

***I'm in the Band x D.C.: The Social Power of Music***  
**Episode 2: Anthology of Booty**  
**Audio Transcript**

**Run Time:** 27:46

[Music: Bratmobile – “I’m in the Band”]

**Allison Wolfe:** Welcome to *I'm in the Band*, a podcast hosted by me, Allison Wolfe. In Episode 1 of this special mini-series for Smithsonian Folklife, we heard from some Washington, D.C., women who were part of the First Ladies DJ Collective in the beginning of the new millennium.

**Kristina Gray [in panel discussion]:** When our collective started, 2002, over fifteen years ago, there weren't spaces that were all-women DJs, diverse women DJs, various ethnicities, races, sexual gender identities.

**Allison:** So now, in Episode 2, we crossfade from the First Ladies to a group that carried the torch further.

**Kristy Chavez-Fernandez:** The Anthology of Booty.

**Ebony Dumas:** Anthology of Booty.

**Darby Hickey:** The Anthology of Booty.

**Allison:** ...which was formed in 2010 by Ebony Dumas, Kristy la rAt, Darby Hickey, and other awesome women!

**Kristy [in panel discussion]:** I always say, like, we would be BFFs—our group of people are like, “You’re friends with a lot of DJs.” It’s like, I think that’s just our vehicle, and we would be really close and using some other vehicle if it for some reason wasn’t that.

**Allison:** Anthology of Booty was about breaking the boundaries between the DJ and the dance floor, creating space to play and dance to the music they wanted to hear. These DJs were also part of the speaking panel I put on with the Smithsonian Folklife Festival.

**Ebony [in panel discussion]:** “Oh, all they have to do is push play, right?”

**Allison:** And they had something to say about the things people have said to them out in the field...

[snippets from panel discussion]

**Les Talusan:** “Wow, you’re actually good!” Keep going!

**Ebony:** “Could you play something in English please?”

**Kristy:** “I’ll give you twenty dollars. Can you play ‘Despacito’?”

**Ebony:** I think I’ll wrap it up with, “Can you play something good?”

**Allison:** What about people handing you their phone and say, “Play this song on my phone?” So you get that, right?

**Kristy:** I just say I don’t know how.

**Ebony:** Well, that’s funny...

**Kristy:** There’s absolutely no way. I’m sorry.

**Ebony:** That’s funny, because my second DJ gig out and about, I remember you coming to the DJ booth, asking me to play Beyoncé “To the Left, to the Left,” and I said, “You know what, I’m sorry, I don’t have that, not what I’m doing right now.” And she reaches in her back pocket and says, “Here’s the CD!” I said, “Okay, ma’am.”

**Kristy:** You know, I met one of the other people in Anthology of Booty who’s not here because we kept fighting over who was changing the CD at her house party. But I also brought a CD. It worked out for the best.

[Music: El Remolón ft. Lido Pimienta – “Atrás”]

[transition to one-on-one interviews]

**Ebony:** My name is Ebony, Ebony Dumas. I am DJ Natty Boom, part of Anthology of Booty, based here in Washington, D.C.

As DJs we have the opportunity to tap into one’s psyche. Growing up, maybe I remember this one particular song played at this one particular moment where, you know, I was having my first crush, or I was experiencing my first triumph in making a decision for myself.

I’ve been DJing since 2007. I have always worked with and part of Anthology of Booty, an all-woman DJ collective here in D.C. I’ve also done a lot of parties and events at art galleries and museums, the Smithsonian’s African Art Museum, also the Portrait Gallery.

[musical interlude, then fade out]

**Ebony:** I grew up in Tulsa, Oklahoma, born and raised there until I graduated high school, and then I swiftly left. I had a really great family, large, extended family. We often got together for meals and celebrations.

[Music: Deans Chapel Baptist Church Choir – “Leaning on the Everlasting Arms”]

**Ebony:** And I also grew up in the Baptist Church. My dad is a Baptist preacher and recently had a street named after him. I was also very surrounded by music my whole life. That started partially in the church and then also being part of the choir growing up as well. Yeah, I guess I learned a few instruments, the clarinet, piano. I took drum lessons for a while.

