

= Harlem Shake ( song ) =

" Harlem Shake " is a song recorded by American DJ and producer Baauer . It was released as his debut single on May 22 , 2012 , by Mad Decent imprint label Jeffree 's . The uptempo song incorporates a mechanical bassline , Dutch house synth riffs , a dance music drop , and samples of growling @-@ lion sounds . It also samples Plastic Little 's 2001 song " Miller Time " , specifically the vocal " then do the Harlem shake " , which is an allusion to the dance of the same name . Baauer added a variety of peculiar sounds to the song so that it would stand out .

The single did not begin to sell significantly until February 2013 , when a YouTube video set to its music developed into an Internet meme of the same name . The media response to the meme helped increase the single 's sales , as it charted at number one for five consecutive weeks on the US Billboard Hot 100 . It also reached number three in the United Kingdom and number one in both Australia and New Zealand . During the song 's chart run , Billboard enacted a policy that included video streams as a component of their charts .

" Harlem Shake " was well received by music critics , who viewed it as an appealing dance track , although some felt that it was more of a novelty song . After the song became a hit , Mad Decent label head Diplo reached an agreement with the artists of the song 's samples , which had not been contractually cleared before its release . However , according to Baauer , he has not received any of the money the song made because of the legal issues from not having properly cleared the samples . American rapper Azealia Banks released a remix to " Harlem Shake " on her SoundCloud page , which was subsequently removed at Baauer 's request and led to a dispute between the two .

= = Background = =

In 2011 , Baauer rededicated himself to music after studying at City College and began to practice making beats . He recorded " Harlem Shake " in 2012 in his bedroom studio in Brooklyn , New York . With the song , he wanted to record a high @-@ pitched , Dutch house synthesizer over a hip hop track and make it stand out by adding a variety of peculiar sounds . He later referred to it as " a goofy , fun song " . Baauer posted " Harlem Shake " , along with several of his other recordings , on his SoundCloud page , and in April , Scottish DJ Rustie featured the song in his Essential Mix for BBC Radio 1 . Record producer and Mad Decent label head Diplo heard the song , and released it on May 22 as a free digital download through Mad Decent 's imprint label Jeffree 's . It was Baauer 's debut single .

= = Music and lyrics = =

" Harlem Shake " features harsh snares , a mechanical bassline , samples of growling lions , and Dutch house synth riffs . It has a high tempo characteristic of hip hop and a dance music drop . According to Andrew Ryce from Resident Advisor , " Harlem Shake " is a hip hop and bass song , while David Wagner of The Atlantic viewed it as trap , a musical subgenre with stylistic origins in EDM and Southern hip hop . Ryce felt the song 's music " represents the hip @-@ hop contingent of " bass music , which is typified by rolling snares and jerky basslines , finding it " particularly symptomatic of a growing strain of music obsessed with ' trap ' " . By contrast , Jon Caramanica from The New York Times argued that it " isn 't a hip @-@ hop song , but it is hip @-@ hop @-@ influenced . "

" Harlem Shake " begins with a sample of a voice shouting " con los terroristas " , a Spanish phrase which translates to " with the terrorists " in English . Although listeners assumed it was a female voice , the sample was taken from the 2006 reggaeton song " Maldades " by Héctor Delgado , who often used the line as a refrain on his other songs . In 2010 , the recorded phrase was used by Philadelphia disc jockeys Skinny Friedman and DJ Apt One on their remix of Gregor Salto 's dance track " Con Alegría " . Baauer said he found the vocal sample from an unidentified source on the Internet . The sampled voice is followed by building synths and snares , and a syncopated sub @-@ bass sound before another voice commands listeners to " do the Harlem shake " . The line was

sampled from Plastic Little 's 2001 hip hop song " Miller Time " , which Baauer sampled after having a friend play it for him and " [ getting it ] stuck in my head for a while " . Plastic Little member Jayson Musson said his line was inspired by a fist @-@ fight that he ended by performing the harlem shake dance move : " This was my first fight and I didn ' t know how to properly ' end ' a fight , so I just smiled at him and did the Harlem shake , blood gushing from glass cuts on my face . The other kid , I guess not wanting to fight anymore , or maybe not wanting to fight someone who just danced at him , got on his skateboard and took off without his shoes . "

