

TRANSCRIPT: NINO BROWN AUDIO SHORT

[music: slowed down beat comes in, speeds up & fades underneath Nino speaking]

Nino: There is a spirit of competition when it comes to soundsystem culture, which is something we tend to eliminate in—when we're doing more inclusive parties. You know, it's like, meant to not have that competition with each other. So, I think some of the spirit gets lost in that, and sometimes I'm like, is that erasure or is that just evolving? I think before there was a little more seriousness, and being a purist was kind of like idolized, whereas now people have more fun with it. And that, I think, is a product of queer dance parties.

[sound clip from Nino's party YES YES Y'ALL plays; crowd members are cheering and the MC says, "Now I introduce to you— that needs no introduction—that's Nino Brown." Crowd cheers continue as Nino plays her first song; fades underneath Nino speaking]

Nino: My name is Nino Brown. I DJ with CDJs—CD turntables. I'm the co-founder of an event series called YES YES Y'ALL, based in Toronto.

[music from YES YES Y'ALL comes up and fades out completely]

Nino: YES YES Y'ALL is a party series that started over a decade ago. We started off trying to bridge different subcultures, but ultimately Caribbean queers were who took over the space and made it their own. And the community that we have now is ultimately from that group of people. And initially to be an inclusive space, creating a safer space for queer people of colour to congregate.

Ultimately, there is a care for the music first and foremost, because I find even throwing parties that are aimed at being inclusive, you make that your sole priority—when for me, there's so many things that are overlooked, and I'm trying to make sure that we find a way to include it all! So: you want to create an energy, you focus on having a great soundsystem, you care about what security looks like and, and what accessible drinks there are to offer, and you make sure that you create a safer space for the people that are gonna be coming to your event that aren't normally prioritized.

[music: bass-heavy beat comes in & continues under Nino speaking]

Nino: A lot of the, like, traditional sound culture influences are more obvious in parties and—and bashments, and fetes that happen predominantly outside of Toronto, or outside of the inner city. You know, like, if you think about how even the diaspora lives, we live in the outside of the city. That's where our families were able to afford houses. They don't have neighbors that are complaining about noise, they don't have city bylaws getting in the way—or maybe they just are—are going against it and rebelling against that? Which is a little more part of the culture, also, you know?

[music fades out completely]

Nino: I was lucky enough to experience so many different cultures by being a product of living here, being mixed, having all types of friends. And for me as someone who is half Trini, half Pakistani, you know, you come from—you tend to stick and be attracted to certain groups that have the same sensibilities, you know? And with that—I think I'm pretty lucky, especially considering like, you know: Muslim, brown, only child, female... but I had a lot of experience clubbing as a little kid and a preteen into being teenager...

[sound: the ambience of a quiet city comes in; a door opens, someone is running up the stairs into a club; the music is muted and then gets louder as a door opens into the club]

Nino: ...and I had my first club experience at 13 in Trinidad.

[music: A remixed version of Buju Banton's song "Champion" begins and continues playing underneath Nino speaking; blending with drum and bass, jungle music, ragga jungle tracks]

Nino: I was going to raves—at 15, 16, 17—that was pretty heavy in the bass scene, drum and bass, jungle music, ragga jungle...um, I was going to Trini soca fetes, I was going to basement bashment parties...

[music: Buju Banton's song "Champion" continues after Nino finishes speaking, he sings: 'I "Walk like a champion, talk like a champion, what a piece of body gal, tell me where you get it from. Knock 'pon your entrance, ram pa pa pam pam"; track fades completely]

Nino: I wouldn't be a DJ or selector without...I think it's a perfect marriage between being a music fan, first and foremost from when I was a kid, to having a community that came in—that fell into my lap at a young age that I hold so dear to my heart. Couldn't be anywhere without them.

[music: moody, funky music comes in and continues under Nino]

Nino: I mean, I've had to grapple with, you know, my own complacency with white supremacy and my own complacency with anti-Blackness, as a non-Black person who has played dancehall... Realizing the privilege that comes with: why—why may it have been easier for me to book a venue than it would be for Bambii?

[music fades out completely]

Nino: The funny thing is it's a bunch of communities coming together, I think. You know, it's about feeling a little bit like an outsider, a little bit like a weirdo...

[sound clip of Nino DJing at YES YES Y'ALL comes up and plays underneath Nino speaking]

Nino: ...being brought up with certain values and then being an adult questioning them... but still valuing them. And I feel like a lot of us find similarities on the dance floor.

[sound clip of Nino DJing at YES YES Y'ALL comes up and plays for ~20 seconds; crowd cheering throughout; fades out completely]