



DIGITAL DJ TIPS
GEAR. TECHNIQUES. SUCCESS.



**LAIDBACK LUKE INTERVIEW
WITH PHIL MORSE,
THURSDAY 6 APRIL 2017**

Phil Morse: I'm very lucky to be talking to Laidback Luke, who's taken time out of his evening to come on to the Digital DJ Tips site and chat to us tonight. Hello, Luke. Thank you very much for coming on.

Laidback Luke: Hi, Phil. Thank you for having me. It's my pleasure.

Phil: Brilliant. Well, Luke, let's start at the beginning. We all get up in the morning, and I always like to ask DJs what their morning routine is. What are the first few things you do when you wake up, at that hour, whatever that hour might be?

Luke: Well, so the funny thing is, what keeps me going during the day - and I'm actually talking to you right now laying in bed - what keeps me going is my naps, so I just took a little nap, and I guess the first thing I do when I wake up, answer my Twitter, and this is something I do throughout the day. In the afternoon I'll do a couple of Tweets, and then in the evening I'll answer some Tweets as well, so I'm actually answering a lot of questions and queries and mentions that come in to my timeline.

Phil: That's awesome. It's very great to hear that. It's refreshing, I guess. Tell me, as a superstar DJ and a family man as well, how do you balance family life and DJing? How do you find that sweet spot between the two of them?

Luke: My answer may seem a little boring, but it's really the only possible way, is to very carefully schedule everything. Once a month, I sit down with my wife, who's a DJ as well, and we just schedule out the whole month of when we get to see each other, where we need to fly out to see each other, when we actually ... Me and my management share a calendar that's called "Daddy Days," and so every Tuesday and Wednesday, I have Daddy Day, but mind you I have kids both on American soil and Dutch soil, so I go back and forwards from the Netherlands to America every other week, and so on Tuesday and Wednesday, my management and all my people know those are my Daddy Days, and that's where basically my weekend kicks in. The DJ weekend, because I always play during the actual weekend.

Phil: That's a great story, that need to organise yourself almost in a military fashion, but also the fact that your weekend kicks in in the week, and I'm sure that's very common for DJs all over the world. Considering you've done this for many years now, have you just forgotten what having Saturday and Sunday off feels like? Is it something that just doesn't occur to you anymore?

Luke: Yeah, that's right. I actually, I sometimes remember the times before I started DJing heavily where I would go and play a little tennis with my dad and my brother on the Saturdays, and it only occurred to me a few years ago where I was ... I think I must have been in Hungary, going from one show to the other, and I saw some people walk by with like tennis rackets, and I was like, "Oh, wait. That's what I used to do on Saturday." Yeah, so it is a little bit of a sacrifice touring this much as I do, where you don't really get to see your friends or family in like a regular fashion.

Phil: I have to ask you a question, and I ask this to every single DJ I ever interviewed, because the answer is quite revealing normally. Are you a cook? Do you enjoy cooking food?

Luke: Well, that's very funny, because I know a couple of DJs that are cooks, and I have cooked myself as well. I did that like really fanatically for about five years, until I started watching my diet like an athlete does, so cooking instantly became way more dull when I started dipping more into the fit life, but technically yes, I love cooking.

Phil: Did that come about ... I'm dipping into my past here. I still do all the cooking in my family, and the reason for that is ...

Luke: Oh, nice.

Phil: ... when I met my wife, who is not a DJ, she was working Monday to Friday, 9 to 5, and I was working Saturday and Sunday night times and Friday night. In the week, I was free to cook, and so that was my job, and it's kind of carried on all these years now, and I still do it. That's why I ask. It was quite often the DJ hanging around with not much to do in the week that kind of leads to that situation.

Luke: It's pretty similar, actually, to DJing, I feel, with grabbing the right ingredients and then mixing it all together, and has a similar feel to it, if you ask me.

Phil: It does. It does. You're right, and serving up your creations at the end of it.

Luke: Yeah.

Phil: We're talking about family life and DJing, fitting everything in. Now I've read that you're a bit of a fan of kung fu, and that's unusual I'd say. Have you met any other DJs who are kung fu practitioners? Are there any others that you know of?

