

**Song Exploder**  
**Flatbush Zombies - Bounce**  
**Episode 88**

Hrishikesh: You're listening to Song Exploder, where musicians take apart their songs and piece by piece tell the story of how they were made. My name is Hrishikesh Hirway.

Hrishikesh: This episode contains explicit language.

*("Bounce" by FLATBUSH ZOMBIES)*

Hrishikesh: Flatbush Zombies are a hip hop trio from Brooklyn. They formed in 2010. Their album *3001: A Laced Odyssey* came out in 2016, and debuted in the top ten on the Billboard charts. Erick the Architect is one of the three MCs in the band, and he's also the group's producer. In this episode, Erick breaks down how the song "Bounce" was made, and how it ended up that the lead single from their album doesn't have a chorus.

*("Bounce" by FLATBUSH ZOMBIES)*

Erick: My name is Erick the Architect, and I'm one third of the illustrious Flatbush Zombies.

*("The Palm of Your Wave (Bibio Remix)" by BIBIO)*

Erick: There was a record, it was a Bibio record, I was really, I was playing it a lot at the time.

*("The Palm of Your Wave (Bibio Remix)" by BIBIO)*

Erick: The name of the Bibio song I sampled was called "The Palm of Your Wave." I think it was one of those songs, you really like sometimes when you really like sampling something, you play it so often that you're like, "I don't want to sample this, because then I'm not going to listen to it the same way anymore." But this one was special.

*(Music fades)*

Erick: Usually, when I'm sampling something, I listen to it for a couple of things. I'm trying to find something that is catchy, but also something that I may be able to

chop and loop. And I particularly like finding a phrase that's already a pattern, and then looping it just to kind of keep it as it is. There's something special about the way that this song originally was, I like to keep.

*("The Palm of Your Wave (Bibio Remix)" by BIBIO)*

*(Music ends)*

Erick: I already had the main part of what you hear [sings Bibio song].

*("The Palm of Your Wave (Bibio Remix)" by BIBIO)*

Erick: Then I added the second part, which is the, like the second half of the verse.

*("The Palm of Your Wave (Bibio Remix)" by BIBIO)*

Erick: I try to find those two moments. And then, I started to do drums.

*(Beat joins)*

*(Beat)*

Erick: When I heard the original guitar, I kept thinking, *man, the original song was not a hip hop record, how am I going to turn this into something that people could jump up and down to? How can I make people bounce?*

*(Beat ends)*

Erick: But, you know, the song's called "Bounce." It's called bounce because when I made it, I bounced it off my computer, and I was trying to send to them so fast that I just named it "Bounce." Because that's what I did. Like "bouncing" means take everything that you see in the multi-track, and condense it into one file. So I was just trying to bounce, "Bounce" [laughter]. I always wanted to do a song that was a hip hop record that didn't have a chorus, but can change over time. Like each one of our verses has a part that's more mellow.

*(Vocals: "Young nigga but I'm still O.G. / Supreme Team like 1993")*

Erick: And then, when it turns up, it's kind of a point where you would think there would be a chorus, but instead we just change up our flow.

*(Vocals: "Young nigga but I'm still O.G. / Supreme Team like 1993 / Triple 6 on my coffin, I dance with the devil / Came back with a vengeance, Christ off the hinges / I'm nice with the spit kid, twice as much vicious / Psycho-active, I'm on a mission / Electric Kool-Ade")*

Erick: When the song changes is when your flow changes, and the feeling of the record becomes more promising and powerful.

*(Beat with sample)*

Erick: We performed this song many times before we released it. And we just liked the song that much to try it out. But I was always like, "Damn when he does that part like I feel like there's a lot of shit going on that you can't really hear her how sick his flow is." So I was like, "Let me open it up." And I went back, muted the sample and started. That's how I built the other parts of the song that don't have the sample in it.

*(Beat)*

Erick: If a song feels that powerful, just from a sample, I'm always going to attempt to start to add live instrumentation to it, which I started to do. Me and my engineer got together a band of like five people or so.

*(Guitar)*

Erick: So there's certain parts of the song where there's no sample from Bibio at all, it's all this stuff that I played with the band. And yeah, my favorite part of the song is definitely the piano outro.

*(Piano)*

Erick: The thing about being in a band is like everyone pulls their weight, but I think for me, it's to wear two hats, you know? Sometimes I have to turn into the fourth member of the group, and just be Producer Man. I remember playing the beat and them really liking it off top. And once I knew that that was the reaction, I knew that the song was going to be some special, and the fact that it had no chorus was because all of us wanted to rap on it for as long as possible. The other two MCs are Meechy Darko and Zombie Juice. We're also lucky to have three different kinds of voices. You know, Meechy's voice is very dark and gravelly.

*(Vocals: "Flatbush, Brooklyn, from the County of Kings / Run up on me like I'm some hippie nigga / And die under the knife, Joan Rivers / Ooh, damn, that punchline delivers / Hold up wait a minute, moment of silence")*

Erick: And Juice's voice is really high.

*(Vocals: "High like the sun / Fetch a frequency, this ain't shit to me / She said she got a friend, then let my nigga beat / Meech roll 'em, bust 'em, cannons, wooh")*

Erick: And mine is kind of in the middle.

*(Vocals: "Not a thug but niggas know how I keep mine / Call her up or quick to throw up the peace sign")*

Erick: So depending on the key of the song, that also affects the way that I think that the song should be introduced, like whose voice, whose register should be first and last.

*(Vocals: "Woah woah")*

Erick: That's Meech.

*(Vocals: "Woah woah huh")*

Erick: Yeah, that was crazy. When I recorded Meech, the first time that he recorded, he did that, and I kept it there because it was dope, and it was just like, that was a way to like start it. Honestly, if it doesn't have that, it's, it would not be the same record. It just has something about it. It's like, literally, "Woah, woah, what is going to happen?" Like what?! And it wasn't in any other take, but then when I mixed it down, I put that part back in. I always use some part or most of the first take, just because that first take has that energy, that I, it's your initial idea. And maybe your second take has the cleanest take, but it doesn't have that energy you had on the first one. I just want everybody's energy to be appreciated. And that's hard to do, man. When you got three people,

*(Piano)*

Erick: it's not like it's just one and two back and forth. I'm just lucky that I can be here, and make music

*(Beat joins)*

Erick: with some people who I've grown up with my whole life. It's really, we're able to consistently be friends, and still be able to make music, and care for one another. You know, that's a rare thing.

*(Music ends)*

Hrishikesh: And now, here's "Bounce," by Flatbush Zombies, in its entirety.

*("Bounce" by FLATBUSH ZOMBIES)*

Hrishikesh: Visit [songexploder.net](http://songexploder.net) for links to learn more about Flatbush Zombies, and to buy this track. You can find all the past and future episodes of Song Exploder at [songexploder.net](http://songexploder.net) or wherever you download podcasts. You can also follow the show @SongExploder on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Song Exploder is a proud member of Radiotopia, from PRX, a curated network of extraordinary, cutting edge shows. Learn more at [radiotopia.fm](http://radiotopia.fm). This episode was produced by Christian Koons and me. My name is Hrishikesh Hirway, thanks for listening.