



# Octo Octa & Eris Drew's

## Hot n' Ready DJ Tips, Tricks, & Techniques

Version 1.2



*Photo credit: Tiu Makkonen, Oct 2019 at T4T LUV NRG x Shoot Your Shoot at Berkeley Suite, Glasgow, Scotland*

# INTRODUCTION

Between the two of us, we have been DJing for 35 years. Eris got her start in the 90s playing small parties, raves, bars and clubs. Her first residency was at a restaurant that turned into a club at night. Maya got her start in basements and kitchens before “graduating” to playing empty Wednesday nights after rock shows. We now play all over the world. Collectively, we have made more mistakes than we care to recount and learned a lot along the way.

One of our favorite aspects of touring is conducting workshops and mentor sessions with other DJs. It is wonderful to share information with other artists and to feel that our knowledge can be of use to others. We’ve met amazing people and learned about ourselves in the process. One thing we know for sure, DJs present the work of communities, they are never a solitary force.

We prepared these “Hot n’ Ready DJ Tips, Tricks, & Techniques” for beginners and advanced DJs alike. This isn’t a “how-to” DJ manual. There is no one right way to DJ, these are just suggestions and insights. This guide is not meant to be an elitist text declaring that our ideas and methods are the only way to do this properly! We don’t always follow our own advice for goddess sake. So in reading this, you may disagree with an idea or don’t like something we are saying. There are so many different ways to approach DJing. Our intention is to stimulate creativity and consideration of new ways of working. We just want to share our knowledge and experiences to hopefully help others, not make them feel othered by declarations of “this is what a *real* DJ does.” We’re all working on improving and elevating our art together. Hopefully this helps you on your trip.

**Have fun and be sure to break rules along the way, including ours!**



## **CONTENTS OF THIS GUIDE**

This guide is separated into two sections, **Methods** and **Club Skills**.

- **Methods** include advice on building your collection, practice, preparing for a set, thinking about your records, ideas about mixing styles, etc.
- **Club Skills** is advice on working in and with clubs like getting your first gigs, doing soundchecks, preparing what to bring, being nice, negotiating fees, dealing with intoxication and altered states of consciousness.



## **METHODS**

Your methods are not just how you mix two records together. The techniques you use to DJ include the methods you use to build your collection, practice, and prepare songs for a set.

### **BUILDING YOUR COLLECTION**



The music you play is one of the most important aspects of being a DJ. You're presenting music to others but also representing yourself and showing who you are and what you believe in. Firstly let's talk about building your collection. We are not precious about music format or equipment choices. Use whatever is in your budget and whatever

you have access to. Use what feels right, whether that be Traktor, or CDJs, or turntables, etc.

- **Many amazing tracks exist only on records because they have never been made available digitally by the artists or label that originally released them.** So buying used vinyl is a great way to build a unique collection of music. This is true even if you never plan to mix a vinyl record, because digitizing vinyl is a great way to build a digital collection of special recordings.
- **On small systems MP3s sound fine but true lossless files (wav, aiff, FLAC) sound much better on big high-fidelity systems.** Build your collection for the events you want to play in the future, not just the gigs you have now. This will save you time and energy further down the road.
- **You can build a vinyl collection on a budget by digging for used records at your local record shop.** The vast majority of our collections are cheap used vinyl that we picked up over years of collecting. There are lots of used record shops all over the world that typically have some dance music in them even if it isn't their focus. Check out rock shops; often there are a few crates of 12-inch records on the floor under dusty copies of Pink Floyd. The owners of these shops have little to no interest in these records so you can find amazing tracks priced to sell. If they don't have listening stations you can preview a lot of records on YouTube while shopping or you could even bring a portable record player.
- **Don't just shop for new or older tracks off published DJ charts or other playlists.** Allow chance and synchronicity to guide at least some of your record/track discoveries. Shopping at record shops is a good way to do this. Youtube is also useful. User preference algorithms are a complicated and dubious subject, but we can't escape the simple fact that YouTube has suggested many great tracks to us based on our listening history.
- **Something to keep in mind when building your collection is to think about where you source new music.** [Bandcamp](#) is typically a great way to find lots of new music while also paying artists and labels directly for their art. Lots of independent shops also have online storefronts that have solid smaller selections of new vinyl to look through (for example [Idle Hands](#) in Bristol, [Gramophone](#) in Chicago, [OYE](#) in Berlin), instead of getting lost searching larger distro websites.