Luke: Yeah, well, it's funny, I do come across them, and I just did a free class in Miami during WMC, and I found out Michael Feiner who is a DJ and producer as well has been a long-time practitioner of Wing Chun kung fu, and it's funny, we were direct messaging on Twitter a little bit, and I told him the class would be at 10 AM in the morning on the Thursday in Miami, and I said, "Are you sure that's not too early for you?" He was like, "No, I'm absolutely fine, and this is great and everything." When he showed up, he told me he was a long practitioner of kung fu, and that's great fun. Other than that, I do come across DJs that do some kickboxing, that have practiced some kind of martial art back in the day, and yet for me, it's actually my second career, and a lifestyle really.

Phil: It's interesting, because I think a lot of DJs find the need to do something, a daytime physical activity, to kind of almost balance, almost like the yin and yang of their lifestyle, to keep things on a level. How important do you think it is for people who want to make a career of DJing, want to do it long term, to have some kind of interest outside of DJing?

Luke: Well, this week there was a little bit of an uproar on Twitter because Ook, the guy, the producer-DJ Ook with the double-O, he Tweeted something about, "If you look very muscular or look like you always go to the gym, you probably have no producer skills," or something like that.

Phil: Right...

Luke: You know, fair enough. He probably aimed it at the ghost producing DJs who really spend much time looking at their appearance and trying to look great on press pictures, but people like Will Sparks and myself kind of got offended by it, and you know, literally you only need to have 45 minutes a day of a workout, and then you can actually call yourself an athlete, or living the fit life, and then the rest of the day you can be in the studio, you could be creative, you could be energized, because yeah, just like you said, it's a yin and yang kind of thing. There's nothing more deteriorating than leading a studio life and just sitting all day in a dark cave, trying to finish this track and tweak your elements. Whereas if you would just take the time out to spend those 45 minutes moving your body and getting the blood running, this will benefit you highly, absolutely.

Phil: There's definitely a big ... It's the same for office workers, I think, isn't it? Anyone who's still and not moving for a long period of time. They reckon it can damage you nearly as much as smoking, so you really have to balance it out. They say that night shift workers have more health issues than people who sleep a normal night's sleep, and of course DJs can certainly be lumped in with night shift workers, right? It becomes doubly important.

Luke: Yeah, well there you go. Not only physically, but mentally as well, it's really a big stress relief if you can just move your body and be in tune with your body.

Phil: Here's a question for you. If you could take yourself back to the age of 18, so we're looking a couple of years ago now :), if you could go back to 18, what would you do differently with what you know now?

Luke: That's 22 years now for me ago. Actually, a funny story. I was just digging up my old DAT recordings of my first productions, so DAT was the medium we used to use when handing in masters of new tracks. DAT stands for digital audio tape, and I was just listening to 20-year-old demos of mine just this afternoon, and it was taking me back to when I was that age, and you know, I have really no regrets. I guess the thing I would say to myself was to take away the uncertainty of, "Will I actually become a fully experienced producer? Will I actually become a professional DJ? Do I have what it takes?" I would tell 18-year-old me, "You know, you will get there. Just keep up what you're doing, and don't make a big mess out of it, and just keep going, keep enjoying it, and you will succeed."

Phil: That's awesome. Thinking back then, what came first? Was it DJing, or was it producing?

Luke: You know, what's often very funny is that I'm known in the current DJ industry as this highly technical DJ, and people praise me for that, and I'm really happy people recognise that, but I am actually a producer

first, and then a DJ. I started producing in 1992 at the age of 15, and I was already putting out records for several years when I started DJing at 19. Just because if I dive into something, so for instance DJing and DJ technique, I really want to learn anything and everything there is to learn about it, to do it properly, so same goes for my kung fu, but same goes for my productions as well. If you do something, you might as well just do it for the full-on 100%.

Phil: Do you think all DJs should learn to produce? Do you think it's now become something that is pretty standard and pretty much necessary to succeed in DJing in 2017?

Luke: The funny thing is, because I am both, I am a producer and I'm a DJ, but I've seen what kind of horrible result we have with all these producers trying to be a DJ as well, and to be honest, and just to be clear, I don't see myself as an actual DJ. I don't see myself as a real DJ. I still see myself like a producer who just knows how to DJ really well. That's different. If you're a real DJ, then that's ... You know, you're someone that's a taste-maker. You're someone that naturally has a curiosity for all the old music. Someone that's a collector. Someone that still loves being in vinyl shops, everything. I feel if you get behind a desk as a real DJ, the crowd gets a way bigger, more deeper experience than a producer that's behind the desk.

