

AS VJs & New Visual Technologies Remain on the Upswing, the New Video Stars Step Forward

By Ron Slomowicz

Whether you call yourself a Disc Jockey (DJ), Video Jockey (VJ), Digital Video Jockey (DVJ), Audio Visual Jockey (AVJ), DVD-Jockey (DVDJ) or Media Jockey (Me-J), this is your time. Why? Because the movement to add visuals to DJ sets has finally gained momentum in venues throughout the world. Jocks are coming together, forming their own networks and crews, and adding the new technology as it comes along. Equipment manufacturers are responding in kind with hardware and software to fit their needs—but, it should be noted, there is no one system that works for everyone. For many, the question isn't whether you should add video to your live sets—it's how you decide to do it. So, we interviewed a panel of cutting-edge jocks, asking them about their set-ups, live performances, and advice for video newcomers.



2nd Nature (aka Brett Belcastro), Atlanta, Ga.

System: Pioneer DVJ-100s & SVM-1000 mixer. Occasionally, I use my MacBook Pro to play back visuals.

What makes your set special? I sample movie clips or people singing, make an a cappella out of it, and add a beat to it live on the other DVJ. I quantize all of the audio from the movie and make it as smooth as possible. If you're not doing original video production, beatmixing, mashups, and live performance, you're not doing anything.

Music format: Open format, everything.

Music videos or visuals? I play both. If I'm rocking an old-school set, I'm playing the artist's original video, just with my touch to it. If I'm playing house or electro, I like to create my own visuals.

Favorite piece of gear: Pioneer SVM-1000. I always loved the simplicity of using only a switcher, but after playing out with the SVM a few times now, I'm finding that it's not as complicated as it looks.

Advice: Don't be afraid to think outside of the box and experiment with all types of software and hardware. Also, it all comes back to the basics of DJing. If you can't do the basics, you'll never learn the advanced techniques.

Barry Browder, Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

System: 2 Pioneer DVJ-1000s & a Numark AV01 Audio/Video Mixer.

What makes your set special? I make original music video re-edits under the name Div-A-Matic, as well as projects on promotional services ScreenPlay and Rockamerica. When I spin live, I beatmix and add in live performances and comedy clips.

Music format: Hi-NRG/Happy Top 40/Dance

Music videos or visuals? Music videos only.

Favorite piece of gear: DVJ-1000s.

Advice: Go with your passion, make it your mix, don't do what everyone else is doing and love that you play music for money.



cb shaw, Vancouver, B.C.

System: I've used them all, including Ms. Pinky's, Virtual DJ, Union, Pioneer DVJs and Serato SL-Video.

What makes your set special? I custom edit every video I play, and often edit myself into the content. I'm also an avid user of Mixed-In-Key technology, so even my dialog samples, explosions, crashes, etc., are mixed in key with the songs. It makes for a smooth mix and keeps the audience moving.

Music format: All styles, all genres. I always throw in something opposite of what the crowd expects.

Music videos or visuals? Both. I'm a big fan of music videos, especially custom remixes and mashups.

Favorite piece of gear: Pioneer DJM-800 mixer and the new SVM-1000.

Advice: Do it because you love music and moving pictures and because you want to share this art. The DJ/VJ is a conduit for culture, not the culture itself.

Digital Assault Team (HBomb, Rayza, Lady Verse, OkularKhaos & Parag), Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

System: Pioneer DVJ-1000s, VSW-1 and DJM-700; DJ screens, Sharp & InFocus Projectors; Sony DVD recorders for live simulcast remixing and Apple Final Cut Studio for video shows. For audio shows, Pioneer players & mixers, plus Serato Scratch-Live and Mac My Book Pros.

What makes your sets special? We use video and images that people can relate to, from movies or TV shows, personal videos or pictures.



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Music formats: Dance, Top 40, Latin, hip-hop, R&B, reggae, reggaeton, classics, electronica, alternative.

Music videos or visuals? Both.

Favorite piece of gear: Pioneer DJV-1000s

Advice: Get a sub to Promo Only—the ambient video on the HotVideo series is sweet! Read as much as you can about technology and attend DJ Expo seminars because they are a major source of knowledge and inspiration.

