

Back to Tape (6/7)

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03/03/2018 Music journalist Niko Hüls spent a week exploring the most formative influences, disciplines and personalities of this urban youth culture. Hamburg is the home city of the man behind Backspin – so it's unsurprising that it's one of the key cities on his road trip in the Porsche Panamera to discover the roots of the hip-hop scene in Germany.

Six cities, ten artists, one car and a whole lot of rap. In a multi-part series of guest articles in the Porsche Newsroom, Niko Hüls, Editor-in-Chief of the German hip-hop magazine Backspin , tells us about his road trip across Germany. Niko has shared a few more of his experiences on Instagram and Twitter under the hashtag #porschexbackspin , as well as on the Backspin TV YouTube channel.

It all began with a mixtape

German hip-hop has always been influenced by the scene in the USA. But while the hip-hop records

released in America in the 1990s were influenced by the very public "battle" between its East Coast and West Coast, in Germany several new styles of hip-hop were developing outside of the "New School" and "Old School", originating in the middle classes. I have visited and introduced many of the artists and cities involved in this shift on my road trip. However, I couldn't help but make Hamburg and the sound of my home city the last stop on my epic #porschexbackspin tour across Germany in the Porsche Panamera.

It goes without saying that this Hanseatic city has produced numerous rap giants, with Jan Delay, a.k.a. Eizi Eiz, and his crew Absolute Beginner leading the way. Other groups to emerge from this city include Fettes Brot, Dynamite Deluxe, Fünf Sterne Deluxe and Deichkind, bands that have already influenced generations, plus the more contemporary 187 Strassenbande. Samy Deluxe is one of the absolute legends – in my opinion, he's one of the best rappers ever to come out of Germany. Having sold over a million records, he's still one of the big players in the hip-hop business. His African heritage, his attachment to the city – from Eppendorf to Eimsbüttel – life without a biological father and his love of hip-hop in all pf its forms still play a significant role in his lyrics today.

Final stop for #porschexbackspin: @nikobackspin & @samydeluxe in Hamburg! Watch the whole story soon @allesbackspin & @PorscheNewsroom #porschexbackspin #workdrivebalance pic.twitter.com/QaUvdGWvuy

Rhyme monster

"Samsemilia" began his career in 1997 when Dynamite Deluxe released their first mixtape, which was distributed independently by Jan Delay, a.k.a Jan Philip Eißfeldt. The demo tape was an astounding success, paving the way for other incredible albums such as his debut "Samy Deluxe", "Wer hätte das gedacht?" (Who'd have thought it?) and "SchwarzWeiss" (BlackWhite), as well as accolades such as an MTV Europe Music Award, an ECHO Pop award and a Comet award.

While for many artists rap is a powerful expression of violence or about beautiful women, for Samy Deluxe it has always been and will remain primarily about culture – a creative mind set, a release that gave him direction as a teenager and, above all, a chance to turn all of his negative experiences into something positive.

Important values for the next generation

And it is precisely this attitude that the MC is today passing on to future generations through his involvement with charities and clubs. Samy Deluxe has his own such project, "DeluxeKidz e.V.*", in cooperation with* Esche, a youth arts charity in Hamburg,*and under the artistic direction of* Beat Boy Delles. Esche gives children and young people of various ages, backgrounds and beliefs a space in which to be creative and enjoy themselves and their passions. Dance, street art, rap, DJing – whichever the chosen discipline, it's always shaped by fundamental values of hip-hop.

Reflecting on the tour with Falk Schacht

When I look back on the over 2,000 km I have travelled across Germany and all of the conversations I had during that time, I come to the realisation that this has been a journey for hip-hop. Away from the posters, albums or concerts, I have met ten artists in the places where they can just be people, and where their stories have been written. I can think of no one better to reflect on these experiences with than my friend, colleague and fellow music journalist Falk Schacht.

And so the last stop of my tour in Hamburg has led me into the backstreets and directly to the harbour. In the passenger seat: Germany's biggest hip-hop nerd. Like me, he's been a fan since day one, and I've given him the affectionate nickname of "Professor".

The hip-hop professor

If you're interested in the German hip-hop scene, you'll surely have heard of this Hanoverian. Beginning his career in 1994 with a column in "Intro", at the time a music magazine, he has been a writer, editor and director for KiKa, VIVA, the Goethe-Institut, Wax Poetics, Jazzthing, Lodown magazine, Word, The Message and Backspin. Today, his German rap podcast Schacht & Wasabi for puls Musik (Bayerische Rundfunk's youth channel) is considered to be one of the most important media elements for our urban youth culture.

In addition to his career as a journalist, Falk Schacht has also had a musical past and for that matter present in his own right. As a hip-hop producer with the alias "Hawkeye", he has produced for acts such as Curse, Ferris MC, Canibus and Grand Agent.

There is probably no better way to end my #porschexbackspin tour than looking out over the roofs of my hometown with views of the harbour and sitting next to Falk Schacht.

Link Collection

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