Obviously, I'm kind of throwing my own windows in here, but I've seen in the past, so for instance, someone like Carl Cox is a real DJ. I wouldn't say Carl Cox is the best producer of the world, but he's an incredible DJ. There's other DJs currently, for instance, Sunnery James and Ryan Marciano, those guys are real DJs. They are not infamous for their productions, but they are renowned for their DJing skills, and taste-making, and all of that kind of stuff. I wish there would be more. I wish there would be less producer/DJs up on top, and I wish ... Kind of like the old days. In the mid-90s, you would know DJs for their actual skills, instead of their hit records. Someone like Erick Morillo who hasn't put out a hit record in ages, still everyone knows he's an amazing DJ. I miss that, and I feel that needs to come back.

Phil: That's interesting you should say that, and I want to press on this point a little bit more, because you were saying, "We need fewer producer/DJs." I guess the point being that there's this sense that people produce music and then need to learn to DJ in order to go out there, and play that music, and get the reward, and get their fees.

Luke: That's right.

Phil: But some of the names you mentioned there, and I mean, just to quote one example, Carl Cox, I mean, I'm old enough to remember Carl Cox putting music out, and like you say, he's not a prolific producer. He's not known for his productions anywhere near as much as he's known for his DJing, but nonetheless he's produced music, and he's produced music since the very beginning. Do you think that there is something about being a DJ, and about being a taste-maker, that predisposes you to want to make music? Whether it ends up being the thing that defines you, or whether DJing does. You know, even like Jazzy Jeff, the DJ's DJ, he still made music, even though he's very much known for being a great DJ. I guess my question is, is it almost inevitable that DJs will have a go at making music, just as nowadays it's inevitable that producers are going to have a go at DJing?

Luke: That's right. There's two sides to the story. One, yes, you need to have your tracks out nowadays in order for you to get a global or an internationally recognized name. You can still make big moves in your local scene if you're a fantastic DJ, but to go outside and conquer the rest of the world, it's very hard if you don't have your productions out. That's number one, but I think number two is that people don't realise how different DJing and producing actually are, and I've been trying to get people to be aware of that. A producer is way different than a DJ, and actually the both shouldn't even be mentioned with each other. It's like comparing a dentist to a baker. It's just such a complete other type of thing, and what unites a baker with a dentist is that something has to do with, like, putting food in your mouth, but that's it.

DJing and producing has to do with music, but a real DJ doesn't necessarily need to know what kind of compressor you need on the master to sound this or that type of way. The other way around, a producer doesn't need to know how you could stack energy to get a crowd moving, for instance. There's so many different sides and depths to both, and people are very much confused right now and assume you just need to be both, but yeah, I wish it was more separated.

Phil: They are different skills, aren't they? I guess the ideal nowadays would be to learn both, but respect both, and I guess what you're saying is that that generally isn't the case. You generally find that, although it's necessary to be seen a DJ-producer nowadays, that people tend to be better at one than the other.

Luke: Absolutely. I do feel that if you want to be both, if you want to DJ, want to be a DJ, then do your absolute best to learn the craft, not just the basics. We often, at various big festivals, just get the basics, and it's funny because I kind of don't understand why there are so many great producers and they spend a lot of time to develop their producing skills, and are really diving into the art of it, but then when they want to become a DJ, I guess in a lot of cases there's no time for them to actually go through, you know, DJing at weddings, DJing in front of your friends, to opening at clubs, and it's crazy.

Yesterday I got a question on Twitter about a kid, he was just very friendly, and he asked me on Twitter, "Hey, Luke, love your stuff. Would you mind answering me a couple of questions about DJing? I would love to learn from you." I'm always open on Twitter, so if you're hearing this, contact me @LaidBackLuke. I'm always there. I said, "Well, shoot over the question. Let's see." He said, "What do I need to know to play at big festivals, to get ready for playing at big festivals?" My answer was, "Well, you first need to play at small venues, play at weddings, play in front of your friend, play in sweaty clubs, play early, play late, and there's actually a whole trajectory that would get you ready to play that main stage slot at big festivals." A lot of times nowadays people just skip that, and they end up at a festival with 30,000 people in front of their nose, and they have no clue what they're doing.

Phil: It's a scourge of our age, isn't it? People who are old enough to remember, as you said, kind of half wish it to be back to the way it used to be, so that didn't have to be the case. I think as you say, that it's probably simply because people don't have time, because they're expected to go out and DJ instantly, having had a Beatport number one. It's certainly something we've seen in the last few years, which we never saw before. People coming to us and saying, "Teach me to DJ. I need to know in the next week!"