- **Cover art, artist names and song titles can capture the essence of a recording, but often not.** The labels and signifiers used by the artist and label to describe the release sometimes reveal more about their egos and personalities than they do about the actual music. As a result, the music is timeless but the way it is presented is time and culture-bound. Sometimes the most unappealing art or song title is hiding an amazing recording. So when you dig for music, be wary of letting aesthetics alone drive your search.
- **Often a record that seems damaged is actually just dirty.** If you buy records, consider investing in a “spin clean” style machine. We own two and travel with them during extended tours. This is the most cost effective method we have found to clean very dirty records. Spray and wipe cleaners do not work particularly well unless the records are new or have been recently cleaned using a more thorough process. Brushes are only good for small dry particles, NOT smudges, caked-in dirt, fog juice, sweat or condensation (“rave rain”).

## PRACTICE

The more you work at it the better you will get! Everyone picks-up skills at a different pace. One person might be able to beatmatch after only a few sessions while someone else takes months or years to understand it. Neither of us got good at DJing right away; it took time! The thing that ties us all together despite skill level is practicing. It’s the only way you’ll get better. It is why the skills of touring DJs can seem so far out of reach, they are simply logging tons of time practicing in real world situations.

- **Try to practice on the equipment you will encounter in nightclubs.** Each piece of equipment acts a little differently so having solid practice on the equipment you will typically be using will help you the most. *For example: Not all turntables are the same; each has a different torque on the platter or the pitch reacts differently when moved. While we can play vinyl very tightly on a set of Technics, give us a pair of Numark belt-drives and we would have the hardest time trying to mix two records.*
- **Access is a huge issue in our music culture at the moment because of the high cost of equipment and its unavailability in certain places. If there is a club in town, it is ok to ask them if you can practice during office hours.** Clubs are businesses and typically staff a few people during the day to deal with

bookings and logistics. If you want to offer something in return you can ask if they need help with hospitality for touring DJs. It is a great way to make real connections (and earn some cash). Before Eris started touring, she was an artist care handler for Smart Bar in Chicago. We met when Eris picked-up Maya at the airport for a Smart Bar gig.

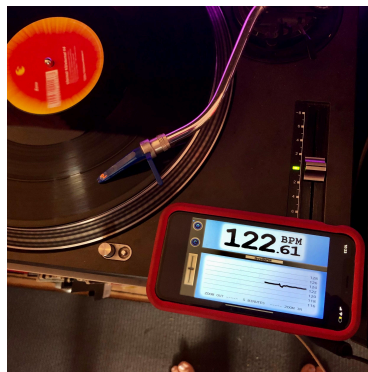
- **Practice as much as possible by yourself and with friends.** Both types of experiences will teach you different things. Practicing by yourself will give you space to experiment and make many mistakes without an audience to get embarrassed in front of. Playing with a bunch of friends can spur you on because you can feel direct feedback of having done a great mix or when you find an amazing record to play. You can also teach each other techniques. That said, group situations involve power dynamics and the establishment of group values. It is best to cultivate a strong personal relationship to your records in addition to playing in groups. Don't be afraid to go it alone sometimes.
- **Experiment and try different ways of mixing your records** besides slow fades and/or dropping the bass out of the mix, bringing in the next track, and then bringing the bass back in. *TO BE CLEAR: There's nothing wrong with these techniques, they are primary, and we use them. It's just that there is so much more you can do!!!* We build energy in sets by doing all sorts of mixing from long blends to short mixes to hard cuts, to total silence. We even scratch-drop in records. It's the skillset as a whole that brings out the magic of the music for us. We only got good at this by practicing and making lots of mistakes.
- **There is an ongoing debate regarding technique. We believe that technique is important but not as all-encompassing as some do.** We have seen many a DJ with beautiful mixing skills lose a dancefloor for other reasons. Maybe they were not heart-connected when they played. Maybe their song selection didn't radiate energy. Or maybe the clean blends just weren't exciting. That said, your techniques are the means by which you manifest your creativity in the world. Practicing your techniques will help you to eventually enter a flow-state when you are playing, which is one of the most magical feelings we have ever experienced. Putting two recordings into sync is like tuning an orchestra with the power of your mind. When the recordings are playing together in this state of harmony, they become a unity and it is beautiful. It is like a wind enters the room. The concentration it takes to maintain the mix creates a tension and release which is perceived by the dancefloor as pure NRG. This is why mixes which are not

