

Romance behind the decks

Little over a month after tying the knot, Brit DJ **Danny Rampling** and US decksmith **Ilona Inc** are celebrating Valentine's Day by playing their first gig together in Dubai. *Rob Garratt* caught them on their honeymoon

**Mr and Mrs
Rampling**



For one couple celebrating Valentine's Day in Dubai this year, the date will be particularly special. It won't just be the newly-married pair's first February 14 together. It will also be the pair's first night working alongside one another, in front of a crowd of hundreds. That couple is legendary British DJ Danny Rampling, 51, and his wife, Ilona Gierach, aka 32-year-old American decksmith Ilona Inc.

While we normally shy away from needless sentimentality on these pages in favour of a critical approach to music, the couple's joint Valentine's gig at Embassy seemed too historic – and romantic – to miss. So less than a week after their January 6 marriage we caught up with both halves of the happy couple midway through their honeymoon to find out all the sappy details. Although we couldn't help mentioning the 19-year age gap...

How have you found your first week of marriage?

Him: Wonderful. Absolute bliss.
Her: We've been on cloud nine. We had a very, very fairytale wedding in the hills of Scotland, and now we're enjoying our honeymoon in Thailand, from the sweeping hills of the highlands to the tropics of Bangkok.

Tell us how you met.

Him: I was at a charity event and Danny was DJing...
Him: There was a party afterwards at The Ten Bells, a historic pub in [London] that's part of the Jack the Ripper story. It was on the boil.
Her: He was charming and that sealed it...

What was it that attracted you to one another?

Him: Instant magnetism and rapport – and non-stop conversation.
Her: There was an instant connection: we couldn't stop talking.

Him: Also the keen interest we both have in music.
It must cause problems, doing the same job...

Him: It hasn't yet!
Her: He hasn't played a bad track.
Him: Mr and Mrs in the DJ booth...
Her: ...'That's my track, get your hands off!'

Tell us each others' best qualities.

Him: Danny's instant charm and charisma wins me over every time.
Him: Loyalty, sense of humour, good looks and conversation.

And worst habits?

Her: He's on Facebook too much.
Him: I'm the techno junkie, on social media all the time.
Her: It's nice to have that connection with your fans, but it's nice if you can switch off.
Danny, you appear to have dodged a bullet there.

Him: I'm not avoiding the question, I'm just... just give me a moment. I'm

not, I'm... worst habit? I don't know... sometimes she's a little bit domestic.

Her: I hide all the chocolates.

Him: That's to stop me eating them.

Her: He's a chocoholic.

A lot of couples don't like Valentine's Day. Are you fans?

Him: We are fans this year, because it's a very unique event. We've never played publicly together before. This will be a first – it's a milestone.

So is this the first of many gigs together?

Him: We're going to be doing a lot more DJing together, and concentrating on our individual careers. We're about to produce an artist album together – we've written 12 sketches so far.

Surely they'll be a few fall-outs behind the mixing desk...

Her: No there won't. We work together well, we both respect each other's views and creativity.
Him: That doesn't come your way in life every week.

Her: We build off each other's ideas. One person can come up with something, and the other expands it.

Him: If it's good enough for Johnny Cash, it's good enough for us. He toured with his wife [June Carter Cash] for 30 years.

How do your musical styles differ?

Him: I'm more percussive-led. I have a real background in soul music. Ilona's more electro, she leans more towards the East London sound.

Her: Electro-melodic. A lot of melody. We both come from the trance scene years ago.

Him: A long time ago.

Her: Danny's more of a soul guy – I can go from techno to something more poppy, depending on what I'm feeling and the different parties we play.

We can't help noticing there's a 19-year age gap between you...

Him: I have the stamina of a 25-year-old.

Her: No complaints here!

Him: I feel personally that age is irrelevant. You're as young as you feel. There isn't any ageism in the industry I work in. In the same club you'll find DJs in their twenties and in their fifties – and soon probably in the sixties and seventies.

Rampling+Rampling takes place on Thursday February 14, 7pm-3am. Embassy, Grosvenor House Dubai (04 399 8888).

▶ **NEXT WEEK:** We quiz new electro-pop duo Hollaphonic about their debut single