= = Commercial performance = =

" Harlem Shake " was released commercially in June 2012 . Mad Decent commissioned a music video for the single at the time , but were not satisfied with the result and shelved it . It gradually received listens online , and was re @-@ released as a single on January 8 , 2013 . However , it did not begin to sell significantly until February , when its music was set to a YouTube video that developed into an Internet meme of the same name . The 30 @-@ second video featured people dancing to the song and was parodied more than 3 @,@ 000 times in other user @-@ submitted videos . Billboard magazine cited " Harlem Shake " as " the biggest viral sensation since PSY ' s ' Gangnam Style ' " . Baauer and Mad Decent generated income from both the user @-@ submitted videos and Baauer ' s original audio post on YouTube because of the site ' s Content ID service , which allows artists , labels , and publishers to monetize songs . According to MSN Money , they earned \$ 6 for every 1 @,@ 000 views of the video .

The late @-@ week media response to the meme helped the single sell 12 @,@ 000 units on iTunes in the week ending February 10 , according to Nielsen SoundScan . It consequently entered the US Dance / Electronic Digital Songs at number nine and the Dance / Electronic Songs at number twelve . Mad Decent ' s manager Jasper Goggins said that " Harlem Shake " was the " biggest thing " they have released , " and it ' s happened within six days . " In the United Kingdom , " Harlem Shake " reached number twenty @-@ two on the UK Singles Chart during the week of the meme ' s phenomena . By the end of the chart week , the single had climbed nineteen spots to number three . Martin Talbot , the Official Charts Company ' s managing director , said that the single ' s climb on the chart " underlines just how quickly this track has turned into a bone fide phenomenon . At the start of the week , it wasn ' t even selling enough to make the Top 20 ? but it is now one of the UK ' s most popular tracks . "

The following week , " Harlem Shake " debuted at number one on the US Billboard Hot 100 and climbed to number one on the Dance / Electronic Songs , while selling 262 @,@ 000 units . It was the first instrumental track to top the Hot 100 since Jan Hammer ' s 1985 Miami Vice theme . It was also the twenty @-@ first song in the Hot 100 ' s history to debut at number one and was aided by 103 million weekly video streams , which was announced that week by Billboard and Nielsen SoundScan as a new component of their charts . According to Billboard ' s editorial director Bill Werde , " Harlem Shake " ' s success prompted them to enact the chart policy after two years of discussions with YouTube . However , Silvio Pietroluongo , the magazine ' s director of charts , said in an interview for The A.V. Club that their timing was coincidental and came after a period of negotiating the chart policy and its logistics . However , because it lacked major label promotional support , the single registered low in airplay . It also debuted at number one on the ARIA Singles Chart and became 1000th number @-@ one song since Australia began compiling charts in 1940 .

" Harlem Shake " remained at number one on the Hot 100 in its second week , when it sold 297 @,@ 000 digital units . It also received more airplay after being promoted to radio by Warner Bros. Records , who had agreed to a deal with Mad Decent on February 26 to distribute the song worldwide . " Harlem Shake " topped the Hot 100 for a third week and sold 228 @,@ 000 units , despite a decline in YouTube streams . By March 10 , it had reached sales of one million digital units . On March 12 , Sean Michaels of The Guardian reported that the song had earned more than £ 50 @,@ 000 from YouTube . " Harlem Shake " remained at number one for five consecutive weeks on the Hot 100 .

= = Copyright infringement = =

Neither vocal samples used on " Harlem Shake " were contractually cleared with Héctor Delgado or Jayson Musson , who were both shocked to hear the song after it became a hit . In February , Delgado was told by his former manager Javier Gómez that he heard his voice on the song and wanted to take legal action . According to Gómez , Diplo subsequently called Delgado and told him that he was unaware " Harlem Shake " sampled his voice when it was released as a single . Gómez called " Harlem Shake " " a clear breaking of intellectual property rights " and said that since Diplo 's call , lawyers for Machete Music have been negotiating with Mad Decent over compensation for the sample .

