



On a journey that has been over a decade in the making, [Gavin Herlihy](#) (pronounced Herl-i-hee, as his bio clarifies) has established his strong musical identity on the global DJ circuit. With releases on some of dance music's most tested stalwarts like Damian Lazarus's Crosstown Rebels, which recently celebrated it's 100th release, as well as more recently championed labels like the Los Angeles based imprint, Culprit, or Matt Tolfrey's slightly off center, Leftroom Recordings, Herlihy has showcased a versatility that endears him to fans around the globe. We got a chance to catch up with Irish-born producer ahead of his New York debut. Thanks to

**Strangelove & Inc.Residents**  
for the interview!

**SL/INC:** Right now we're catching you about half way through your first North American tour-how has that been going so far? Any surprises?

**GH:** It's been action packed to say the least. My tour unofficially started at Burning Man so as tours go it's hard to put into words the feeling of taking part in an event as mind blowing as that. It was my second time at the Burn and I played a few times while there but the most memorable was on the Mayan art car with Matt Tolfrey and Laura as the sun came up over the Playa. Once we clawed our way back out of the desert we drove to San Francisco via the Big Sur to play our first non dust based gig at Harlot before making my debut at Spy Bar the following night, hitting

Atlanta to watch Laura play the Sound Table and then jumping on an early morning plane to play the Standard rooftop and make our LA Culprit Sessions debut.

**SL/INC:** You're originally from Ireland, a country less known for it's dance music than other places you have called home- were there any strong local influences on you while you were coming up?

**GH:** Growing up in an Ireland in the 90s and trying to discover dance music was almost impossible. It was just before the rise of the internet and at a time when radio stations or magazines weren't really supporting house or techno so finding out about the music was challenging. The closest thing to underground that my local record shop stocked was a token Bon Jovi album! I found the music through parties. In particular through going to festivals and the illegal rave scene on beaches near my home that sprang up due to Ireland's draconian opening hours. In a way that was probably the greatest influence as it added an even greater mystique to the music and culture pushed me to search it out even harder than I might have done if the music had been handed to me on a plate.

**SL/INCL:** Did you find the fact that Ireland is less on the radar than places like London or Berlin an obstacle to be overcome or freeing since you had more opportunity to carve out your own niche?

**GH:** I left Ireland at the age of 19 so my musical explorations definitely exploded after that point. By that time I'd been re-listening to the same old house and techno mixes and albums for a few years so when I moved to Southampton in the UK to go to University I was chomping at the bit to discover more. Going from an environment of no clubs to the thick of the dance music boom of the UK in the late 90s blew my mind and that proved more of an influence than anything I'd ever found at home. Suddenly I found myself listening to Essential mixes every weekend, reading magazines like Mixmag or Muzik, travelling to clubs like the Manor in Bournemouth or further afield to London and having record shops on my door step to visit and get inspired by.

**SL/INCL:** Rapid fire round- Single greatest Irish musician or band of all time:

**GH:** Phil Lynott, lead singer of Irish rock band Thin Lizzy and an icon of cool as well as master of the bass guitar.

**SL/INCL:** People have been touting you as a break out over the last few years, but you've been around for quite some time and your résumé reads as a who's who of dance music- you've got standout releases on Buzzin' Fly, Cocoon, Crosstown Rebels, Culprit, Kindisch, Get Physical, and Leftroom just to name a few. Do you ever sit down to make a track with a particular label or sound in mind? Do you ever feel pressure from what is going on in dance music as a whole to make a certain style of music?

**GH:** I'm influenced by labels and trends but I also have a strong musical identity of my own so I don't allow them to define what I do. I like to think of music as a conversation. Everyone is trying to shout over everyone else all the time so if you want to be heard it's better to add something different but still relevant to the discussion.

**SL/INCL:** What role have collaborations, from the Lazy Hartz Club to sharing your Leeds studio with Laura Jones, played in shaping your artistic trajectory?