[Music: drum beat]

**Ebony:** When I first started in the marching band in high school, I played the clarinet just because that’s what my older sister played. But I didn’t really love being in the woodwind section, and I thought the drumline was way cooler. So, if you’ve seen *Homecoming* by Beyoncé, that is essentially my high school career. My older sister played the clarinet, my younger sister was a majorette, and my mom would, like, join us on all of our school trips.

[drums fade out, choir fades back in]

**Ebony:** There was a big focus on community, like the way I grew up. And so in the church, it wasn’t just like you go there on Sunday mornings, and then you leave. It was like our second family. And so whenever people were sick, or having a child or a celebration, we would all come together. That process of building community was really influential to how I chose to continue to relate to people.

[musical interlude]

**Kristy:** My name is Kristy. My DJ name is Kristy la rAt, and I also have gone by DJ Rat. I guess if I start from the very beginning of my DJ genealogy, I was a part of the Tigria Crew...

[Music: Le Tigre – “Hot Topic”]

**Kristy:** ...which was my best friends in Lima, and we came together from a love of Le Tigre and the Gossip and like a bunch of bands from a certain era that we were all listening to. And in Lima, we’re not hearing certain indie sounds and women vocalists.

I was also a part of and continue to be part of the Anthology of Booty collective. And we throw the Booty Rex party every year and founded also the Maracuyeah collective. I learned this really important thing about organizing at that time, too, that if people get along really well, they’ll do a really great job organizing ’cause they already want to spend time together. That experience really taught me the power of friendship in organizing together.

[music fades out]

**Kristy:** I grew up in Northern Virginia, outside of D.C. I was a part of a very close family. And we were like a little island because all of our extended family who we're also very close with lived far away. I grew up knowing that there was this reality somewhere else. Some of my family lived in New York and some of my family lived in Lima, Peru.

[Music: Home cassette recording of Kristy and family singing]

**Kristy:** I went to school with a lot of white American kids. It was hard to tell how much they didn't understand about my family. I just realized that we were different, but I didn't really understand why.

I grew up knowing that when I went to Lima, Peru, I was going into another world, that when I came back to the United States, a lot of people weren't going to recognize. Once I was asked by my bus driver, "Where were you?" "Oh, I was in Peru." "What's a Peru?" At second grade realized, like, oh, this is this place that people can't imagine at all. I have to like, go back to my sister, and my mom, my brother, my dad, to remind me that it's actually real, and it's not my imagination that we're going to this whole other world, where we have all of our family, where I have this other life.

That influenced my ideas of possibility: possibility of crossing borders, multiple spaces existing and spaces that you create. And in order to cross some of those borders, I also realized some of the possibilities of media. My cousins and I used to record cassette tapes.

[Kristy's "Primas cassette" continues with talking]

**Kristy:** Because, well letters took forever, and phone calls were super expensive. And so our moms would have us record little radio shows for each other, like messages and music we were listening to, and they would like sing songs, but we would make up our own. And then whoever would travel next would take it. A neighbor or friend would take the cassette tapes with them, and that was how they traveled, because we couldn't travel that often.

[Music: Ioannis Johnny Mantzoros cover of the Ramones – "7-11"]

**Kristy:** You know those CD magazines that would come where you could get like nine CDs for ninety-nine cents? And they made you give them your social security number if you had one, but they couldn't do anything to you if you were underage. And I remember ordering a Ramones CD, which is a very suburban way to get introduced to punk when you're like twelve or thirteen. And with my sister who was only like fifteen months younger than me, we started discovering punk shows.

[Music: Monorchid -- "X Marks the Spot"]

**Kristy:** In D.C., Maryland, and Virginia, we would go to record stores as a place to find out about stuff. We would go to shows, and then you would like look at the patches people had on to learn about new bands.

We went to a lot of punk shows. You would get the flyer to hear about the next show. I also went to some underground hip-hop shows, which was the same thing—you'd go to the record store, see the flyer, and go. And D.C. is a city that had underage shows. And the fact that venues would let us in at that young of an age and put X's on our hands to make sure we didn't drink was a huge game changer. Like seven years before I would have been able to in another city, I was listening to music live and connecting with people who also were passionate about music, finding like the two other Latinas in the crowd and trying to make friends. That was where I wanted to spend my time was in underground music scenes, and D.C. made that possible.

