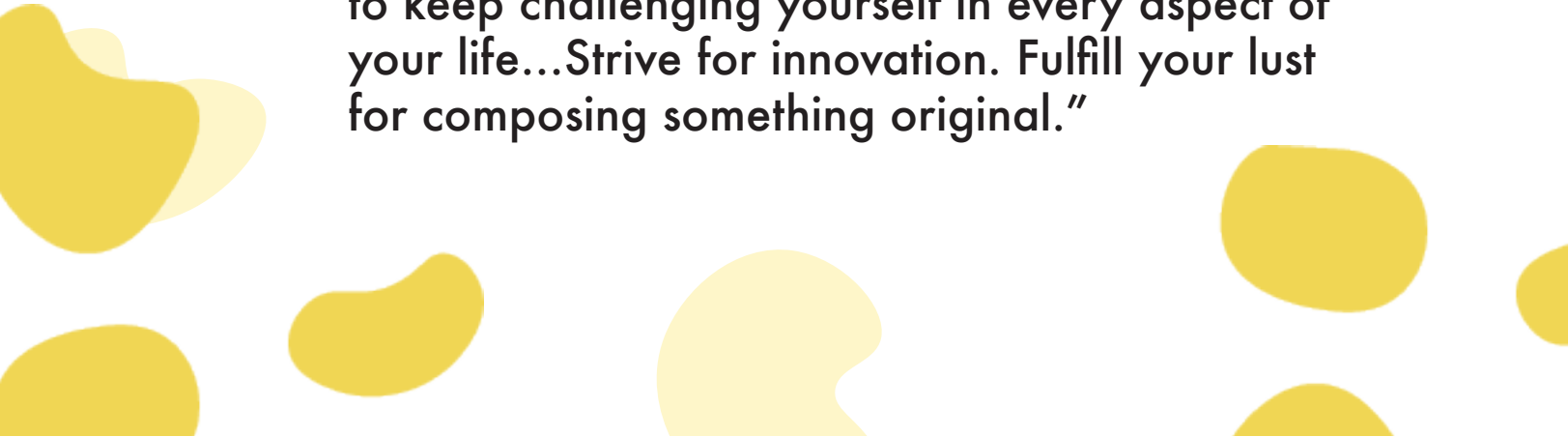


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GOLDIEROCKS

Interview by Tammi Heneveld
September 1, 2015

UK-born DJ and broadcaster, Sam Hall, aka Goldierocks, discusses diving into the music world head-first, how years of working for free paid off, her ambition to bring music to areas of conflict, and finding joy in every day.

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"I think the key to being satisfied creatively is to keep challenging yourself in every aspect of your life...Strive for innovation. Fulfill your lust for composing something original."

Describe your path to becoming a DJ.

I grew up in the countryside where there wasn't much going on—mostly horseback riding and sheep—so music was my solace. I used to listen to alternative, late-night radio shows like John Peel and Zane Lowe under my bed covers when I should've been asleep.

I started as a music journalist when I was 16, reporting on local gigs and reviewing LPs. Soon after, I began touring with bands across the country and selling their merchandise. I put my hand up for everything and anything I could get involved with, just to be a part of that world. I didn't know how or where I was going to fit in, but I knew with every inch of my heart that I wanted to be involved in live performance. The energy, the spark, the magic—that's what I wanted to do for a living.

Everything transformed when I moved to London to pursue a theater degree at Goldsmiths College. All the years I spent working for free had finally paid off: I started a showcase club night called Goldierocks, which gave bands like Bloc Party, The Killers, and Mystery Jets some of their first-ever UK shows.

Eventually, someone asked me to play the MTV European Music Video Awards in Lisbon. And the rest is history.

Have you had any mentors along the way? And if so, how did they influence your life?

I've had several mentors, most of whom are still dear friends. My good chum, Toby L, gave me my first writing job for the online music magazine, *Rockfeedback*, where I carved my way as a music journalist. It was there that I learned how to interview people properly, encouraging

them to open up by speaking to them as real people with sensitivity and tact instead of just going through the motions. Working with Rockfeedback opened me up to so many new genres that I'd never been aware of before—it was a sonic ear-opener. I threw myself into the gig scene in the capital, going to as many shows as I physically could, often with Toby at my side. His constructive criticism, relentless passion for new music, and the personal encouragement he gave me soaked into my bones. I'll always be grateful for the chance he took on me, and I'm so proud of the roaring success he's gone on to have with Transgressive Records and Love Live TV.

Was there a point when you decided to take a big risk to move forward?

There are lots of strings to my bow, as it were: I'm a DJ, radio and TV presenter, writer, voice-over artist, occasional model, event promoter, filmmaker, mentor, and budding philanthropist. Anyone with multiple interests or pursuits takes risks every day, but that doesn't make you a jack of all trades. It makes you multidimensional, deep, and worldly. One feeds the other. Being brave enough to take on a new role and risk failure is a weekly challenge, but that's what keeps pushing me forward. Taking those risks is what pushes me to grow and manifest a career that has now spanned almost 10 years.

Last year, you were the first international female DJ allowed to perform in Cuba, and you do a lot of humanitarian work in conflicted areas. What drives you to pursue these riskier venues and projects, and how does it influence your creativity?

I do it because it's exciting! I love exploring the relative unknown, meeting lots of brilliant, artistic people, soaking in different cultures and exotic lands, and hopefully inspiring people in turn. I truly love what I do. We're all fundamentally striving to understand and celebrate human nature. If anything, areas of conflict need me to visit more than places like Ibiza or LA. As a DJ, I believe they need that escapism, that light relief; and as a broadcaster, I believe they both need and deserve for their voices to be heard.

Are you creatively satisfied?

Yes. I think the key to being satisfied creatively is to keep challenging yourself in every aspect of your life, professionally and personally. Strive for innovation. Fulfill your lust for composing something original. Have as many adventures as you can, both abroad and at home. Make your habitat beautiful. Love passionately, and be creative every day.

What advice would you give to a young person starting out?

Find your niche, your true passion, your unique selling point. What makes you feel alive and excited in the morning? Dedicate your life to that. Commit to something that, even in tough times when you've only had two hours of sleep and your bank account is empty, you'll still find joy in every day. Work hard, and be authentic, professional, and kind to people.

I'd also recommend logging off now and again: our artistic brains need freedom and calm to daydream and watch the bees. If you're glued to your phone from the moment you wake up to the minute you lay down your head to sleep, you'll miss out on the real world—and that's where the really good stuff is.

You're playing Burning Man 2015, which will be your second appearance at the festival. What else are you planning to do or explore in the future?

I'm so excited to be playing Burning Man. I believe it is the most powerful festival on the planet. It's the Woodstock of our time: a place for thinkers, philosophers, lovers, and party animals alike. Going to Burning Man is like experiencing a life energy reset; so many people pour so much love, hope, and vision into it. For someone who has made her living going to the best and boldest parties around the world, that's a big claim! I'm absolutely delighted to be going back this year with my best friends to DJ and be part of the Queen Dick camp, an East End London pub in the middle of the desert.

Afterwards?

Well, life manages to somewhat transform itself—I fell head over heels in love last year, so who knows what inspiration will strike! Otherwise, in the coming months I plan to write a book all about my adventures around the world, start filming for a documentary TV series, and continue the great work we do with my global radio show, *The Selector*: spreading new British music. I also want to continue to strive to be grateful and happy.



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