Musson received an enthusiastic call in late February from a past member of Plastic Little telling him that his voice was sampled on " Harlem Shake " . Musson did not have a problem with Baauer using the sample without his permission and found the song 's production " phenomenal " . He subsequently called Baauer to thank him for " doing something useful with our annoying music " . However , he felt that the allusion to the dance was " peculiar " and outdated : " I was like , Who the fuck is rapping about the Harlem Shake in 2012 ? " Musson said in an interview in March that he was negotiating with Mad Decent over compensation and that , although no agreement had been reached , the label had been " more than cooperative during this " .

In April , Diplo told The Huffington Post that he had reached an agreement to clear the samples . However , in an August interview with Pitchfork Media , Baauer said that he has not made any money from the song , despite Diplo 's reported agreement : " I 'm meeting with my lawyer ... so I 'm gonna find that out . I think it 's mostly because of all the legal shit . I didn 't clear the samples because I was in my fucking bedroom on Grand Street . I wasn 't going to think to call up [ Delgado ] , I didn 't even know who it was who did that [ sample ] ; I knew the Jayson Musson [ sample ] . So I found myself in that fucking pickle . Legal letters and shit . Ugh . Lawyers . So exposure @-@ wise it was fantastic , but everything else ... "

= = Critical reception = =

Pitchfork Media 's Larry Fitzmaurice labelled the song " Best New Track " upon its release in May 2012 and called it a " disorienting banger " with an " irresistible appeal " that " owes almost everything " to its " menacing , world @-@ smashing bassline " . Fitzmaurice wrote in conclusion , " Along with this purely visceral pleasure , it 's hard not to marvel at how awesome those growling @-@ lion samples sound . " Randall Roberts of the Los Angeles Times said that he liked the song and viewed it as a " syrupy instrumental " that foreshadows " the convergence of hip @-@ hop , dance and rock " .

Andrew Ryce of Resident Advisor gave " Harlem Shake " a rating of three @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half out of five and found its musical climax " admittedly satisfying ? that is , until it resumes flailing like a novelty track " , writing that " it 's not hard to see why the track is well @-@ liked , but its snowballing ubiquity is a bit of a head @-@ scratcher , simply because it 's not all that interesting . " Similarly , Jon Caramanica of The New York Times said that , after hearing a minute of it being played during Power 105 @.@ 1 FM 's mixshow , the song " felt more like a novelty than like part of a strategy . " Caramanica felt that its success , along with that of Macklemore 's 2012 song " Thrift Shop " , reflects a " centerless future " for hip hop and stated , " Depending on your lens , this reflects a tremendous cultural victory for hip @-@ hop or the moment when hip @-@ hop , as a construct , begins to lose meaning . "

= = Remixes = =

On February 14 , 2013 , American rapper Azealia Banks released a remix to " Harlem Shake " on SoundCloud , which was then removed at Baauer 's request . Banks disparaged Baauer on Twitter in response and claimed to have e @-@ mails sent from him giving her permission to use the song . She then said that Diplo had sent her an e @-@ mail telling her that the remix was removed

because they would rather have rapper Juicy J on it . On February 16 , Banks shared a music video for her remix on Vimeo , and revealed a purported e @-@ mail from Baauer saying he liked the remix . Baauer responded in an interview for The Daily Beast , saying that they had planned to release a version of the song with Banks , but felt that her verse did not meet their expectations :

Jon Caramanica of The New York Times cited Banks ' remix as one of her best songs , while Chris Martins of Spin wrote that she delivers " fire @-@ hot verse after fire @-@ hot verse " and facetiously remarked that " Banks raps all over your dumb ' Harlem Shake ' meme " .

Pitbull and Jim Jones also recorded freestyle raps over the song . After releasing his version , Jones claimed in an interview that " Harlem Shake " was a song he originally recorded one year ago for an album by Pauly D , but that they ultimately scrapped it : " When I started to hear the ' Harlem Shake ' and heard the beat , I was like damn , I had the record for a year . So I just put the record out . "

== Track listing ==

Digital download

" Harlem Shake " ? 3 : 16

" Yaow ! " ? 2 : 11

== Charts ==

== Certifications ==

== Release history ==