perfect can be so powerful. It is like watching someone teeter on a tightrope—some of the joy is in the tension of the moment.

- **During practice it is a solid move to mark your records and tracks.** If you are a digital DJ you may want to set a cue points for each track. If you play with records, consider writing on them. We use stickers, labels, and markers to prepare our records for the club. We mark the BPM of the tracks we intend to play with a plain label on the sleeve. We use stickers and markers to note the track(s) we like, and we write the RPM on records that play at 45. All this saves valuable time in the club, especially in low light situations. Marking your records is also a lovely way to personalize your collection and add mysticism to your process. *Do you have a magic number? Maybe an intention you want to set with that record? Maybe you want to note a memory on the label?* All of these signifiers engage the subconscious each time we pull a record.



- **For marking BPMs during practice and for monitoring BPMs during performances, we recommend the following iphone app: "liveBPM."** This is not a "tap" style tempo monitor, it uses the microphone to detect the BPM on a live real-time basis. It is very sensitive and works just fine in high volume environments like clubs.





- **Try to place your monitors at home in the same position as you will encounter in the club.** The monitors should be at ear height, a few feet from your head, on both sides. Slightly forward at 45 degrees is fine, but behind the head is never a good idea because of the shape of your outer ear.

## **PREPARING YOUR CRATE/VIRTUAL RECORD BOX**



*What are you going to bring to the set? How much should you bring to the set? Do you have new music that you want to play?*

- **Don't play a totally prepared set.** As uncomfortable as it can be, try to make your selections while you play. We think you should ideally respond to the conditions (e.g., crowd, soundsystem, & your own emotions/state of mind) that present themselves during the performance. This isn't to say that you should totally play to a crowd. Having your own style is critical, but having the freedom to move around in your set is powerful. *Note: it is perfectly fine though to have signature mixes or a few transitions you practice ahead of time. Sometimes really powerful or beautiful mixes reveal themselves while practicing versus being in front of a crowd. Learn those mixes when they happen!*
- **Organize your crate or playlist ahead of time.** This may be the most subjective idea we have in this guide but here it is: *Don't bring more than a bag of records*



and prepare a single virtual record crate for each gig from your collection. Having a lot of genre tags and categories is useful for organizing records or files at home, but not necessarily useful for the gig. A lot of the most popular DJs struggle with organization and bringing way too many files/records to the party. If you bring a tighter set of music with you then you will be able to think more about programming your set from what you have versus what's possible. Less scrolling through filenames, less flipping through records and more playing the soundsystem and the crowd.

- **The more you sit with your music and learn it the better you will understand what it can do and the more memories that will attach to it.** We are touring vinyl-only DJs, which means that when we leave for a tour we are working out of the same record bag night after night. This limitation has brought us a lot of joy and we continuously figure-out new mixes and weave the records in new ways. Eris and Maya each bring about 80 records on tour. During the tour we buy more. We can play any set during an extended tour with these records because the order of selection and the actual content of the mixes can create wildly different collages and energetic states responsive to the conditions before us. The possible combinations are infinite. You don't need 500 tracks to play a four hour set or to set out on a two-week tour.
- **Knowing your music intimately can really make tracks sing in your set.** It is probably not a good idea to download too many new tracks the day of your set and play from that without spending time with each track. At least listen back to them a few times before taking them out. Knowing the tracks well will give you ideas of when and where to mix them in and out during your set.