Luke: Oh my god. Yeah.

Phil: You say that you don't see yourself as a real DJ, which is, you know, some would say modesty. Nonetheless, I remember clearly at take you did at Dance Fair, using the hashtag #RealDJ, a couple of years ago.

Luke: Yeah.

Phil: It was lovely, because you were very open, and very giving and honest, and just if anyone hasn't seen this by the way, I think if you probably go onto YouTube and type in "LaidBack Luke 2015 Dance Fair" you will see this. It was basically a good half hour, maybe longer, just on the art of DJing. It was just you with a couple of CDs, just talking about the way you play and your techniques and what's important. How important is it to you to educate, to pass forward what you've learned and the skills you've got to the next generation? It seems to me like it's in your DNA to do this. I mean you're answering people on Twitter, you were saying earlier, first thing in the morning! How important is that education side to you?

Luke: It's very important, and to be honest, that's the golden side of everything and anything I do, is really to pass this on and to try and get the new generation enthusiastic for what I do. It's not the fame, it's not the money, it's not the private jets and all that crap. Really, it's just passing along knowledge and have people keep on doing what I've been loving doing. With that seminar on Dance Fair, it's a really tricky subject, and if anyone would come across the title, they would think, "Oh boy. Here we go." It was a little bit of a risk for me as well to put up a video like that, and it could have really backfired if I would be a rude and cocky type of guy, but yeah. It really is about education, and I just want people to be aware that it goes way deeper than what we see right now.

The moderator of that afternoon was a DJ I've known for a long time. Her name is DJ Marcella. She's kind of our generation as well. She read through what I was planning to do, and I looked at her and I said, "Well, you know, to us this is just plain and simple and forward, right? But to a lot of the new generation of kids, they have no clue. They think standing on top of a DJ booth is something they need to do, and they think yelling through the mic, 'Three, two, one, jump' is an actual part of DJing." I really wanted them to know what I went through, and what's in my DNA, and I do pride myself to have always looked and watched at the right people and have picked up on the right type of examples as DJs to try and pass this along.

Phil: A couple of questions, then, about people just starting out now. It's very, very different now to the days of our youth, when it was record decks, and it was six months locked in a room trying to crack the very basics. What mistakes do you think that young or new DJs you see often make, you see them making over and over again? Something that they just don't get, they don't realize, that you could kind of push them in

another direction and say, "No, do it this way. You're making a simple error there." What do you see often among that kind of person?

Luke: There are a bunch of things, actually. For instance, jumping from genres, which I'm renowned for, you can't do that every other track. In order to switch from one genre to the other, say for instance, and this truly, really happens right now at festivals, say you want to switch from deep house to dubstep. You don't do that in one track. You actually transition. You need a couple of tracks to massage people into it. You could do it like really bluntly and out of nowhere, but then you'll need to have some time before doing that where people are really bored with the deep house you were playing and are ready for something else. A lot of times, I just see them jumping and switching out of nowhere, and then from the one dubstep track, they go into a hard style track, and then from the hard style track into a Dutch house track, and it doesn't make any sense. Somewhere they listen to me, or listen to some other EDM DJ, and they think that's the way, and it's actually way more subtle than that. That's number one.

Number two. People are very much obsessed right now with mixing in key, which is great, and which is fine if that's a skill you know, but it's not the essence. Mixing in key has nothing to do with dancefloor energy. Mixing in key is very useful. I use it, too, when I make my podcasts, for instance. For the air, it's really nice if you have smooth transitions, and if you're working with acapellas, it's good to know which ones are in key, but to actually base your set on solely the harmonic elements, that's not the essence. The essence is dancefloor energy, because without the dancefloor energy, people will stop dancing. It's as simple as that.

Then number three, there are tons of people that do the exact same combinations each and every time, where people will all of a sudden think you do pre-recorded sets, because those five tracks always work for you and always work for your festival type of environment. Then it even develops up to where people can only play an hour long set, for instance, and in real life situations, this happens, that a main stage act has no tracks left after an hour of a set, and sometimes you need to play one hour and 20 minutes, because the other act is late or whatever, and they cannot do that. So bring more tracks - actually way more tracks - than only that one hour you need to play.