Chris Racine, Provincetown, Mass.

System: Mac Book Pro running Virtual Vinyl with a Vestax VCI100 & a Numark iCDX MIDI controller and player; plus a second laptop running NuVJ for visuals & effects.

What makes your set special? In addition to playing my own audio & video mixes, I share content with a group of talented VJs. I'm using Final Cut Pro to create video edits and extended mixes.

Music format: Everything from progressive house to Tea Dance light and fluffy to show tunes to comedy—depends on the event.

Music videos or visuals? Both

Favorite piece of gear: My Mac & the Numark iCDX—it's a nice little controller that's a CD player, too.

Advice: Ask questions, get help, share ideas. Also, make sure you know what you're buying and get the fastest laptop with the most RAM you can afford—and make sure it's a Mac.



Ron Slomowicz, Nashville, Tenn.

System: MacBook Pro running Numark Cue with a Vestax VCI-100 controller and an M-Audio Fast-Track Pro SoundCard connected via external Pyro AV Link Video card to a second MacBook Pro running GrandVJ with MIDI keyboard (either Novation 25 or Akai MPK49).

What makes your set special? I beatmix music video and send the stream to GrandVJ where I add up to 7 layers of effects and visuals to create energetic live video remixes.

Music format: Electro, house, Top 40, disco, classics or mash-ups.

Music videos or visuals? Both, mixed together at the same time.

Favorite piece of gear: MacBook Pro—stable, and it never crashes. A close second is my Stanton Uberstand.

Advice: Start with a solid video library that will cover a variety of music—Promo Only offers a good start. Practice your craft. Network with other jocks. Attend industry events like DJ Expo, Winter Music Conference and/or Amsterdam Dance Event to build your name and network.



DJ E-Flexx (aka Edwin Jackson), Ogden, Utah

System: Technics 1200s, Rane TTM-57SL, Pioneer DJM-707, Powerbook laptop, WD external hard drive, Video-SL & Serato Scratch Live 1.8

What makes your set special? My performances are never the same. I beatmatch, do live blends, mash-ups and use video as much as possible. I love Motown so my mash-ups are influenced by that era.

Music format: All genres except country.

Music videos or visuals? Both, music videos and movie clips.

Favorite piece of gear: Pioneer DJM-707.

Advice: Educate yourself on video theory. For example, how does an MP4 differ from a VOB file? Getting a stack of music videos and ripping them isn't enough.



Jason Lin, Hollywood, Calif.

System: Pioneer DVJ-X1 and Edirol V4 mixer

What makes your set special? I beatmix high-energy club tracks and videos in both original and remixed format.

Music format: Hi-NRG, vocal dance, Eurodance, trance.

Music videos or visuals? Music videos.

Favorite piece of gear: Pioneer DVJ-X1.

Advice: Network with other VJs and subscribe to as many video services as possible. Learn to edit video.



DJ Lars (aka Lars Schlichting), Brooklyn, N.Y.

System: 2 or 3 Pioneer DVJ-1000s with either a Pioneer SVM-1000 or DJM-800, Edirol V4.

What makes your set special? I create a custom video for every clip I play. I usually play private parties & my company, DVJ Vision, creates content, consults manufacturers, DJs and nightclubs; we also have a rental division.

Music format: Tech-house, electro-house.

Music videos or visuals? It's 90-percent visuals, 10-percent music videos. I play a video, I will remix the clip to match an audio remix that I like.

Favorite piece of gear: Pioneer SVM-1000

Advice: A stand-alone DVD recorder is a real time saver. Sony Vegas is the best to get started editing video.





Michael Toast, Las Vegas, Nev.

System: Mac Book Pro and Serato 1.8 for performance. Sony Vegas, Ableton Live 7 and Final Cut Pro for edits. Technics SL1200MK5 turntables with Stanton needles, Rane TTM-57SL mixer.

What makes your set special? I connect with my audience using pop culture references without coming off cheesy. I create original content for the show, but I

always know the music comes first.

Music format: Hip-hop, indie-rock, electronica—all mixed in key.