## **SELECTING WHICH RECORD/TRACK TO PLAY DURING YOUR SET**

*What do you want to do during your set? Do you have certain intentions for it? Are you trying to tell a story? A lot of what you are trying to convey happens in the moment when playing and linking songs together.*

- **PLAY ONLY SONGS YOU LOVE!** You want to play songs that you want to hear. Playing music that's just for the crowd and not also for you can feel weird and is most likely disconnected from your heart. Playing music that excites you will also

translate to the people you are playing for. You are there to bring the party but also to showcase who you are as a DJ.

- **Play songs that connect rhythmically, thematically, melodically, and/or emotionally, try to stay away from playing genres.** We're multi-genre DJs and honestly don't even like to think of it that way. We play music that we love from all across the dance music spectrum. You can play essentially anything in a set and keep energy building if you pay attention to certain elements that can connect them. If you do this, you will avoid jarring "left-turns" when playing the next track (unless you want to do that 💜).
- **Often there are tracks that can work as a bridge to changing the mood of the floor and changing-up what you're playing.** Listen to the elements of tracks and their specific emotion rather than just lining-up tunes by genre or mood. For example, maybe a rhythm from a bass record will sound amazing with a simple house beat. Maybe a vocal part from a garage record can provide an interesting narrative to a techno banger. A great DJ is basically remixing on the fly. You'll be surprised at the synchronicities that appear when you start experimenting with combining different elements. When combining tracks, narratives can unfold like a poem writing itself. Also, energy does not need to build in a straight line. Sometimes a deep emotional cut sounds amazing after a peak tune in a set because everyone's body is worked-out and the floor is ready to feel a different emotion than just pure excitement. That might just be the moment everyone remembers.
- **Don't be afraid to have signature tunes which you play over-and-over again.** As long as you love these songs, the more you play them the more power they will have in your life and on your dancefloors. All the greats have at least a few signature tunes.
- **Reading the floor isn't simply about paying attention to cheering and hand raising.** Just because people are quiet doesn't mean you are messing-up. If a track is deep, people will be entranced. If a track is ecstatic, people will be loud and gestural. Trust your connection to the music and the space. Ask yourself, what do YOU want to hear next. As long as you are partying with everyone else, that translates into energy!





So you've been building your collection and practicing a ton, let's get out of the bedroom and into the club :) There's a few things we'd like to talk about when working with clubs that we feel are quite important, both in regards to them and yourself as well. These are things we both had to learn the hard way, over and over again. So hopefully talking about some of it will help you avoid the same mistakes 🍷

## GETTING YOUR FIRST GIGS AND GETTING INVOLVED

There is no road map to getting your first gigs, but we do have a number of suggestions and advice on finding ways to get into the club. Absolutely no one in industry gets their first chance to play because they are an amazing DJ. People tend to elevate their friends and the people who elevate them. All ships rise on a rising tide. We recommend the following:

- **Find a party you like and make it home.** There are roughly-speaking two types of parties that occur at clubs: A) events booked by the club's talent buyer, manager or owner, and B) events in which the club is working with an outside promoter or crew that books DJs. Go early, stay late, and let the party's crew know how much you appreciate the event on socials. People who throw local events deeply appreciate regulars and supporters. Without regulars, clubs feel like concert halls, with people only going to events to see particular artists. That's not a proper music scene. If you go regularly to the same event it means you are there to build a scene, support local residents and have fun regardless of who is playing. It is ok to ask if the club or organizer needs help. A lot of crews decorate, bring in additional sound, etc. Volunteering is a great way to get involved in the scene.
- **Record a killer mix.** Share your practice mixes with your friends. Share your best possible mix with the world. The mix is your demo. It should reflect your best work. Ideally, it should be the actual sound you'll play in a club and be a performance you could replicate in a club. We don't recommend you make a demo of your warm-up set unless someone asks for it. A mix which will get you booked to play dance floors is one that is unique and that has a lot of dance energy. With thousands of DJs to choose from, people making booking decisions

will be listening carefully to your track selection and the technical transitions between tracks.