Phil: It's crazy to hear that, actually, I have to say. Crazy, that final point. The thing that we see a lot of is people bringing all their tracks everywhere, which I think is an equal error. Our advice is bring two or three times the number of tracks you know you're going to need, but think very hard about each of them. It's almost like revising for an exam. When you get there, you've got enough to deal with any situation, but not so much that you're paralyzed by it, and you're kind of blinded by choice.

Luke: I love that, yeah.

Phil: But I've never noticed people only taking the exact number they need to play a set. That's a new one on me.

Luke: It's horrible. It happens so much, and it's crazy. You even see people Tweet about that, and I once saw a Tweet like that come by where a DJ said he packed the wrong USB stick, because he brought his Ultra set to his to another festival with him. I was like, "Wait. What?" It didn't compute with me. I was like, "You played the Ultra set at your other festival, in that case?" Yeah, he did, and people didn't even notice, and it was fine. Come on. You know, when you're a main stage festival act, the amount of money you wheel in per set is ridiculous. Please go and put some effort in. Like, go and put some amount of effort in. It's horrendous.

Phil: It's an eye-opener. It really is. Can I ask you the same question, but this time aimed at people who want to start producing their own music? What mistakes do you see people making at that stage, where they're just trying to make their first record, trying to get a tune out there? What advice would you give someone in that position to just get them on the right track and stop making a common error?

Luke: One of the most common errors I get asked a lot is, "Hey, Luke. What kind of VST plugin did you use to make that sound, or that track?" Very inexperienced producers are under the impression that you only need one plugin to make a certain type of sound or effect. Wouldn't it be nice to just have one plugin that fixes everything? No. You just need a set of ears, and you need to know what a lot of plugins do over the whole spectrum, so in order to get that sound you were asking for, you need to have this synthesizer, but then you'll need to know how to modulate that sound, then you need to know what kind of compression you need on that sound, how to bust the reverb, and how to properly EQ all frequencies, and then how to fix it in

the mix. The answer as to just one plugin, it's way more complicated than just an easy way out. Fair enough, a lot of people would love the easiest and the quickest and the most direct answer, but most of the time it's all just down to really learning the fabric of anything you'd like to do.

Phil: Do you think people have an obsession with the next piece of gear, or the next plugin, or the next big thing round the corner?

Luke: Absolutely.

Phil: ...as being the solution to getting where they want to go, rather than something inside of them?

Luke: I've a fair amount of tutorials on my YouTube channel as well. One is for beginning producers, like the five steps you need to take to become a producer, and the answer is so much different than people expect. A lot of times the comment I get on my tutorials is that everything sounds so basic, and so plain, and for instance the EQs I use are the standard, stock, Ableton EQs. The reverbs I use are the stock Ableton reverbs, and same goes for delays. I actually don't really have, like, very special go-to plugins at all, because I know how to thoroughly manipulate all the stock plugins to do what I do. I have a very long history of producing, and I started with hardware and slowly switched over to all VSD-based things.

I've tried all the UADs and the Waves plugins and everything, and then my best advice would be, is just when you buy a plugin, or if you think you need a new one, ask yourself, do you know everything about the old one? Do you really know how to dive into the fabric of the plugin you worked with? Then you'll find out that you actually don't need as much as people think, so yeah, people tend to get really obsessed by having as much, and kind of like you said with bringing your whole collection. Same goes for producing. The more plugins you have, the more confusing it can be, and what do you actually use?

Phil: My final question about advising people on this journey to hopefully get them the success that they're dreaming of, is what point do you feel that DJs should start looking for a team around them, for people to help them, for management, or for a label, or for an agent? At what point the good point to think, "OK, I need help now to make the next jump"?

Luke: That's a great question, and you know what? I'm actually going to make a vlog about that in a matter of few weeks, because often I see that kids already have their artist name, their logo, their social media going on, and they haven't even put a demo out yet. This is the wrong way around. The team will come with various releases, so for instance with me, it all went really gradually. At a certain point, there was enough hype around me that managers and agents were contacting me. I think that's the natural flow of things, so instead of you seeking out to go and get a manager, if you become that successful that people are talking about you and that your music is hyped, they will come to you, and then you can start negotiating towards a contract that suits you.

One of the most important things I only learned recently is that, for instance, if you get a contract under your nose, say a manager or an agent wants to sign you, and you get a contract in, the contract is fully negotiable. This is something I literally only learned like last year, that a contract is ... You can actually make a contract exactly the way you want as well, not only for the business part of it. I never knew that. All of these, and your logo, and your social media, the first thing you need is the music and the fire that will hype your name around, and then everything will fall in place.

