

## Erphun

Written by CGNY

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Ali Zaree (aka Erphun) is a little on the dark side. And we likey!! Making his long overdue NYC debut this Friday at Bar 13 with our friends at Tech La Di - we caught up with him to chat about Iran, LA and all that darkness!

**CGNY:** Hi Erphun - tell us a little about yourself - where are you from originally and what got you into electronic music?

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**E:** Hi Fiona- thanks for this interview :) My family is from Iran and I was born in Tehran... we came to California when I was 8 and have been here ever since.

I've always had a deep love for House music from my early teens. I listened to a variety of different music and even played the violin for about 7 yrs.

I fully got into electronic music around the age of 18 and that's when I actually started going out to underground parties and clubs for house music. Getting into DJing was at a very specific night in my life and that was when I saw Sasha & Digweed for the very first time in San Francisco in 2001. I had never heard of them before that night and didn't even know about Progressive House. That night I was driving back home with my friend and I told him what I wanted to do! :)

**CGNY:** Why was the impetus to move to L.A?

**E:** I went to college in Santa Barbara and ended up living there a few years after college...I got into DJing while living there believe it or not and my first gig was on Halloween, which is fitting I guess in regards to the dark nature of my music. hehe

I actually learned how to DJ on CDJs by going to clubs in LA and watching the DJs I liked... At that time all my other DJ friends were making fun of me cause of the CDs, but a year later I wanted to learn to play with vinyls and ended up getting the technics 1200s and started building my vinyl collection.

My family moved to LA because they were ready for a change and as I got more serious about DJing I realized I would have a better chance of breaking into the scene if I was in LA instead of Santa Barbara since the electronic scene was very small and underground at that time.

**CGNY:** You describe Brood Audio - your own label as "techno and even darker techno" - how dark is it possible to get?!

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**E:** There is no limit with the darkness...it's just a deep black void and once you fall in you never know when you'll hit the bottom...if there is one! :) haha

I started Brood because I wanted to release a very specific style of Techno, a different, deep and dark distinctive style and sound that has inspired me through the years.

I started DJing when progressive house came into the scene and it was always the darker and harder tracks that interested me more...I experimented with trance even believe it or not and even got on the electro house bandwagon when it all started. They were all a phase for me, but it was when I got into techno that I realized it was my true calling.

Some people ask why I love the darker stuff so much and it makes me think of all the times I used to go to LA's #1 club 10 yrs ago, Spundae... we use to go from the time they opened until closing and all the best times I had were between the times 2-4AM. After 2am all the drunk, clueless, cheesy and trendy idiots left the club. The people that stayed till the end were the ones that truly appreciated the music and the DJ and within 2-230am this cool and calmness came over the club. By calmness I don't mean people stopped dancing or anything, but that the vibe just changed and matured... And of course the music became harder and darker as it went into the early hours of the morning. The groove and the vibe of the place penetrated you and it locked you in with the DJ.

I think that's what I love the most about the darkness in this music... that it's definitely not for everyone...that it's much easier to listen to the top 10 and blend in the tens of thousands that follow blindly and hysterically to the mainstream electronic music for example, but a certain mature and musically educated few can understand the opposite of that music.

I have tremendous amount of respect for the big names in the techno scene that are still true to the sound and have stayed consistent with the deeper and darker style and have not followed the trends. Guys like Chris Liebing, Adam Beyer, Dubfire, and Len Faki are few of the guys I'm talking about! For me it's inspiring to see that you can be at that level for all these years and still play and follow your own true sound.

**CGNY:** Your music is a little harder and faster than many US-based dj's (in my opinion). That harder style is more favored in Europe. Any thoughts on that?

**E:** Yes, that's true... you don't see a lot of that here in LA, but there are a few of us that have definitely put LA on the global map of the techno underworld.

I love playing in Europe and the scene is definitely a lot better there and wouldn't mind moving there one day. It's just not that easy to pick up and go these days. ;)

**CGNY:** You're playing Bar 13 this Friday for Tech La Di and it's your NYC debut! We're excited about that! You looking forward to it? Why has it taken so long!