- **Get your mix hosted.** There are a lot of podcasts dedicated to emerging underground DJ mixes. Find a series that would be a good fit with your sound and record a mix for them. The crew you made friends with from going to their events for months might be a place to start.
- **Start something from scratch.** The [Daisychain](#) podcast is a great example. The podcast is “on a mission to celebrate intersectionality in dance music. Trans, nonbinary folks & femmes come together to form a supportive community.” We met Leesh, the founder of the podcast years ago when they were getting their start as a DJ. They had just moved to Chicago and wanted to start something from the ground up. As of this writing, there are 113 podcasts and Mixmag recently did a full feature about their work showcasing a number of mixes on their platform. They’ve built something and connected people together by doing great work.
- **Form a crew.** There’s power in working towards a common goal. Individuals all over the world are banding together to throw parties which are conscientious, safer and political. For example, a small party crew named [Room 4 Resistance](#) is known throughout the world for their approach to intentional raving. So if you and a few friends see a gap in your local scene then you can be the ones to fill in and help elevate each other. Figure out what you want to do together and bring it to the world. Remember that power dynamics exist in groups, so you want to share power with others. Some of the most effective groups in the scene right now are small crews of cis women, trans women and men, POC, GNC and non-binary individuals working with trusted allies to bring change.
- **Get a job in the industry.** Here are some possibilities:
  - Write event reviews for the local music press or online platforms.
  - Get a job at a club or record store.
  - Work with a sound crew or lighting crew.
- **Use Social Media to connect with other people like you who love music.** We are full-time touring artists and we pay close attention to our supporters. Many producers will deeply appreciate you putting their track on your mix, especially if you tag them in the post. Writing about the new record you love on Instagram is a great way to connect with other people who like what you like and make friends

with other musicians. The first out-of-town gig you have a few of these producers will show up, which you will definitely appreciate. This won't work very well if all you like are Martinez Bros. tracks, but if you invest in other musicians trying to build a life in music like you, real bonds will form.

## **SOUNDCHECK**

Using the term “clubs” broadly is tough because the size, scale, and access of a “club” can be radically different from place to place. It can be a restaurant that becomes a club at night, a bar, a dedicated dance-music venue, etc. So if you have the access and time to do a soundcheck at the place you are going to play then do it. We play vinyl which creates a huge number of issues to think about and account for when playing a space. We do a soundcheck to make sure the decks are stable from vibrations, that the monitors sound ok, that all the channels on the mixer are working, etc. If you play CDJs it's a good idea to do a soundcheck so that you know: A) if the link cable is working or not, B) if the jog wheel is acting up on a deck, C) if a contact on the mixer is dirty, or D) if the signal sounds bad. Every space can have issues and it's really great to know what those issues could be especially if it's the first time you are playing a certain space. Fixing problems before the party is much better than doing it during (believe us!). A soundcheck also just lets you get comfortable with a space before playing it. Knowing that things are working properly will definitely put you at ease behind the mixer.

## **BE ON TIME**

Arrive at your gig on time: for us “on time” means arriving at least an hour before you play. If you are opening the night you should be at the club before it starts by like 30 minutes or so (being early lets you check the equipment before starting). Showing up early for your set will give you time to get settled and get your stuff organized before you play. If you are showing up late for your set time you're most likely stressing out not only the promoter but also the DJ playing before you (they may have even planned a special closing track to their set ). Be in the booth 10 minutes before your set and stay out of the way. Gently let the DJ before you know you are there by saying hi or a quick wave between their mixes. Be prepared to start a few minutes before your set time just in case the last DJ's track ends a little early. You don't need to let their track fully play, but the polite thing to do is let it play for a while and then either mix into it or fade and start

your set. If you're not sure just ask the DJ before you if they want you to mix into their track or let it play out.