Phil: It's interesting to hear that. It's the answer we give as well. "It will come and find you when the time is right." But I guess, as you say, people have their logo, they have their social media, and it's important that that doesn't get in the way of making music, of DJing, of doing what it is that's going to create this output that will get people interested in them in the first place. I guess there's a balance nowadays. Don't you think it's probably very hard for new DJs to find that balance when they've got to do all this stuff themselves? They've got to do the Twitter themselves, they've got to their Facebook, they've got to call and book their own gigs, then still find the time to be creative. Is that something that you think is getting harder, or has it always been hard, it's just it's more visibly hard now because of social media and so on?

Luke: Yeah. I think the latter, because I do a lot of these things myself still as well. I run my own Twitter, and I run my own Instagram, and luckily I do have a team now that puts up a lot of the record label stuff and my Facebook stuff, but yeah, it is tough to try and do everything and still be creative, but you've just got to never lose sight of the essence, and the essence is good music. You know, it doesn't really matter how good

you are on social media right now if you don't have a reach, for instance. You get that reach not by posting more amazing selfies, but to actually put out some good music, and reaching out and becoming friends with a bunch of bigger DJs and producers, and just get your name out there strong enough that a lot of DJs will tell other DJs, "Oh man, did you hear the music of DJ so-and-so? His music is absolutely brilliant. You need to check him out." That's the type of hype you want. Then everything else will fall in place after.

Phil: Make stuff, do stuff, get stuff out there, and work on everything else second, but keep in mind that it is important, but not without the music...

Luke: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah.

Phil: Talking about the way things are changing and so on, I can't help but notice there's been quite a big change in LaidBack Luke's rider and his equipment recently. We spotted you with a different brand to the one that's been dominating for many decades now in the DJ booth.

Luke: That's right.

Phil: Tell us about this hookup with Denon DJ, and how that happened.

Luke: Yeah, so it's a fantastic new chapter for me, and it's funny because when they reached out to me, I was at Creamfields Festival, and I spoke to the guy from Denon, our dear friend Paul, and he did an interview for me, and afterwards he said, "I work for Denon now, and we are actually working on something that might interest you." My first thought was, "Well, no. I'm actually not interested in Denon, why?" I really didn't get it at the time, and then he showed me some drawings of their new player, and I was intrigued, because the things he said about those players were things that I had been looking for. During Amsterdam Dance event, he contacted me again and he said, "Instead of drawings, we have the actual product now, set up in a hotel room. Do you want to come out and feel them?" I was like, "Fair enough," because I was interested now and I felt them, and I was really blown away by them.

A lot of people have been assuming my motivation of switching, and obviously because I've been displaying my DJ skills so much, that often people thought it was very strange for me to instantly change like that, and the main reason is that they're just a next step into the DJing evolution. Yeah, it's just the technology I've always been looking for, and being a brand ambassador really makes me able to go into the research and development aspect of it all. For instance, we have such a great structure now at Denon. If one week I discover a flaw or I need to have something changed in there, in the other week, they'll pass me an update and it's in there. It's this influence right now that really satisfies me, and that's something I always wanted, to be that close to the development part as well.

Phil: That's interesting. That must be quite exciting to be ... I didn't realise that you had this kind of almost ... Well, it's not almost. It is a research and development input into the product. For people who don't know what we're talking about, by the way, it's a new player from Denon DJ called the SC5000, and it's a media player that looks like the other media players on the market, but it is, as Luke says, it's more powerful. It's got more processor power in there, and it can do stuff that's just kind of, people have been dreaming of, and is now kind of a reality.

What is it that you like best, Luke? What's the one thing, you said there's stuff you've been dreaming of, and suddenly there it was. What are the one or two things that you were really dreaming of that really were amazing when you saw them in these new players?

Luke: For instance, the full touchscreen. Anything we have right now in 2017 that's in our faces is touchscreen, so why not have a CDJ be fully touchscreen as well? You can scroll, you can select by simply touching the screen. Before this, nothing had that. That's a first. At the bottom of the track, there's eight hot keys, and those are kind of drum pad-type of buttons, but those eight hot keys are not just eight hot keys. When you flick a button, they become eight loops. Then when you flick a button, they become eight slicers. Then when you flick a button, they become another effects, and it's just brilliant. It's just tons and tons of options. One thing I always bumped into, and I need to be very honest about this, I do bring my whole library of tracks to every show.