Going to a lot of live shows feeling like a little disappointed that I thought I was in alternative spaces, but then they ended up working a lot like mainstream society in terms of who was excluded and who was centered, realizing that my sister and I felt kind of invisible. It was like these really packed shows, and we would be in the mosh pit moshing and really loved that high-contact experience and expression, but really didn't feel like an actual sense of connection with the people who we were there with. We always were kind of on the periphery or felt a little transparent and often didn't see ourselves represented.

[musical interlude]

**Darby:** My name is Darby Hickey. I DJed with two other folks, and we called ourselves the Apocalypse Crew. And then later I was part of Anthology of Booty. The DJ name I always used was DJ Bent...

[Audio: Clip from film *Ma Vie en Rose*, "Boom boom"]

**Darby:** ...which I chose from the movie *Ma Vie En Rose*, which is a French movie about a young kid who's experimenting with gender. And his father at one point gets very angry and screams at him that he's bent, and like takes a utensil of some sort and like smacks it so that it goes from straight to bent. And that really resonated with me.

[film clip fades out]

**Darby:** Using DJing and parties as building community and as a political act, creating space for people in a world where space is limited—or people are limited from spaces—was always really important for me and I think for other people too.

[Music: Noisy Pig – "Hulla Hulla"]

**Darby:** I grew up mostly in rural Maine. We moved a lot but mostly lived in the western mountains. My mom was a hippie. There's a lot of those in Maine. And we grew up pretty poor. And I always wanted to leave. I got into punk rock in middle school from a friend that I had who was in the big city of Lewiston, Maine, like, I don't know, maybe 10,000 people or something. He introduced me to two bands that would go on to really affect me a lot, which is Pixies and the Dead Kennedys.

[Music: Dead Kennedys – “Stars & Stripes of Corruption”]

**Darby:** And then I remember in high school walking down the street and there was a box of records on the sidewalk, and it had all these old punk records in it, like the Exploited and Sex Pistols and whatever. That was kind of my music pathway.

[Music: Aiu Band – “Santa”]

**Darby:** Then later I lived in some different countries, including in Central America and in the Middle East. I was living in Jerusalem and listening to my, like, Aus Rotten tapes, right, and walking around like a frickin' punk. Same thing in Central America, I went to punk shows there, also in other cities, in New Orleans and Baltimore. And in those places I got exposed to different kinds of music, and that's then what really influenced the music I first started to DJ with.

[Music: Magic Witch Cookbook ft. K. Joseph Karam – “What's Wrong with That?”]

**Ebony:** When I moved to D.C. in 2005, I had just finished undergrad in Pittsburgh, and in Pittsburgh, I had started to perform in drag. I would travel with the troupe, and I was always really impressed by the DC Kings. When I graduated, I knew I wanted to join the DC Kings. I packed up my little red Nissan, and I drove to D.C. I found a house through a friend of a friend in Shaw, performed in drag, got to know people that way. There were still neighbors who had been in the neighborhood for multiple generations. We all partied together, essentially.

**Kristy:** I remember being at this party and really wanting a change of music, and busting a CD out of my purse, not thinking that was a problem at all. And just going up to the CD player and changing out the CD. And realizing I really liked directing some aspect of the music at a party, or when I felt a vibe, I was really excited about putting that into action.

**Darby:** I got into DJing through a very good friend, Zom the Diabolical. She was a Radio CPR DJ. I think she was connected to the First Ladies. And she taught Selina and I—DJ Mothershiester—how to DJ in her room with the turntable and stuff and her teaching us how to count beats and stuff.

[Music: DJ European DJ – “Be My Baby”]

**Darby:** And we went out and we DJed, and we were called the Apocalypse Crew. Our first DJ night was at Saint Ex, which had just opened. And then from there, we started to throw our own parties. Then we connected with Ebony...

**Ebony:** I got into DJing because for me, it felt like a very natural seam between my love and passion for music and performing. I grew up, you know, watching my dad and my mom as well, you know, do a lot of public speaking. While that wasn't necessarily the route that I wanted to take, I knew drag also wasn't a thing that was going to be a really long career for me.

