

## More Bounce To The Ounce

Apple recently updated their iPod product line, which included a new slickly designed video Nano and a touch screen 16GB iPod that mimics the look of the iPhone. The most exciting addition to this family for me has been the iPod Classic with its 160GB of drive space. This amount of digital storage is a huge improvement over the mere 60GB on my previous player. For the past several months I've been moving tracks from my 120GB laptop to my Mac Mini's 320GB external hard drive in order to store music I couldn't use because of limited iPod space. Now that I have the new 160GB iPod, my next plan is to replace my now ancient Mac Mini with a newfangled iMac that has 1TB of external hard drive. (That's one whole terabyte, 1000 gigabytes!!) It seems that computer life is a never-ending series of upgrades; and for me, the more space available for collecting music, the better.

The new iPod Classic is a beauty. It highlights album artwork by way of a picture-based cover flow and its main menu uses half of the screen as a cover preview that changes randomly every few seconds. These new features led me to a gargantuan organization of my music. First, I went through every track on the laptop to make sure they were all labeled correctly and second, I found new high-resolution album artwork for every song. So the cult of Mac has taken over my household in a big way. Joshua bought a new MacBook and also an iPhone because his old cell phone got drenched on Splash Mountain while in Disney World. My iTunes managing rubbed off on him and he began organizing his songs by way of an automated system for cover art retrieval provided by iTunes. Most of the time this magical feature worked but occasionally it grabbed completely random covers. For instance, it used an image for the film *Shag* to tag two songs from the *Annie Soundtrack*. My album art hunting was more complicated and obsessive than Joshua's. I spent a week surfing the Internet and hunting down the highest resolution album covers I could find for every song in my iTunes library. When I couldn't find a decent cover and I had the original CD, I scanned my own jpeg files. This process was a major organizational overhaul for me because many of my mp3 and AAC files were mislabeled. I also just returned from a visit to my home state of Louisiana. I didn't have a very long visit. However, there was one fun experience where Joshua and I had dinner with New Orleans-based musician Quintron and his wife, cult puppeteer Miss Pussycat. Over blackened redfish and Abita beer, the duo updated us on the musical trends of post-Katrina New Orleans. It seems that the cities large chain music stores had left town for lack of major revenue and what remained were the mom and pop shops that had once feared the likes of Virgin and Tower Records. Louisiana Music Factory, a shop specializing in New Orleans jazz and blues, had persevered. Miss Pussycat spoke of several other neighborhood shops that survived including one called Nuthin' But Fire. The store sells a local form of rap music that sprouted up in the New Orleans projects during the early 1990's called Bounce. Bounce has been a New Orleans cultural phenomenon for years but since the hurricane its sound is becoming faster and more aggressive. Bounce is an energetic style of butt-shaking dance music that is based on the beats of one lone rap song from 1986: 'Drag Rap' by the New York-based Showboys. Most bounce songs sample some part of 'Drag Rap' or simply speed up the songs catchy beats. These beats are referred to as Triggaman Bells. The Triggaman Bells are an arpeggiated, up and down sequence of three high notes. The vocals in most bounce songs are call and response chants with a repetitious melody. Lyrically the songs typically deal with Project culture and sex. The sounds of the 'Bells' make the party girls shake their rumps. The key to DJing any Bounce party is being able to get the ladies to the dance floor where their boyfriends will hopefully soon follow. [{audio}images/mp3/The\\_Showboys\\_Drag\\_Rap.mp3{/audio}](#) (Listen to the rap tune that started it all: 'Drag Rap' by The Showboys. The song pulls from the *Dragnet* TV show theme song and Triggaman Bells can be heard at the beginning and again about two minutes in.) Quintron told us about transvestite rappers in the projects of New Orleans that had found wide acceptance in the violent and male dominated world of ghetto thuggery. This special brand of flamboyant bounce rap is known as Sissy Bounce. The cities top tranny rappers are Big Freedia and Katey Red. Red's catchy rhymes have caught on outside of the Melpomene projects where she lives and she actually performed at a party held at Quintron's Spellcaster Lodge. The morning after our dinner with Quintron, Joshua and I drove out to Nuthin' But Fire Records to hunt down some of this notorious Sissy Bounce. We were hesitant about going into the store because it was located in a part of the cities 7th Ward where most gay boys usually don't venture. However, our desire for Sissy Bounce far outweighed any fear that we might have had about the trip. The inside of the shop was plain and bare with little in the way of music to be found. Against the left wall were numerous racks of XXXL white t-shirts featuring gangsta phrases scribbled out in glittery puff paint. Underneath these racks were well-worn vinyl records from the likes of LeVert and Quincy Jones. To the right was a shop counter with a wall of bootleg CD's behind it. The girl behind the counter put down her bag of Cheetos and asked "Can I help you?" before we had fully walked through the door. Looking as cool and collected as possible, I asked if she had any Katey Red or Big Freedia. "You mean like the Pussycat Dolls?" she asked. "No" I said, "Like Sissy Bounce." She paused for a minute and then shook her head no. "We out." Apparently most Bounce records are in limited supply because they hit and then disappear quickly. Though we found no Sissy Bounce, we did stock up on four volumes worth of Bounce party jams compiled by DJ Money Fresh. Fresh is the music maestro behind a popular bounce party in New Orleans called the Duckoff. Like any good Bounce DJ, his music sets cater to the butt shaking desires of the ladies. All four of his mixes are filled with calls and chants, spoken intros, guest DJ's, and dance reworkings of popular R&B pop songs. The Duckoff compilations are filled with contemporary smooth R&B songs given a jolt via the Triggaman Bells. Highlights on the Duckoff mixes include sped up versions of R&B ballads from artists like Akon and Miami DJ Rick Ross. Beyonce is a staple of the series and she appears on every single one of the Duckoff volumes. Money Fresh even takes Mary J. Blige's love ballad 'Gotta Be With You' and gives it a violent edge by filling the song with a cascade of electro gunfire. On another track Money Fresh discusses the 'stereotype' of being a Bounce DJ. Apparently Bounce pays the bills and if you think Money Fresh is playing Bounce while he's out with the boys, you're fucked! DJ Money Fresh even gives a shout out to the classics by dropping hollowed

Triggaman Bells into the hit DeBarge R&B smoothie 'All This Love'. Though combining the hyped 'Bells' and the balladry of DeBarge is an interesting mix that plays better than most live mash-ups.  
{audio}images/mp3/DeBarge\_All\_This\_Love.mp3{/audio} (Bounce Girls photograph by New Orleans photographer Jonathan Traviesa.)