Phil: Don't let me be the man to tell you not to do that, Luke.

Luke: I know, right?

Phil: I think you've earned the right!

Luke: Mind you, this is a collection of a decade of music that I bring, just in case I need to grab that one filter disco track that I know they will go off on. Previous to this, I could only bring a maximum 64GB USB stick, and anything above wasn't recommended. With the Denon players, it doesn't matter if I bring a hard drive, or a one terabyte USB. I can go as big as I want, and that's great for me too. But, and I'm going to do a vlog about this soon as well, I could essentially play a whole set with just one player because of the layering option there. With the flick of a button, it turns the player from player A to player B, and then the whole player switches colour, and you know you're on a different layer, and you can actually mix into the track that's playing from the player. That's some next level stuff to me.

Phil: I was curious about that, and we being Digital DJ Tips, we come from a background of ... We've kind of grown with DJ controllers. We arrived when they first arrived, and we've championed the way they democratise everything. What we found curious is that these Denon players, they basically catch CDs up with what controller DJs have been doing for years. You know, the eight pads at the bottom. The analysis of tracks very quickly when you plug them in, so that they've got the BPM and they've got the key on there for you, and some of the other things you've been talking about, the layering of the decks. You know, it's old hat in DJ controllers and software to have the A, B, C, D deck buttons so that you can play four decks on two physical decks, and yet this is almost like it's taken this long for the hardware versions to catch up.

Luke: Yeah, so number one, isn't that insane that it took this long to catch up? Number two, because I've only played on the quote-unquote "flagship" players for over a decade, I wasn't aware of what the DJ controller market was doing, and have done, and still. Mind you, every top DJ is playing on this so-called "flagship" setup where you pay loads of money for as well, and we are only getting all of these features now. To us, it's a revolution, and yeah, to the DJ controller world, it's like, "Oh, yeah, it was already there." But stupid thing is, and I literally do mean that, stupid thing is, when you show up at the club and there's the professional setup, and you're not bringing your DJ controller, that's what you get. You get the stripped down version. I'm really happy we're getting developments in that area now, and so from here on, there's way more room to go beyond that.

Phil: The next question is, and I'm asking you this specifically because you spend your life in this environment, how do you think it's going to change the DJ booth? Are we going to find that every big club and every big festival, there are two full set-ups, one of each brand, so that depending on what the DJ wants to play, the thing that he or she needs is there? Obviously when there's competition, then someone falls behind, and they do their damndest to catch up, so we can see a stage in the future when these features are arriving on everyone's equipment. How do you think it's going to pan out?

Luke: Taking you back into history now, where every DJ booth in the world had the Technic SL1200 vinyl players in the booth. This was, in 2003, I started to DJ on the CDJ set-up only, and I had to deal with promoters, clubs, that needed to move the vinyl decks in order to get my set-up in there. I've been through there once already, and it literally only took about three to four years when all the DJ booths in the world had a CDJ set-up, and look at everything now. I've been there before, and I'm quite certain that if there's not going to be a game of catch up, then absolutely Denon will be the ones that will be in the DJ booths of the future.

Phil: It's going to be interesting to watch, isn't it? From an impartial bystander's point of view, I guess the fact that there is competition, it's never healthy when there's a monopoly on anything.

Luke: Yeah.

Phil: Because things don't develop...

Luke: Exactly. This is what we've experienced the last couple of years. Things weren't developing. It's a good thing now. Absolutely.

Phil: Cool. OK. Look, you've been really generous with your time tonight. I didn't expect you to spend so long speaking to me, so I'm very grateful for that. Can we just close by you giving us a little flavour of what's coming up next for you in 2017? What are the highlights, what you're looking forward to, what should people look forward to?

Luke: Actually tomorrow ... This will be Friday. Tomorrow is the release of my new single called Paradise, which I made together with Made In June and Bright Lights, and funny enough, we're releasing on Dim Mak, and this is because Bright Lights is signed to the Dim Mak label. That's very exciting, and I am actually planning on making a new album in 2017. It's going to be a different project, so my last album was made in 2015, and I got the taste and the flavour for it, and now I'm going to take it to the next level with the album, and apart from that, I'm back at all the major festivals coming summer, and I'm very excited for the season. Yeah, just keeping it rolling.

Phil: That's great. Thank you ever so much for your time. It is much appreciated. I hope we talk again soon.

Luke: Thank you very much for having me. Good luck.