When organizing with Girls Rock, I met Maegan Wood. She had this mellow cool about her. She was kind of like the only DJ in that group of people. And I just asked her if she could teach me how to DJ, not really knowing what that even meant. So she invited me over to her house and pulled out two turntables and a mixer, and she had this really vast record collection. She really demystified the whole setup by showing me how to plug everything in and then unplugging it and making me replicate and set up the same system until I started to understand it, and it became second nature to me.

Even now, when I teach people how to DJ, that's the first thing I do, because I tell them, "You know, I'm happy to teach you how to DJ. But once you go out into the world, you're not going to have people saying bad things about me because you don't know how to plug up your equipment. So let's get this together, red and white."

**Darby:** First, it started out with learning together. Throwing a party is way easier with other people. DJing is more fun with other people. If nobody else is there, at least your co-DJs will dance with you.

[music fades up then out]

**Ebony:** Pretty much all the folks that I learned from, except for Maegan, have been women of color DJs that have taken the time to tell me to come over to their house and talk through equipment, bounce ideas off. It kind of breaks down a barrier. It is a very dude-centric profession. It's been really special to be able to do that with other women of color, with other queer women. It was just more comfortable.

**Darby:** Yeah, there was this culture, especially if you didn't have a lot of money— Sometimes the club and bar scene can be so crappy. D.C., it's improved a lot in some ways, but we had stopped going to Adams Morgan because every time we went there was a fight, and we got, like, sexually assaulted or harassed or homophobically assaulted or whatever.

**Ebony:** Walking into a club or a venue is always a toss-up what's going to happen.

**Darby:** So it was like again, let's create our own space.

[Music: Coup Sauvage & the Snips – "Requiem for a Mountaintop"]

**Kristy:** I remember we would have house parties.

[song vocals come in: "Right about now, we want you to dance..."]

**Kristy:** The key to a really good dance party was to make a cassette tape of the set ahead of time, because then when people jumped on the floor and the whole stereo system moved, the CD wouldn't skip.

**Darby:** We threw a ten-year anniversary party for Radio CPR at my old house, this old row house that we were renting for dirt cheap because it was falling apart.

**Kristy:** So we would have these parties, but this one ended up being wildly huge. It was like more than 400 people came through the house.

**Darby:** And there was a line down the block to get into the party, and the floors were like, dangerously moving.

**Kristy:** The floor almost broke through.

**Darby:** I was concerned about the structural integrity of the house.

**Kristy:** But it was also just untenable. That night, the cops didn't come, but we had had other parties, we put a lot of effort into them, and the cops would come.

**Darby:** And it was like, okay, maybe we need to shift venues.

**Kristy:** And so we were thinking about what it would mean to actually go into a club. The disadvantages were that we didn't control the space in the same way. It would be open to the public. We would be working with employees who weren't our friends.

**Darby:** That's when we connected with Ebony actually at Girls Rock. Then we were like, let's do a party together.

**Kristy:** DJ Natty Boom was actually working at the 9:30 Club at that point and was offered a slot.

**Darby:** We went from the house parties to trying to do it in clubs.

**Kristy:** We decided it was a good idea, 'cause we didn't want the floor of one of our houses to break in.

**Darby:** Yeah, and then we did the Anthology of Booty.



**Kristy:** It was Ebony, Natasha, Selena, Darby, and I. And we said, okay, we're gonna do it, but we're all best friends.

**Ebony:** We made sure to keep our friendship centered in any events that we did. With Anthology of Booty, we came together through sharing music. But also we had like really in-depth discussions about the culture around the music, and how this particular fusion happened, or the lineage of this song or music.

**Kristy:** And really honoring kind of like a lot of the musical traditions that we each felt connected to from the places that we're from, or from our families, our communities. Also, thinking about the liberatory possibilities of our bodies, our booties. And so we were talking about the idea of like, we all like booty music, and then we came up with the name of Anthology of Booty.

[song vocals come in: "We dance for every Black and brown and queer and..."]

