

When first I met "Unique Monique" at the DJ Expo 2000 in Atlantic City, New Jersey, I saw her twirling around on stage, with two hunky male dancers, Sean van der Wilt and Michael Fry, belting out lyrics about "Lipstick Lesbians" and "Cradle Robbers," tongue-in-cheek style. Her smile, laugh, and self-deprecating wit were complemented nicely by her personality; I was almost fooled into thinking that she was just another pretty face. Then I came to the realization that Monique Marissa, as she is on this disc "Irreversible" [unsigned – no label produced in Holland] is a woman on a lyrical mission.

Way back in her early career, a co-worker at a dance music radio station called her a Lipstick Lesbian, and she turned it into a song five years ago. Not a bad progression for a gal with a church choir background! Monique has been through the music industry mill, and hasn't given up. Now Unique Monique, she has her gaydar finely tuned, and targeted her music accordingly. "I learned that gay men listen to dance music more, whereas the women seemed to be more into Hip-Hop and rock [popular music wise]. Nonetheless, I got positive feedback."

"Cradle Robber" was about her experience with younger men, which she confessed to me that she is attracted to; "Irreversible" is her latest cause celebre. "It is about the feelings of a good, clean girl who just goes to clubs to dance and has never [experimented] with drugs. Week after week she sees other people doing ecstasy and none of them seem to be getting sick. She is peer pressured into trying E her first and last time. Last because she has a bad reaction and is left for dead at the end as all the people who persuaded her to try it leave the scene. All these kinds of people were never friends from the get-go," Monique explains. She got the idea from a producer when she visited Amsterdam.

Unique Monique's singer/actress persona comes through Oscar-style on these tracks. She goes: "Try some E with us/Yeah E as in eat my brain/listen I just go to clubs to dance/But they said, C'mon give it a chance/so I grabbed a water bottle/salute, cheers, lakaiaim!/ /and I swallowed..." Whoa! Somehow I think of oral sex on that last one, however – a mixed metaphor given her Jersey girl-speak. So, and I smiled, laughing all the way through

the listening session – I can't help it I guess because I know this may not be taken seriously by the crowd of industry partiers that I came of age and experience with. Monique describes a bad trip over a pumpin', mixable dance music track. About the acapella chant she says honestly, "I would have like to have made it a song, but didn't have a musical track for the lyric; hope in that future I can use [them]..." Cuts three through five represent that mellow acapella rant. Her voice is a lower pitch here than her previous efforts; "I believe the producer of the track wanted to give the impression that what I'm saying in the song is actually coming from my unconscious, and not being spoken out loud. It is basically a story over the track." She says.

The rub here is people in and out of the music industry letting their hair down do not want to be reminded of their frailties and quasi-addictions as they party. "The trick is, don't be preachy, just be real. I am out to spread good choice to my audiences, not negative messages for the money's sake" she advises. To parody oneself with humor ala RuPaul, who is one of Monique's heroes, is both admirable and praised here - even tongue-in-cheek. Yet Monique is dead serious regarding her message music. She told me, "I think it's more interesting to hear songs about things or people that we can relate to than the 80% or so of songs which talk about love."

Her co-producers are narrowly diverse; from acquaintances to friends. "The gentleman who recorded my vocals for ["Irreversible"] goes by the production name of Rockobilly". She gave us his CD (recommended by the way), where she sings on tracks four and ten. "Irreversible" has acquired pool chart attention from the great northwest to the mid-Atlantic and even North Carolina. "The song was distributed in Holland by a major distributor, and put out independently in the US by mwa." She is seeking to collaborate with a European trance/house producer, so if that is you, or if you are just wanting more singularity, hit her up at www.geocities.com/uniquemoniquemusic/Irreversible . Why European producer? "Having a Euro-American background, and being raised in a somewhat European fashion, I think I may be able to relate better. I feel in general, Europeans (not including Germans so much) are not as rough as Americans. They are warmer and gentler, and I need this in a partner. Competition makes the

world go round, but love makes it stick together." She told me. Sounds like "Mo" could possibly run for office.

At the end of the day, she is the very theatrically-based, techno/trance prophet Unique Monique, ladies and gentlemen! Speaking of gentlemen, word is she is coming after us and playboy sexuality next – the killjoy. I thought girls just want to have fun, and wonder what kind of music she would have done had she come of age during the Vietnam/Civil Rights awakening era; maybe a different kind of protest music?