**E:** I'm very excited and happy to be playing in NY finally. Yes it took a while, but it was all a matter of finding the right people to work with and the right time. Everything happens when it's supposed to I guess and for an incredibly impatient person that can be difficult at times! Everything with Tech La Di has been great and very professional from what I hear with my management so I'm very much looking forward to it!

**CGNY:** What or who have influenced your production style?

**E:** That's a tough one... there's a lot of guys that I've been fortunate to have met in the past couple years and others that have influenced my sound as a producer.

Just quickly though some guys that have been inspirational are Gary Beck, Monoloc, Tommy Four Seven, Alan Fitzpatrick, A. Mochi, Shin Nishimura, Joseph Capriati and Alex Bau to name a few...

Last but certainly not least, my good friends Subfractal.

I noticed their music about 2 years ago and I remember that once I found them on Beatport I was buying every single release and always looked forward to their next one. When we finally

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met and began our first collaboration it was instant chemistry between us. We have very similar taste and style in music and can do well on our own, but when we combine our music it definitely goes to another level. Everything we've done together so far has been well received and we actually started a new 3-4 track EP today so we'll see where that goes. :) People at Bar 13 are going to be the first to hear it on Friday so am very excited! :)

**CGNY:** You've worked with a lot of great people including Tony Rohr and you've also released on Bedrock (we just interviewed John this week!). Any artists that you would like to work with? How is it collaborating with another artist?

**E:** I haven't actually worked with Tony, but he is doing a remix for Brood Audio soon which I'm very excited about...The releases on Bedrock got me a lot more global exposure and am very lucky to be a part of Bedrock. Digweed of course is a legend to a lot of people, including myself and having him play my music and support it was definitely a dream come true.

As far as working with other artists, I would love to possibly do a track with any of the guys I mentioned earlier and hopefully we'll get around to it sometime in the near future.

**CGNY:** You've a fairly busy tour schedule for June and July. What have been some of your favorite venues/festivals to play?

**E:** The touring has been picking up more recently and have had some great gigs along the way...some better than others. I had an amazing tour in April in Europe and am going back for a longer tour next time in October. I'll be playing in some new countries for me, France, Austria, Holland and making a stop in Zurich again at the end for a second Brood Audio night with one of my artists, Mario Zar. His first EP was just released on Brood so be sure to check it out. ;)

**CGNY:** How are you finding the LA techno scene? Are you playing out much there?

**E:** The scene here is not that great to be honest but a few dedicated artists and promoters are keeping techno alive in LA. Incognito have been throwing great parties for a long time now, which I have a residency with and of course the Droid guys bring in some top talent with their

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events.

**CGNY:** Dopamine is one of my favorite tracks of yours! Maybe you'll give it a whirl on Friday! But in general what do you do to prepare for a set?

**E:** Haha, we'll see how it goes... no promises!

I've been using Traktor Pro for the past couple years in my DJ sets and it allows me to get a little more creative with my sets as far as sampling and editing. Most tracks I play are edited one way or another so I always have to prepare those tunes before a tour. I've been playing a lot more of my own productions in my sets and Brood Audio tracks. I say about 90% of my sets is my own stuff and Brood Audio.

I want to share my passion for the label and my music with as many people as I can across the globe and I think the best way that I can do that is to personally give them a taste of the music that I want Brood Audio to represent.

I think having that drive and passion in your performances definitely helps if you're trying to expose the audience to something new and different.

**CGNY:** What's your favorite food!?

**E:** Haha, this is one of my favorite and most difficult question. Favorite cause I LOVE food and difficult because to this day I cannot tell you hands down what is my favorite food. I love pretty much everything except shrimp and lobster...Allergic to shrimp and don't care for lobster. But..... you can never beat a nice fat perfectly cooked porterhouse! :)

Thanks Erphun!

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Erphun plays Bar 13 this Friday - details [here](#)

<http://www.facebook.com/DJErphun>