

arts

Battle on the dance floor

...for song of the summer

By MATTEO BLANCO

Rihanna's "Please Don't Stop the Music". Kelly Rowland's "When Love Takes Over". Pepper Mashay's "Dive in the Pool". What do all these songs have in common? Each defined a summer in the first decade of the new millennium. As we enter the first summer of a new decade, music insiders are all abuzz over what diva and song will go down in gay history as the song for summer 2010. A lot is riding on it: prestige, honors, and most of all, money. We chatted with four of this summer's strongest contenders - Kristine W, Veronica, Leah Driscoll, and Kim Davis - about their new dance tracks and why they feel theirs will be the song of the summer.

Why will your track be the dance floor song of the summer?

Veronica: If You Wanna Fly is about letting go of your security blanket and taking the plunge into the unknown. I think we all wanna fly. We all want to leave inhibitions behind.

Leah: If This Is Love is relatable. I think we've all experienced that moment of empowerment where we walk away from a love that's not right.

Kim: Twist of Love is a throw your hands in the air dance floor anthem.

Kristine: The Power of Music is all those things. A throw your hands in the air dance floor anthem with an important message about how music fuels our souls.

Is dance music enjoying resurgence today?



Kim Davis

Veronica: Definitely! Hip Hop did its thing. It was a huge movement that no one could stop. It will always be around, but it has moved into another sphere. Dance has taken the limelight.

Who is to thank for making dance popular again?

Leah: The Internet is to thank. Dance has always been huge in Europe but it never really found a mainstream pop home in the US until it became so easy to get a hold of.

Kristine: We also have the current economic and political climate to thank. Dance music is uplifting with powerful and often times spiritual messages. We need the extra encouragement in stressful times such as what we are living in today.

How does today's dance music compare with the dance music of five and ten years ago?

Leah: Dance music today is crossing into other genres of music much more so now than it did before - perhaps because it has become mainstream.

Kim: Before it was more about dance artists breaking into mainstream. Now its mainstream artists breaking into dance.

Do today's dance music divas command the floor in the same way past divas did?

Kim: They certainly do. That's one thing that hasn't changed.

Kristine: Fans want to hear a great live singer. They expect you to sound like the music they purchased and they want to see a great live performance. These new girls - Leah, Veronica and Kim included - are delivering!

Do the up-and-coming girls look up to Kristine and the other dance greats?

Leah: Of course. Kristine, Pepper, Deborah Cox... I look at those ladies as the ones who set the standard.

Kim: I bow to their greatness.

What other new dance artists

should we be keeping an eye on?

Veronica: La Roux.

Leah: Sam Sparro. I listen to him almost daily and I think he's going to blow up into a huge star very soon.

What about Ke\$ha and Lady Gaga?

Leah: Love them!

Kim: They are introducing tomorrow's clubbers to the power of dance.

What do you say to people who feel there would be no

Ke\$ha without Lady Gaga?

Veronica: There would be no Ke\$ha without Luke or Flo Rida. There would be no Lady Gaga without Akon.

Leah: And there'd be no Leona Lewis without Whitney, and there'd be no Whitney without Aretha...

Veronica: Ultimately, I think both Ke\$ha and Gaga borrow from Madonna's image. Ke\$ha took her grungy beginnings and Gaga incorporates her love for theatrical performances. So there would be no Ke\$ha or Lady Gaga without Madonna.

Is it ok for artists to borrow from one another?

Leah: Artists are influenced by the world and music around them. The only way we wouldn't borrow from one another is if we all lived in separate bubbles.

Kim: That wouldn't offer a lot of inspiration creatively.

Kristine: An artist's image, style and productions always change to reflect their influences. The true test of who we are as artists and performers shine when the songs are good and heartfelt. Great messages last.

Kristine, as the senior diva, what advice do you offer your colleagues?

Kristine: My advice to all singers is to stay positive and realize that your voice is a gift that you give to others. Yes, we all want to sell music but when creating music comes from honest feelings and a good heart, magic happens. You may not get rich but you will change lives.



Veronica

Would you sacrifice your perfect voice for the perfect love?

Kim: I honestly don't know how to answer that. I love my voice but I also love love!

Leah: For a very long time, all of my self-worth and identity were wrapped up in my voice. That isn't necessarily a good thing, but still, it's a huge part of me. I am one of the biggest hopeless romantics you'll ever meet... and I'll leave it at that.

Veronica: I'm a sucker for love.

If you had one wish, it would be...

Veronica: To fly.

Leah: To make Los Angeles, where I live, and Maine, where my family is, a few thousand miles closer.

Kristine: If I had one wish, it would be that we discovered an environmentally safe replacement for oil and coal.

What's next for each of you?

Kim: Touring!

Veronica: I launch my promo tour this summer and my Saint Nor Sinner album releases in the fall.

Leah: I'm on the road promoting my new track. I'm also planning to get back into the studio to record new material.

Kristine: I have a Jazz album coming out called "Straight Up with A Twist". It's a double album project that I started in 2006. This baby has been in my belly a while and is ready to come out!



Kristine W.