What do you want to be doing in 5 years? (W/ HM or individually?)

School has F*d be up enough that I'm pretty much just thinking about what's happening in the next few weeks. For HausMo, we've gotten into a goooood groove since about 2013 that we're just trying to keep rolling with about 10-15 releases a year. In the longterm, I'd like to find a place where we can put on some shows that is ours. I'd also like to find a part-time gig teaching, and do more volunteering in the community (outside of music). I also plan on trying to see Trey Anastasio play guitar as many times as possible, because I don't want to be that old hippie that's sad because they didn't see Jerry enough times.

MFA zone -- When I started two years ago, it was just a very logical life move. I was winding down at my job at Thrill Jockey and wanted to learn more, get more skills before the next step.

< Why'd you want to do school (side Q)? (Doug is getting an MFA in sound at SAIC)

SIDE Q 2: what are you guys listening to RN? (I've been playing Caetano Veloso's Araca Azul in the bg).

I've been DJing the interview zone. We listened to a healthy portion of a Dead show from 12/9/81 and are now listening to La Monte Young's Black Album.

<YES!
Relevant!

Some other zones I've been listening to recently:: tons of 80s Miles and 80s Herbie Hancock. King & Eye by The Residents. 1993 Phish. Maryanne Amacher, Annea Lockwood.. This new Hard Vapour Resistance Front album by Fox 6 which is a hard vapour country album.

YES! >
Do you know JOIA? That's one of my fav recs of all time)

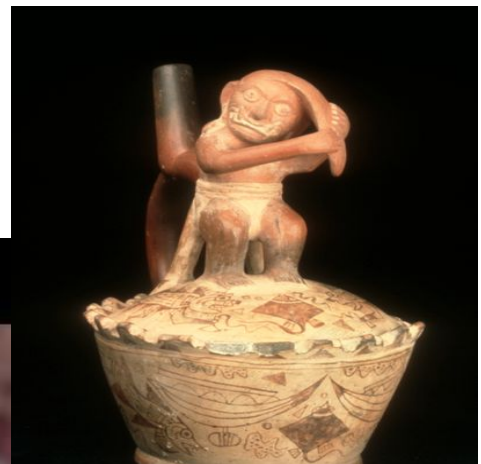
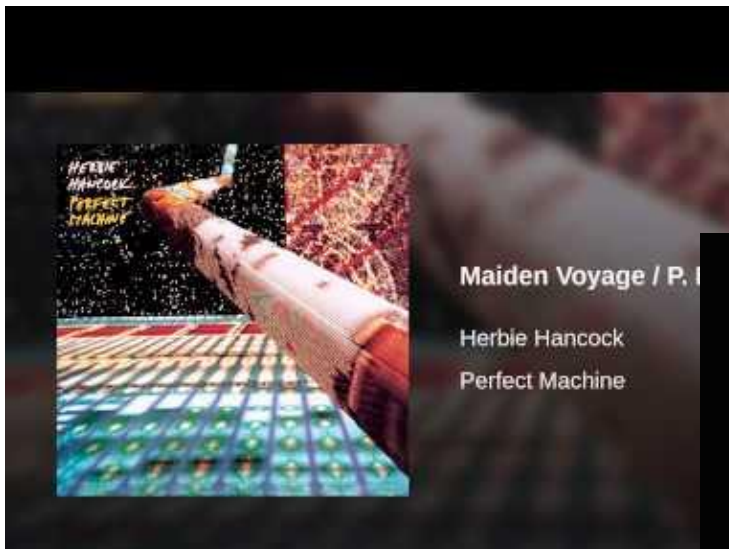
It took us 5 years to release about 60 releases, so in five years hopefully we'll be over 100. One fourth of the way to 420. Obviously lots of other projects and things will happen along the way - bands that we're in, solo projects, etc. etc. - and those will intersect and diverge from the label in various ways. We definitely have no plans to sit still. In order to keep remaining relevant to our listeners, our friends, our "scene" we have to avoid treading the same ground - and just keep evolving like we always have in terms of what we release and what we're interested in.

I've been listening to MIGOS- CULTURE, FUTURE - HNRXX, all things Young Thug, Three 6 Mafia, J-POP, anime soundtracks, video game soundtracks. I saw GUCCI MANE at the chicago theater last week and it was transcendent. It was amazing to sing along with the entire crowd to "photoshoot" and "freaky girl" and "lemonade"

OH MAN I LOVE ARACA AZUL !!! SO INCREDIBLE!!!! "Sugarcane Fields Forever". That album is truly a trip from start to finish. The horns on "EPICO" are my favorite. So many beautiful moments on that LP. i love all of caetano's catalog, from the self-titled albums to the more loungey and cover-based stuff (FINA ESTAMPA) to the new school kind of like... fusion of lounge music and classic tropicalia. His voice still sounds incredible. Yes definitely i love that one.

THANK YOU DOUG AND MAX!

THANK YOU !!! woo!!



We'll leave you with an excerpt from the Wiki of "Mystic Stylez"

"We went into the studio and just made records, man. Go in there, got high, drank, and just made records. That's all I remember doing."

Recording [edit]

Recording sessions for *Mystic Stylez* took place in a studio in northern Memphis.^[4] DJ Paul described the area as "the middle of the fucking projects. It was a side of town we wasn't from. Juicy was from there and Koopsta was from there but nobody else in the group. We were from the south side but we [recorded] it on the north side. We would just jump in my car. I had a 1972 Pontiac Catalina convertible. Me, Koop, Crunchy, Boo, Lord, all of us would jump in the car, drive over there, meet Juicy and we recorded man. We used to go everyday. Then we would walk down the street to the Whataburger and get something to eat and we just had a good time recording. It was an old R&B singer that recorded the album. He would always tell us stories about his group traveling the world and when groups get older they travel overseas and do tours. I was like, 'Man, that's cool. I want to do that one day.'^[3] The album cost \$4,500 to record and mix,^[3] and was recorded on [16 track reel-to-reel tape](#). As Juicy J recalled, "We went in the studio and just made records, man. Go in there, got high, drank, and just made records. That's all I remember doing. I can't remember 'I came up with... Who did...' We just made the beats. We all just came in and contributed, and the shit came out hard."^[4] DJ Paul and Juicy J produced the album. DJ Paul mostly played [synths](#), primarily on a [Roland W30](#). Juicy J, who "didn't really play keys too much", mostly controlled the MPC 60 drum machine.^[3] As DJ Paul recalled, "Both of us also wrote songs. [Juicy J], Lord Infamous and I wrote hooks and we were the three main writers of the songs."^[3] DJ Paul also used an SP-1200 sampler to produce a lot of the album, which he credits for its [lo-fi](#) sound. "We didn't even think about [the lo-fi] element back then", DJ Paul claimed. "It was good that it came out like that. We didn't know sound like that. Now I know sound but back in those days when you had a drum machine, an SP-1200 or an MPC and it would only put out 13-bit sound, we didn't like that. We were like, 'Damn, I wish it would be more clearer but it's not.' It was just like fuck it, that's just how equipment was back in those days."^[3] The group attempted to achieve a clear and crisp sound quality but "between recording it on worn equipment, reels and putting that heavy bass in there, which skirted it out even more, that's what gave it that sound."^[3] DJ Paul stated that much of the appeal of the album came from its lo-fi sound. "People said it sound so hard so now when I be talking to people on Instagram, they be like, 'I hope it sound like the old stuff man!' So I'm glad it came out like it did back then."^[3]