Generally if it's possible you should be at the club night for as long as you can, especially if you are a newer DJ. Being there means you want to be part of a scene and shows support for other DJs; respecting their set times shows that you are in this with them, not above them. Being there yourself on time shows that you actually care about DJing. And you can always learn by watching others.

### **BE NICE!** 😊

This might feel like really simple advice, but it's always something to keep in mind; be nice. Typically no one wants to work with someone who is being difficult for no reason. Very few people who work in clubs make a lot of money doing so, and the types of big promoters who do probably are not going to be the first to book you. Most of the people in the club work for wages and many are also musicians. If you have a new hot record and trot through all the clubs thinking you're the royalty of the space and everyone should bow to you; you are most likely not getting asked to play that club again. Being nice to people goes a long way. Be nice to the degree that you can still assert yourself when necessary, be it soundcheck, or drunk partiers, or rude promoters, etc. Stand up for yourself or others when necessary. And call out racism, transphobia, sexism and other forms of harassment. But don't be a total jerk in the club. We're all hopefully here for reasons beyond an ego boost so show some humility when doing what you love. As Armand Van Helden said in a recent interview, "my advice to young DJs is don't be an asshole."

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## PREPARATION



You should be prepared when you head to the club in case everything you need is not provided. *This can be difficult for people's budgets though.* So these are things to think about if you have the money to do it. You can absolutely still play out with minimal stuff so don't let this list keep you from getting behind the decks at a club. These are good tips to think about for the future if you are DJing a lot.

- **Bring Headphones:** it's always good to have a set of headphones that are yours. There are times when borrowing a set from another DJ can be tough because they may have to leave before you are done, or a pair could break. It's good to have a pair that you know well and can take back home with you. Each pair of headphones has a different sound.
- **Bring Multiple USBs + Back-ups:** if you are a digital DJ using CDJs then you should have at least two USBs because you will absolutely encounter decks where the link cable isn't working, where it isn't long enough, or where they have set-up the CDJs incorrectly (i.e. haven't set the CDJs to be different "players"). The USBs can be copies of each other or two separate ones---whatever the case have at least two. USBs seem to corrupt on a regular enough basis and you don't want to be mid-set having one fail and then you have no back-up. Our friend Tiu has a good phrase for this "two is one, one is zero" meaning if you lose one and have no back-up then you lost everything.

- **Back-up Your Digital Collection:** If your computer can handle it or if you have extra USBs / an external hard drive then you should back-up your digital collection. One of us (...Maya) is terrible at backing things up and has lost music many times over. It's not fun and can be easily avoided. If you can do it then do it.
- **Bring Needles To The Club:** If you are a vinyl DJ then it's a good idea to bring a set of needles to the club. Typically the needles provided by the club---if they even provide them---are thrashed to hell. Bringing your own will protect your records better and will probably sound much better and louder than the ones that have been sitting in the club for a decade. It's also a good idea to bring extra replacement stylus' if you play vinyl a lot since dirt or an egregious spin back or scratch can damage them. It's not cheap to have replacement stylus', but if you can do it then it's great to have that back-up as well.
- **Bring Slipmats To The Club:** We bring our own slipmats to the club mostly because we like the ones that we use better than the ones they provide. This is not to say that you can't play on their slipmats, it's probably alright, but mats that have gotten a lot of use can be warped or damaged in ways that will make your record not sit flat on the platter. Having a pair of your own that slip just the way you like can also add comfort when playing. The mats in clubs are always really dirty, which isn't great as you move the records across them.
- **Bring Record Weights?:** Record weights are a tricky subject in that they help you in certain ways, but can also add some difficulty depending on your mixing style. We find using the weights makes it a bit sluggish to cue records. For older records, like disco records, they can be very helpful in that they flatten the record and can help achieve more stability. For newer records, unless they're a bit warped, they may not be as helpful. If you've seen our Boiler Room together you may have noticed that we used record weights; we used them because it was extremely windy and we were outside. During soundcheck we had a slipmat fly off into the trees and had to wait for it to blow back to the ground. When we are playing in a club we almost never use weights and do not travel with them either. They tend to be very expensive. Everyone is different in their desire to use them, just know it isn't always a necessary item to have.
- **Isonoe Isolation Feet:** We're including this as it's something we use now, but mostly because we are two heavily touring vinyl DJs. We bring two sets of Isonoe Isolation Feet (8 feet total) to each gig for the turntables because typically the

