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'Girl' power: Santa Monica-based producer puts new spin on the superstar female DJs of the electronic dance music world

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By Michael Aushenker

On Sept. 5, The Argonaut reported on Santa Monica resident David Garonzik's harrowing efforts to get "No Place Like Home," Jamaica-based filmmaker Perry Henzell's sequel to his Jimmy Cliff-starring crime caper, "The Harder They Come," finished and released.

Next week, independent film producer Garonzik has another project reaching fruition when "Girl," his documentary on prominent female DJs in the electronic dance music genre, will have its world premiere at American Cinematheque's Egyptian Theatre in Hollywood on Thursday, Sept. 19 beginning at 6:30 p.m.

A Santa Monica resident since 1999, Garonzik lives in the coastal city with wife Cecilia and daughter Masina, 9.



Filmmaker Kandeyce Jordan and EDM Star Sandra Collins in a scene from "Girl."

It was through Cecilia that Garonzik met filmmaker Kandeyce Jordan, who had spent the better part of a decade gathering footage at clubs, raves and festivals on these superstars of the underground music scene: DJ Rap, DJ Irene, DJ Colette, DJ Lady D, and, most prominently, Sandra Collins.

As with reggae before getting involved with "No Place," Garonzik didn't have a clue about electronic dance music.

"She had a rough cut. Visually, I loved the trailer," he said.

And yet, Jordan was at a crossroads. She couldn't figure out who to wrap up her film.

"She had a rough, rough cut and she didn't know where to take it from there," he said. That's when Garonzik got involved and helped her to shape her doc.

In "Girl," filmmaker Jordan interjected herself and her own personal life into this quest to seek out these DJs, and her disintegrating marriage to David Veloz, the filmmaker behind the Ben Stiller drama "Permanent Midnight" and screenwriter of Oliver Stone's "Natural Born Killers." Jordan and Veloz remain friends.

"It's all documented while she was making the movie they were having marital issues and they separated," Garonzik said.

Garonzik's head still spins when he thinks about the similarities between "Girl" and "No Place," with its female protagonist.

"It's 'Alice in Wonderland' going down this journey of self-discovery," he said. "The fact that she put herself

in the documentary, documenting herself going through this journey of self-discovery."

For Jorden, "it's about loneliness, it's about identity," and searching for "a sense of myself."

After getting married and having a baby, the filmmaker went on a quest to find her true self.

"It just happens to be against the backdrop of superstar DJs," she said.

"I had no idea how big a following these girls have," Garonzik said. In "Girl," "you really see how difficult the lifestyle is (for the female DJs): the traveling, the late hours, and all the vices that come with that world," he said.

Originally from Queens, NY, Garonzik grew up in McLean, Va., just outside of Washington, D.C.

"When I was 10 years old, I first saw 'Halloween;' that was the first time I associated a film and a filmmaker," he said of the classic John Carpenter horror film.

Once he reached California in 1987, he became a sought-after projectionist, going straight from the Palm Springs Film Festival to work for Miramax in its heyday, when producers Harvey and Bob Weinstein helped pave the American film market for independent and foreign films, working with directors Quentin Tarantino, Kevin Smith and Robert Rodriguez and actor Jackie Chan.

"Internally, I felt that Miramax was incredibly supportive (as a budding independent producer)," Garonzik said. "Internally, everyone was working on their own film project."

"Django Unchained" executive producer Shannon McIntosh, then head of post-production at Miramax, was one of the executives who helped Garonzik shepherd "No Place."

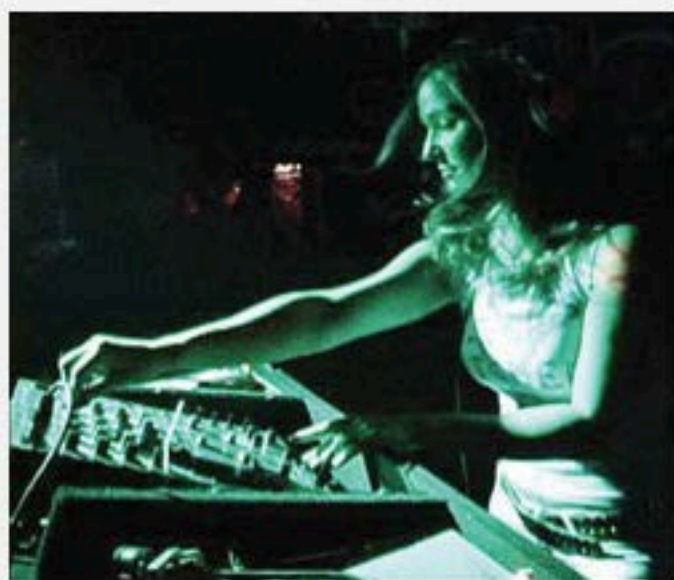
Today running the screening room at Dick Clark Productions, Garonzik believes that the tide will turn on the Hollywood blockbuster, and cheaper, better told stories will return to the silver screen.

"I think that's going to turn," he said. "Especially when you make a film like 'The Lone Ranger' that stars the biggest star in the world and that's a disaster."

Next up, Garonzik is working on his first fiction film – a Southern California-based sex comedy – and a documentary on country act Junior Walker and the All-Stars.

In the meantime, he's enjoying life on the Westside.

"Being from the East Coast, Santa Monica is without question the best town there is," he said. "I love the people, I love its layout. You feel like you're in Los Angeles, the urban city, but you're not, you're in that old school Southern



D.J. Rap.

California beach community.”

The “Girl” filmmaker says she’s glad her paths crossed with

the affable Santa Monican.

“He definitely helped resurrect my film,” Jorden said. “No one really got the story, and as a filmmaker, you get really worn down. That’s where his strength is; bringing fresh life (to a project). He has a tenacious optimism.”

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