

He's been active for over three decades instrumental in help shape UK Rave Culture, his shows & productions firmly cemented in the underground rave scene. 2025 marks 34 years in the underground-to-clubland journey.

We meet Joey at the Hilton Hotel shortly before leaving for New York and ask him about his career

UK Rave Scene and Early Influence

Q: What was it like being part of the birth of such a groundbreaking movement, and how did it shape your approach to DJing?

Being part of the UK rave scene in '88 was like stepping into a sonic revolution. We weren't just playing records—we were building a culture from scratch. The energy was raw, the venues were unconventional, and the crowd was hungry for something new. That era taught me to read a room instinctively, to mix with emotion, and to always push boundaries. It shaped my approach to DJing as a form of storytelling, not just entertainment.

Q: What aspects of that scene do you think were key in shaping the early rave sound, and how did you contribute to that evolution?

The DIY ethos, pirate radio, and the fusion of acid house, techno, and breakbeat were crucial. We were sampling everything—Chicago house, Detroit techno, reggae vocals, even film dialogue. I contributed by launching Strong Island Records and releasing tracks like Fire & Ice and Midnight Massacre, which blended jungle, hardcore, and dub elements. My sets were known for triple-deck mixing and unpredictable drops, which helped define the rave's chaotic beauty.

Q: How do you feel about the legacy of that era, and what are some of the most memorable moments you've experienced from that time?

That era was pure magic. We turned warehouses into temples of sound. Playing Raindance to 30,000 ravers or hosting pirate radio on Kool FM—those moments are etched in dance history. The legacy lives on in every underground party and every producer who still samples those early breaks. It was a movement that gave voice to the voiceless and rhythm to rebellion.

Q: What influenced the direction of the music during that period, and how did you personally integrate these influences into your DJ sets and productions?

The music was shaped by ecstasy culture, urban tension, and global sounds. Detroit's mechanical funk, Ibiza's Balearic bliss, and London's gritty basslines all collided. I integrated these by layering acid synths over jungle breaks, using dub vocals, and crafting tracks like Scream and Circuit 69 that felt both futuristic and primal.



Q: How do you think your style or sound resonated with the crowd, and what were some of the tracks you'd always drop to keep the energy high?

My sound was high-octane and unpredictable. I'd drop Bring da Noize or The Last E when I wanted the crowd to erupt. I used triple turntables to create tension and release, often blending techno with jungle in ways that felt like controlled chaos. The crowd fed off that energy—they wanted to be surprised, and I delivered.

Move to Berlin and Impact in Europe

Q: What motivated that move, and how did the Berlin music scene differ from the UK at the time?

Berlin in '93 was post-wall, post-industrial, and full of possibility. The UK scene was peaking, but Berlin was just beginning to define its underground. I was drawn by the rawness—the abandoned buildings, the openness to experimentation. It wasn't about fame; it was about freedom.

Q: How did you find your place in the city's thriving underground scene, and what made Berlin such a special environment for an artist like yourself?

I found my place through residencies at Tresor and E-Werk, where I could play deep, dark sets that stretched into the morning. Berlin embraced the avant-garde. It was a city that didn't care about genre—it cared about vibe. That gave me room to evolve, to experiment with minimalism, and to connect with a crowd that lived for the music.



Q: What do you think made your performances stand out, and how did the European audience react to your sets compared to those in the UK?

In Europe, especially Germany, the audience was more patient, more cerebral. They appreciated long builds and subtle shifts. My UK sets were explosive; my Berlin sets were hypnotic. What made them stand out was the emotional arc—I'd start with ambient textures and end with pounding techno, taking the crowd on a journey.

Q: How would you describe the evolution of your DJ style from your early days in the UK rave scene to your shows in Berlin and Europe?

It evolved from raw rave energy to refined techno storytelling. In the UK, I was all about impact—drops, rewinds, MCs. In Berlin, I learned restraint, how to let a groove breathe. My productions shifted too—more minimal, more layered, but still rooted in rhythm and rebellion.

Q: What were some of the defining moments or experiences that really shaped your career as a DJ in Europe?

Playing the Berlin Love Parade to over a million people was surreal. Hosting my radio show on Kiss FM Germany gave me a platform to showcase underground talent. Touring Switzerland's Street Parade and Holland's Dance Valley cemented my reputation across Europe. But it was the late-night sets at Tresor that truly shaped me—those were spiritual experiences.

Future Plans and DJing in Berlin /Germany

Q: Do you have plans to DJ in Berlin again or in other parts of Germany? What kind of energy do you want to bring to the dancefloors there today compared to when you first arrived?

Absolutely. Berlin is calling again. This time, I want to bring a fusion of my legacy sound with modern Latin tech house and deep techno. The energy will be more global, more rhythmic, but still rooted in the underground. I want to connect past and present—nostalgia with innovation.