environment is particularly rough for turntables and feedback is a constant issue. They are not cheap so we would never say that this is a necessary item, but it has helped us a ton in the past. Playing vinyl in clubs and especially festivals has gotten more and more difficult over the years, to the point that many people have abandoned it because of feedback problems (which we totally understand). The Isooes have made it so we can fix many poor vibrational situations. They aren't magic and won't solve every situation, but they've become pretty important in our touring lives which is why we wanted to include them in this guide. We consider them a game-changer, because they limit vibration/feedback without destabilizing the deck for pitch-mixing, cueing, dropping, and scratching.

## **NEGOTIATING FEES**

We can't tell you how much money you should get paid, it depends on the circumstances, but here are some things to think about: are you playing a club or space that will be charging ticket prices and/or giving you a percentage of the bar? **If you are on a line-up and someone is making money then you should too.** How much of course depends on the price of the ticket, how long you've been DJing, are people coming to see you play, etc. If a promoter is contacting you to play a party for free "because of exposure" and they are charging for entry to the party, then you should get something for your time. It's also good to apply worth to yourself. Don't let promoters and clubs "pay you later" unless you know them and trust them. We've both been promised money that has never appeared because of letting promoters "pay you later". You never want to ask for amounts of money that they can't provide, but it is good to think about covering your basic costs if you have to travel to the gig, buy food along the way, rent a hotel room if you can't stay with someone. You want to take care of yourself and shouldn't be out-of-pocket to do so.

## **INTOXICATION**

We both used to party quite a bit... it's just what comes with being in lots of clubs. Everyone around you is partying typically, promoters are partying as well and lots of free booze and substances can come your way. Each person is different in how they interact with these things, but it's important to remember that if you've been booked to play a club, you're working. I've heard so many stories of DJs who get so drunk that they can't play their set, it's something to avoid for sure. We're not saying that you need to be

absolutely sober to play a set, but it is good to be mindful that you should still be able to play your set. If you want to party hard then maybe wait til your set is done and then have fun the rest of the night with everyone. You want to play a set that people will remember because it was dope, not because you were curled up behind the booth not being able to mix two tunes. *Eris got to be the opening DJ for the band New Order about 6 years ago. It was a teenage dream come true and an amazing opportunity. She thought she had crushed it but when she listened back to the recording months later the mixes were uneasy and there were plenty of offs. It was a sobering moment because she realized that a combination of alcohol and cocaine had impacted her far more than she thought.*

## **ALTERED STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS**

Not all drugs inebriate. Anthropological evidence confirms that plant-based psychedelics, ordeal poisons and other intoxicants have been used by humans in socially-sanctioned contexts to create art and heal since pre-history. Many artists and musicians want to experiment with perturbing their consciousness. If you are such a person, we recommend you educate yourself on harm reduction techniques. For example, there is nothing *necessarily* wrong with taking a microdose and working by yourself in the studio. Programmers in Silicon Valley do it everyday. But you should have experimented with the substance with friends, you should educate yourself on what to do if you encounter a difficult experience, and you should learn about how to test drugs for purity (*e.g., test kits for LSD/MDMA or learning the different types of mushrooms and how to visibly access them*). It is important to learn about the dangers of poly-intoxication (taking dangerous combinations of different substances) and to assess your own medical history (*for example, someone with schizophrenia should probably not experiment with LSD*). In cultures which practice shamanism, a healer will spend a lifetime learning about how to prepare and use the plants to heal. It is best to approach altered states of consciousness with seriousness, humility and intentionality. We don't recommend that you do psychedelics or MDMA when inebriated.



# ADVANCED PRACTICE



Xoxo Maya & Eris

For any questions or suggestions please write: [questionst4tluvnrg@gmail.com](mailto:questionst4tluvnrg@gmail.com)