

Selections

Selections invites DJs, producers and label heads to dig into their digital crates and share some of their favorite tracks

Francis Mercier



THE HAITI-BORN Francis Mercier moved to NYC as a teen, enrolled at Brown University an Amtrak ride away in Providence, Rhode Island, to study applied mathematics — and promptly found himself toiling away at the party-promotion game. One of his early bookings was a young, unknown duo called the Chainsmokers, paying them a few hundred bucks — but don't hold that against him. As both an artist and as a cofounder (with Ajamu Kambon) of Deep Root Records, he's more than made up for that arguable sin.

Deep Root has released music from figures like UK icon Rowetta and the venerable house producer and vocalist Roland Clark, but the label's strong point, perhaps, is its Afro house output, much of it released on the Deep Root Tribe sub-label. Mercier's own recent 'Ayibobo,' a collaboration with Nitefreak and Lenny Auguste, is a prime example of the label's releases — it's a soaring slice of Afro-tinged heaven. He's also a DJ of note, and he took time out of his schedule to fill us in on some of his favorite tunes to play out. **BRUCE TANTUM**

01. Francis Mercier & Magic

System 'Premier Gaou (Nitefreak Remix)'

"This is my all-time favorite record in my catalog. It was such an honor to be given the chance to re-imagine Magic System's timeless hit '1er Gaou.' Coupling this with Nitefreak's genius touch, this song has been on fire for the entire year, and it is still the biggest song in my sets."

02. Safar (FR) feat. Dikla

Hackmon 'Thousand And Two Nights (Paso Doble Remix)'

"Sung in Hebrew overflowing with love and spirituality, this track struck many chords within me the first time I heard it. I consequently chose it to be the debut release for my Afro house imprint Deep Root Tribe. I will repeatedly thank Safar, Dikla, and Paso Doble for this magical work of art."

03. Keinemusik (&Me, Rampa & Adam Port) feat. Ali Love 'Confusion'

"The sultry vocals, chords, percussion, and energy of this composition caught my attention on the very first stream. I've always liked &Me's work, but when I came across this single, that was it for me. Ali Love did a superb job on the vocals, and the instrumentation is pure silk and quality. One of my go-to records right here to close out my sets and leave the stage on a feel-good note."

04. Francis Mercier, Nitefreak & Lenny Auguste 'Ayibobo'

"This song carries a very special message of freedom and hope for my home country, Haiti, and it means so much to me. I composed it with my label mate Nitefreak from Zimbabwe,

alongside Gonaïves' very own Lenny Auguste, back in early 2021. I am so happy to have this incredible piece of music under my catalog. I get the chills and goosebumps every time I play it."

05. Mr. ID feat. Kawtar Sadik 'Waidalal (Ankhoi Remix)'

"My favorite Arabic song of all time! Ankhoi did an amazing job of reimagining Mr. ID and Kawtar's work, and this song is the very reason why I traveled to Morocco for the first time this past May. After playing 'Waidalal' for three months straight, at every show from Tulum to Paris to Miami, I took some time to learn more about Mr. ID. I really enjoyed traveling to his country of origin to play b2b with him this past May, for my first time in Africa."

06. Lakou Mizik & Joseph Ray 'Kite Zo A'

"This song has been one of my favorites for the past 18 months. I've always been a fan of Anjunadeep, but I was pleasantly surprised to see them come out of their typical sound and release an Afro house album with Haitian vocals and instruments. The energy, quality, and mystical feeling of this composition immediately stood out to me and quickly made this track a secret weapon for my sets. Lakou Mizik presented Haitian culture to the Afro house scene, and Joseph Ray did an excellent job on the production."

07. Antonio Lyons 'My Africa (Nitefreak Afro Buzz Remix)'

"When you come across certain records, they just change your entire perspective and musical taste. This remix by Nitefreak helped me discover Afro

house back in 2019, and it was at that moment that I fell in love with the genre. Fast-forward to 2020, and I began producing this kind of music, and here we are today with Afro house being my main lane. This collaboration between Nitefreak and Antonio Lyons has all of the ingredients: amazing vocals, dreamy guitars, mysterious pads, and a very strong message putting Africa forward."

08. Da Le (Havana) 'Oggun's Path'

"Coming from warm and sunny Port-au-Prince, Haiti, I always struggle with the colder winter months of northern countries. Music typically helps me stay positive and upbeat, and this past winter, 'Oggun's Path' was my antidote to return to the equatorial climate and energy of my hometown. This song was composed by an amazing Cuban duo, and I absolutely love it."

09. Zakes Bantwini & Kasango 'Osama'

"2022's anthem! This track sets the tone for happiness and feel-good vibes every time I play it. I love the composition, with the rich arpeggiators and pads composed by Kasango, and I of course equally love Zakes' majestic voice."

10. DJ Tomer & Ricardo feat. NaakMusiq 'Noba'

"Carrying a fearless message of courage and positivity to trust in one's self, this track always does the trick for me. I love the chords and the airy feel of the drums. DJ Tomer and Ricardo are both amazing producers, and it was such a pleasure to see them release this song on my label."