Q: How do you think your music and legacy fit into the modern Berlin scene? Do you feel that the city has changed since you were first part of its rave culture?

Berlin has changed—it's more polished, more international. But the underground spirit still pulses beneath. My legacy fits as a bridge between eras. I was there when it was raw, and I still carry that ethos. Today's Berlin needs that reminder—that music is rebellion, not just entertainment.

Q: Do you think there are any lessons or philosophies you carry with you today in your DJing, producing, or life in general?

Definitely. Stay true to your sound. Don't chase trends—create them. Respect the crowd, but challenge them too. And most importantly: music is a language. Use it to speak truth, to heal, to unite. That's the philosophy I live by, on and off the decks.



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Time Away from DJing

Q: What led to your decision to step back from performing, and how did that time away affect you personally and professionally? Stepping back wasn't a choice I made lightly. I was diagnosed with epilepsy after a series of seizures that made performing dangerous – especially with the lights, stress, and travel. It was isolating. I went from playing to thousands to sitting in silence, trying to recalibrate my life. Personally, it was one of the loneliest chapters I've ever faced. Professionally, it felt like watching my identity dissolve. But that space also gave me time to reflect, heal, and rediscover why I started making music in the first place.

Q: You went through a serious accident and a challenging recovery process. How did that affect your decision to stop DJing, and what were some of the biggest challenges you faced during that time?

The accident was brutal – I had a seizure that led to a fall and a head injury. Recovery was slow and unpredictable. I couldn't trust my body, and that's terrifying when your career depends on stamina and presence. The biggest challenge was accepting vulnerability. I had to learn to ask for help, to slow down, and to rebuild my confidence from scratch.

Q: Was your medical condition the primary factor in your decision to pause your career, or were there other personal reasons that contributed to your break from the scene?

Epilepsy was the catalyst, but there were other layers. Burnout, grief, and the pressure to constantly evolve in a fast-moving industry all played a role. I needed to step back not just for my health, but to reconnect with myself outside the DJ booth.

RAWTRACKS

Return to DJing

Q: What was the turning point that made you decide to return to DJing? It was a quiet moment, actually. I was listening to an old mix I'd made – one of those triple-deck sets from Berlin – and I felt something shift. I realized I wasn't done. Music wasn't just my career; it was my lifeline. That moment reminded me that I still had something to say, and I wanted to say it loud.

Q: How did your recovery process change your approach to both DJing and music production?

I became more intentional. I stopped chasing trends and started chasing feeling. My sets are more curated now – less about volume, more about impact. In the studio, I've embraced minimalism and texture. I'm more patient with the process, and I listen more deeply to what the music wants to become.

Q: How did it feel to get back on stage, and how did the audience react to your comeback?

It was emotional. I played my first comeback set at a small underground in London, and when I dropped "Tunnel Vision," the room erupted. People knew. They felt the journey in the music. I had tears in my eyes behind the decks. The love and support were overwhelming – like being welcomed home.

Back in the Studio

Q: What has your creative process been like during this return, and have there been any shifts in the kind of music you're making compared to before?

It's been cathartic. I've been diving deep into Latin tech house and industrial techno, blending old-school rave energy with new emotional layers. Tracks like "Solace" and "Cortex" came from a place of healing – they're raw, rhythmic, and unapologetically personal. I'm also experimenting with ambient textures and vocal samples that reflect my journey.

Q: Are you focusing on techno again, or are you experimenting with different sounds and genres?

Techno is still my backbone, but I'm branching out. I've got Latin-infused house, jungle edits, and even some ambient pieces in the works. Fans can expect a more cinematic sound – something that tells a story from start to finish. I'm not just making tracks; I'm building emotional landscapes.

Q: Are there any surprises in the works for your fans? Collaborations or new directions?

Definitely. I'm collaborating with vocalists from Brazil and remixing some classic jungle cuts under my alias Mad Axe. There's also a visual EP coming that pairs music with short films – a fusion of sound and storytelling. And yes, Berlin is on the horizon again.

Looking Ahead

Q: What's next for you, both musically and personally? What are some goals or dreams you have as you continue to make music and tour again?

Musically, I want to keep pushing boundaries – maybe launch a new label focused on healing through sound. Personally, I'm learning to live slower, more mindfully. Touring is back, but it's more selective now. I want every gig to mean something. My dream is to play Notting Hill Carnival again, but this time with a set that reflects everything I've been through – a celebration of survival, rhythm, and rebirth.



New Techno Productions

Q: What inspired the direction of your latest tracks, and how do they differ from your earlier work?

The new tracks were born out of a need to reconnect with the raw essence of techno – stripped-back, driving, and emotionally charged. Compared to my earlier rave-heavy productions, these are more refined and cinematic. Tracks like Tunnel Vision and Vapour Bass lean into industrial textures but carry a deeper emotional weight.

