

Title: The Past, Present, and Future of Jersey Club

A pulsating kick drum pattern that vibrates in your chest. 140-ish BPM. Chopped-up vocals. When you hear that unmistakable combination, it's difficult to keep your body from reacting; whether that knee-jerk impulse is to dance or to roll your eyes at yet *another* Jersey club song depends on the person. So, where did this sound, a subgenre of a subgenre from the early 2000s, become so widespread?

It is difficult to argue that any one subgenre was more influential in 2023 than Jersey club. For the casual observer, all the credit for this musical movement goes to Lil Uzi Vert's [double-platinum hit](#), "Just Wanna Rock." Lyrically sparse, the rapper's comeback song is primarily characterized by a thumping beat that warrants choreography, which, in 2023, warrants a viral TikTok trend ([the hashtag 'justwannarock' has over one billion views to date](#)).

For several years now, TikTok has held a firm grip over the Billboard charts, and it doesn't seem to be letting go anytime soon. A social media algorithm moving at breakneck speed controlling a multi-billion dollar industry may concern technophobes and traditionalists, but the internet's influence on music is not a new phenomenon. Jersey club's origins, nearly three decades ago, are also rooted in an era of rapid technological change.

Most people agree on the identity of Jersey club's founding fathers: DJ Tameil, DJ Tim Dolla, Mike V, DJ Black Mic, and the Brick Bandits Crew. Before they grew into this role, as teenagers in Newark, New Jersey, these artists made local names for themselves with their musical predecessors: Chicago house and Baltimore club. [DJ Tameil's Chicago house mixes](#), which played at colleges and house parties, grew in popularity throughout the late 1990s. By the turn of the century, Baltimore's club music – also heavily influenced by Chicago house – started appearing in New Jersey's party scene, inspiring the Newark cohort's musical careers.

The original Baltimore club sound of the early 1980s and early 90s is often characterized by an iconic breakbeat sample, [“Think \(About It\),”](#) produced by James Brown. Another crucial element is a repetitive, chant-like vocal sample (think Lil Jon), and of course, a booming, bass-boosted five kick drum beat that hits evenly on the first, second, and third beat of the measure, and splits the fourth beat into two tripping kicks ([hear it here](#)). These elements derive from club music’s origins in the 90s, but these ingredients – particularly the chopped sample and the kick drum pattern – make up the skeleton of Jersey club today, too.

In an [interview with FADER](#), DJ Sliink spoke about Baltimore’s influence on New Jersey’s club music scene in the 1990s: “Jersey Club is like a religion to people that actually grew up on it and followed it from the Baltimore days. People were already familiar with the sound and beat structure because we always played B-More Club in Jersey.”

In 2002, [DJ Tameil coined the term “Brick City club,”](#) cementing Newark’s intention to develop and iterate on the Baltimore sound. Around this time, DJ Tameil, DJ Tim Dolla, and Mike V began producing music with Sony Acid Pro, a DAW (digital audio workstation) that enabled Newark to differentiate itself in the new millennium.

Speaking to [Resident Advisor](#), Mike V specifically credits the simultaneous growth of the internet with Jersey club’s success: “MySpace is the reason why I believe the music took off in certain place [...] When we started to utilize it, it got out there. When something from the Bandits dropped, everyone promoted it. We had 27 people on the team pushing that one song or EP. One had 600 or 700 followers, and the next guy did, and so on.”

As the Newark sound exploded across the region, it became known as Jersey club. With the birth of widely accessible computers, DAWs, the internet, and social media, Jersey club became faster and smoother than the Baltimore club music of the 1990s, developing into its own sound. One unique sound of classic Jersey club is the unmistakable bed squeak sample from [Trillville's 2004 song, "Some Cut"](#) (you know the one).

To the well-versed, the influence of club music on electronic music throughout the 2010s is apparent. However, it was Jersey club's fusion with rap and trap music in the past few years that made the genre well-known among a new, international generation. DJ Khaled's 2017 song "To The Max" was an early hint that Jersey club would soon creep into mainstream rap music. When it was released, Jersey club producer DJ Jayhood noted [this on Twitter](#): "I don't want to say @Drake @djkhalel stole my "Heartbroken" track.. I don't own the sample but they were inspired.."

In early 2020, amid COVID-19 and breadmaking, Cookie Kawaii's song "Vibe" went viral on TikTok, racking up over two million uses of the sound by August, [according to the artist](#). The song features the bed squeak sample, the chopped vocals, and the characteristic kick drum, but it combines all these elements with the artist's airy vocals and a dreamy synth overlaid over the thumping bass.

However, Jersey club was missing the final piece in any musical trend's rise to the mainstream – a Drake song. In 2022, Drake released his electronic-forward album *Honestly, Nevermind*, featuring multiple Jersey club-influenced elements, such as the bed squeak and vocal sample loops on "Currents" and the bass drum pattern on "Sticky."

For better or for worse, Drake specializes in adopting trends, subgenres, and cultural influences in music when they're bubbling under the surface. Although *Honestly, Nevermind* was met with mixed reviews when it was first released, it was a primary impetus in 2023's fixation on Jersey club beats.

Jersey club's story, both in its origins and resurgence, is inextricably tied to the internet. However, TikTok in 2024 is very different than MySpace two decades ago. While both served as key tools to popularize a burgeoning music subgenre, the content oversaturation built into TikTok's structure means that trends, in music or otherwise, can go as quickly as they come.

The marriage between rap and Jersey club may also soon reach a tipping point of oversaturation. However, with Lil Uzi Vert's "Just Wanna Rock" at the end of 2022 and Nicki Minaj's "Everybody" (featuring Lil Uzi Vert) to close out 2023, it seems like Jersey club is different. Although the songs have come and gone, the sound appears to stick.

"Everybody," produced by New Jersey's own DJ Smallz 732, [currently sits at #28 on the Billboard Hot 100](#) – and will almost surely remain popular as we approach warmer weather in the summer of 2024.

Jersey club's evolution, from its humble beginnings rooted in the fusion of Chicago house and Baltimore club to its commercial resonance in mainstream rap, is a testament to social media's role in 21st-century musical trends.

As Jersey club trickles into pop ([and even K-Pop](#)) – a musical trend cycle's final stage – it remains to be seen if Jersey club will endure the current music industry's relentlessly fickle pace. For now, Jersey club has found a solid foothold, but only time will tell if this vibrant subgenre will continue to shape the future of music.