Music videos or visuals? Both. Everything has a video, so I have no problem using visual to enhance the show.

Favorite piece of gear: My laptop—it's my life.

Advice: Back up everything. You will never have enough hard drive space. Do not start investing in terabytes. Make sure that the club has what you need to make your stuff work. Always buy quality gear without being misled and ending up broke—that's why I read DJTimes.



DJ Scotty B, Las Vegas, Nev.

System: MacBook Pro 2.33 Ghz, Virtual DJ with Total Control, 4TV of Hard Drive space, Apple Bluetooth Keyboard & Mouse, MacBook 2.2 Ghz, Numark NuVJ

What makes your set special? Special edits—definitely. Custom ambients and visuals—a necessity. Hard-to-find clips—of course. The use of cameras and live texting

apps—bonus! I do beatmix a majority of my show, mixes from 8 to 256 beats—length just depends on the energy I'm trying to convey.

Music format: Depending on the venue, house, hip-hop, R&B, country, rock or all-hits.

Music videos or visuals? Both. For a great show, you can't play the music videos and then go bland when there's no clip for the song. Everything has to pop!

Favorite piece of gear: MacBook Pro—you can edit videos with it or play videos on it. Virtual DJ comes in second.

Advice: Practice and diversity. Don't fear your creativity. If you can think about it, it can be done somehow.



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**"The DJ/VJ is a conduit for
culture, not the culture itself."**

—cb shaw

Sid Miller, Austin, Texas

System: 2 Pioneer DVJ-1000s, Allen & Heath X:one 3D mixer, Edirol V4, 2 MC-100NP 3-panel LCD monitors, PowerMac G5, Catalyst video graphics controller program, 2 Toshiba SD-400 DVD players. I use Final Cut Pro for editing.

What makes your set special? I create my own video remixes and custom motion graphics.

Music format: Dance.

Music videos or visuals? Both

Favorite piece of gear: Pioneer DVJ-1000.

Advice: Start now with HD. Make sure you have a large collection of visuals. Learn a video editing program a motion graphics program, so that you can make your own original content.



Video Mashup Kings (aka Dave Carlucci, Steve Cova), New York



City

System: 2 different ones, depending on club's setup. Pioneer DVJ-X1s, Pioneer SVM-1000, Serato Video-SL, Rane TTM-57SL, MacBook Pro Dual Core, 2 LaCie Biggest S2S 2.5 TB external video hard drives.

What makes your set special? We remix, edit & mashup on the fly with looping,

effects and other DVJ/SVM features. We remix and edit with Final Cut Studio 2, Adobe After Effects CS3, Adobe Illustrator CS3.

Music format: Electro, club, lounge, hip-hop, Top 40, tribal, hip hop, reggae and mainstream.

Music videos or visuals? All videos. The tracks that don't have videos, we create them from scratch.

Favorite piece of gear: Otari Concept Elite 96 input mixer with video and surround sound upgrade purchased from Skywalker Studios. It's not just a piece of gear, it's a piece of history.

Advice: Make sure to spend a lot of time with your music programming and invest in a wide selection of music.

Addictive TV (aka Graham Daniels & Tolly), London, U.K.

(Editor's Note: For more on Addictive TV, please check next month's issue.)

System: For production, Ableton Live and Cubase with After Effects and PremierePro video software. Live, laptop running VJammPro audio-visual triggering software (essentially an AV sequencer with banks of AV samples), 3 Pioneer DVJ-1000s, Pioneer DJM-800, and Edirol V4 that's been modified to take audio.

Also, we've recently begun using the SVM-1000 AV mixer.

What makes your set special? Everything you hear is everything you see, and vice versa. We are into an intensity of audiovisualness where everything is built from solid AV samples and is totally in sync. We play as a continuous breakbeat set.

Music format: Everything—it's DVD and AVI files triggered from a laptop.

Music videos or visuals? Not strictly either. Any music videos we play have been completely remixed in our AV style.

Favorite piece of gear: Pioneer DVJ-1000.

Advice: Think long and hard about the road you're wanting to go down—the path is narrow and very rocky! Think about what kinds of pictures complement your style of music.