**GH:** I'm actually not that big on collaborations. When they do happen it's more for fun and with friends like Alex Arnout or the Lazy Hartz guys. Ironically although we share a studio, Laura and I haven't really released any collaborative projects as we're always so concentrated on our own projects so we should probably fix up on that one!

**SL/INCL:** I was reading in an interview that you don't miss your days as a music journalist. There are producers everywhere that hate their day jobs and dream about the day they'll be able to focus on their passion... Can you point to a specific moment where you knew that it was time to focus solely on creating music?

**GH:** Don't get me wrong I loved my time as a journalist but I definitely feel more at home as a producer these days. For me music making came long before journalism so when I finally had the chance to jump back to music in the mid 2000s I took it with both hands. It was tough as my previous dabblings had been while playing in bands in Ireland. I started DJing in 2001 while

working at Mixmag and in 2005 I decided the time had come to learn production. Making your first jump into the studio is hard as it takes a minimum of two years to get anywhere. I lucked out with my debut track landing on Moodmusic in 2006 and from there I decided to sack off my job and move to Berlin in 2007.

**SL/INCL:** It feels that we keep getting the same coverage about the same issues in this industry- technology and pushing play, the malcontent with big name producers resting on their laurels or relying too heavily on theatrics. If you were still in music journalism, what would you be writing about? What issues face this scene that actually warrant this much attention?

**GH:** I would be writing about people. Issues are important but there is only so much time I want to put into whether WAVs are better than Mp3s or whether filesharing is killing music. They are all relevant issues of course but the real stories for me are in the people out there who make amazing music and have struggled to do so Ultimately people want to read stories not biogs and the greatest satisfaction I took from journalism was writing long features about people and dissecting what it is that makes them tick. There are a lot of people writing about dance music but very few of them doing this job well.

**SL/INCL:** As a former Berlin resident, do you care to weigh in on GEMA at all?

**GH:** It's a tricky subject to comment on this one as the issue is so complex. On one side you have Gema who are rightfully protecting artists. By law we should be paid royalties every time our music is played in a club and it's about time the different collecting societies got tougher with clubs and festivals. However, I don't think Gema's collection method is very fair and needs to be revamped to provide a fair deal for the artists and clubs involved. At the minute the artists who benefit most from Gema's collection methods are the likes of David Guetta and I'd hate to think that the Panorama Bar for example got squeezed out of business for his sake.

**SL/INCL:** To address technology from a production standpoint- you once said in an interview- "There are two types of people who use music making technology. People who make music. And people who like technology." Which would you consider yourself? Is your studio more software based or hardware based? How does this setup complement your creative process?

**GH:** I'm definitely a music maker. I'm the first to admit I'm not a natural technology geek

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although I can rise to the challenge when things go wrong. The main players in our studio are a mix of hardware synths and instruments like Omnisphere (for it's sampled vintage analogue synths), Logic and Kontakt so we try not to use soft synths if we can help it in favour of sampled hardware or the real deal.

**SL/INCL:** Air London's website says you have a vinyl only imprint on the way. Can you give us a first look at the label?

**GH:** I'm still working on this. It'll be an outlet for a new alias so I don't want to say too much yet.

**SL/INCL:** Lastly, a word to the fans awaiting your debut in New York City?

**GH:** It's my first time playing New York so be anything but gentle.

Gavin Herlihy makes his New York debut this Saturday the 22nd at East River Bar in Brooklyn. Rounding out the lineup is Culprit label mate and Sheik-n-Beik chief, Nikko Gibler, with support from host collectives, INCLude and Strangelove. A limited run of pre-sale tickets are available through ResidentAdvisor.net.

Gavin Herlihy Soundwall Podcast

<http://www.soundwall.it/soundwall-podcast-109-gavin-herlihy/>

Nikko Gibler Doce Pulgadas Podcast

<http://soundcloud.com/mixfeed/nikko-gibler-doce-pulgadas>

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**Interview courtesy of Strangelove & Inc.Residents**