**Ebony:** And we also all came from different but also overlapping communities. We really wanted to bring all of those different parts of ourselves into the same space. How do we want to build space? In addition to having the example of First Ladies DJ Collective, a number of us were organizers in different capacities. And we really saw that as an organic extension of the work that we had already been doing and bringing that into a social space. So with Anthology of Booty...

**Kristy:** We started Backdoor as Anthology of Booty.

**Ebony:** That was a monthly party for about five or six years, mostly around U Street. We started off at the 9:30 Club basement.

**Kristy:** And we started throwing parties in the back bar, which didn't advertise, so it remained like pretty clandestine and word-of-mouth, which is also something that was really important to us at the time.

Our first flyer was of a segregated movie entrance. And we were kind of making a commentary on how many of our communities had been asked to—or forced to—go through the back door or hold our social spaces in back rooms or out of sight. And so kind of reclaiming that...

**Ebony:** ...as space where it's safer for queer folks, people of color. And you're able to express yourself.

**Kristy:** Connection, creativity, and the best level of safety that we could create for ourselves.

[Song vocals come in: "Come on y'all, keep dancing. We need you to keep..." then fades out]

**Ebony:** Playing music that was from many different cultures, that didn't really work very well for us considering some of the gay and dyke bars in the area...

[Music: Pintura Roja ft. Princesita Mily – “Te Olvidaste de Mi” DJ Luigi Remix]

**Ebony:** So we went to places that were more centered around the music.

**Kristy:** I remember playing this remix of a Peruvian *chicha* record. It wasn't one of the ones on like the American compilations that'd been coming out. And this woman came out of the crowd, had her hands in the air, and she's reaching out towards the booth. And she's like, “I've never been to a queer party where anyone has played chicha. I'm Peruvian. I just moved to D.C.” We became really good friends. But it came from this one moment of connection on the dance floor. Real relationships are formed in spaces which many people would dismiss as just superficial, momentary.

**Darby:** I think others underestimate the power of a social space and of a party space that brings people together, especially when they feel hated on in other places.

[Music: Lido Pimienta and Atropolis – “Reza por Mi”]

**Ebony:** Why we came together, it was serendipitous. But the reason that we stayed together was through friendship and the building community that we did through our events.

**Kristy:** And we made a pact that says, you know, our friendship will always come before DJing. So if we're ever at a point where we have to make a choice, we're going to choose friendship. It also means that now we don't have an issue with the fact that we stopped throwing regular parties for the time being. We throw one massive yearly party, and we're in each other's busy lives in the ways that are most meaningful.

**Darby:** I don't think I would have gotten to where I am in my life, which is in a much better place than I maybe ever thought I would be, without all of that love and camaraderie and solidarity that we developed among friends who were organizing together, partying together.

**Kristy:** When I hear from people that they came to a party and had an experience that felt like getting free, or that helped them feel seen or safer or connected to their own culture and roots, that's really exciting. People have come up to me and said, “you know, I've never seen Latinas DJing, or women DJing, or groups of friends DJing. That's so inspiring, and now I want to do it.” It feels like it's continuing that *cadena*. I guess in English, “chain” is the word.

**Ebony:** There is a very rich history of women DJ crews and collectives that came before me, and the work that they contributed to the landscape of the city, the people that I learned from, the people who supported me, the people who inspired me...

**Kristy:** To be able to come in as like one little link in that...

**Darby:** We all helped to move the ball forward a little bit and also helped to develop and mentor the people who should replace you. I mean, everyone should do what they love for as long as they can, but trying to create space and step back...

**Kristina Gray [in panel discussion]:** You can throw your women's party now because of the folks who are on this panel. This did not exist fifteen, twenty years ago. We were banging down doors of clubs up and down U Street, Fourteenth Street, and having to say like, "Yes, you do want us. No, we are not going to show up in bikinis. But yes, we are all women. And yes, we do all different types of music. Yes, that's possible."

**Kristy:** What was shared with love has produced enduring connection, moments that we take with us, even if those connections or nights... are gone.

[music continues then fades out]

**Kristy [in panel discussion]:** Okay, I asked you for Beyoncé. It's true. It's true. I had the CD...