Q: How do you balance the raw energy of techno with emotional depth?

It's all about tension and release. I use distorted kicks and metallic percussion to build intensity, then layer ambient pads or melodic fragments to create contrast. Solace, for example, starts with a pounding rhythm but unfolds into something introspective. That duality is what keeps the listener locked in.

Q: Can you share the story behind one standout track?

Cortex was written during a late-night session in Berlin. I was reflecting on my recovery and the fragility of memory. The track uses glitchy synths and broken rhythms to mimic the feeling of mental fragmentation, then resolves into a steady groove – like finding clarity through chaos.

Q: How do you keep your sound authentic while pushing boundaries?

I stay rooted in the underground by using analog gear, field recordings, and unconventional samples. But I push boundaries by experimenting with structure – breaking away from the 4/4 grid, using polyrhythms, and blending genres. Authenticity comes from intention, not imitation.

Anticipated Techno Album

Q: What themes or concepts are you exploring in this project?

The album is called Red Shift, and it explores movement – physical, emotional, cosmic. Each track represents a phase of transformation, from isolation to ignition. It's techno as a journey, not just a genre.

Q: Any collaborations or guest features?

Yes – I've brought in Brazilian vocalist Solina Souza for a haunting spoken-word piece, and Berlin-based producer Kryztof co-produced a track that fuses modular synths with tribal percussion. These collabs came from mutual respect and late-night studio jams.

Q: What challenges shaped the final product?

The biggest challenge was pacing. I wanted the album to flow like a live set, but also tell a story. Balancing intensity with introspection took time. Also, producing while managing epilepsy meant working in shorter bursts – but that actually sharpened my focus.

Q: How does the album fit into today's techno landscape?

It's both a nod to tradition and a push forward. You'll hear echoes of Detroit and Berlin, but also Latin rhythms and ambient textures. I see Red Shift as a bridge – connecting warehouse grit with emotional resonance.



DJ Mag Article & Cancer Diagnosis

Q: Joey, when DJ Mag broke the story about your cancer diagnosis in 2018, how did you feel seeing something so personal made public?

Honestly, I felt blindsided. I hadn't even fully processed the diagnosis myself, and suddenly it was out there for the world to dissect. It wasn't just about the illness – it was about losing control of my own story. I understand the media's role, but that moment felt invasive. I needed time, not headlines.

Q: Did you feel betrayed by the exposure, especially since it came during such a vulnerable time?

In a way, yes. Not by any one person, but by the system that prioritizes clicks over compassion. I was dealing with brain cancer, seizures, and the fear of losing everything I'd built. To have that turned into a headline before I could speak on it myself – that stung. It made me retreat even further.

Q: What was the hardest part of facing cancer while being a public figure in the music world?

The silence. People didn't know how to respond, and I didn't know how to ask for help. I went from sold-out shows to hospital rooms. The hardest part wasn't the treatment – it was feeling forgotten. I had to rebuild not just my health, but my sense of identity.

Q: How did the diagnosis and recovery affect your relationship with music and performing?

It changed everything. Music became less about crowds and more about healing. I started producing again during treatment – slow, ambient pieces that helped me process the pain. DJing felt distant for a while, but eventually I realized it was still part of me. Now, every set feels like a celebration of survival.

Q: Looking back, do you wish the article had been handled differently?

Absolutely. I wish I'd been given the chance to speak first. That story should've come from me, not a press release. But I've made peace with it. It forced me to confront things I might've buried. And now, I get to tell the story on my own terms – with honesty and heart.

Q: How are you doing now, Joey? Physically, emotionally, creatively?

I'm in remission, and I'm grateful every day. Physically, I'm stronger. Emotionally, I'm more grounded. Creatively, I'm on fire. I've got new tracks, a visual EP in the works, and plans to tour again. The comeback isn't just about music – it's about reclaiming joy.

Q: What message would you share with fans who followed your journey or are facing their own battles?

Don't let the silence win. Speak your truth, even if your voice shakes. Healing isn't linear, and strength doesn't always look like confidence. Whether you're battling illness, grief, or doubt – you're not alone. And if music helps you through it, let it be your medicine.



Breaking into Latin Tech House

Q: What drew you to Latin tech house, and how are you incorporating its rhythms?

I've always loved Latin percussion – the swing, the syncopation, the soul. Artists like Paco Osuna and The Martinez Brothers inspired me to dive deeper. Tracks like Frank Sinatra and Cuando blend tribal drums with tech house grooves, creating something both familiar and fresh.

Q: How do you see your work contributing to the genre?

I'm bringing underground sensibility to Latin tech house – less polished, more raw. I use field recordings from street festivals, layer in jungle breaks, and keep the mix unpredictable. It's not just about rhythm; it's about storytelling through sound. I want my tracks to feel like a journey through Latin America's sonic landscape, filtered through a rave lens.