

THE REBELS OF RAVE

BASSWAR CAOX

INTERVIEW · Q & A

ANSWER PLAYBOOK · EDITION 2026



*BassWar
CAOX*

HOW TO USE THIS SHEET.

28 questions with fully drafted answers in “we” form. Say them in your own words — the message stays the same. Sensitive questions are flagged with a note. Only quote numbers you can back up, never present other DJs’ track-supports as your own shows, and never mix ACTIVATED with the artist project.

THE REBELS OF RAVE

01

Numbers

Only quote what you can back up — streams, listeners and releases live in the master sheet.

02

Track-Supports

Never present other DJs’ plays as your own shows.

03

ACTIVATED

Never mix the label & company with the artist project.

ORIGIN & IDENTITY.

01 How did BassWar & CaoX come about?

Honestly, I think I've told this story a hundred times already! In 2021, during Covid, Kevin ran an ACTIVATED hardstyle event as a YouTube live show — back then AV wasn't even a label yet. For that show he really wanted to book DJ BadRabbitz, and he made it happen. We stayed in touch, and over time BadRabbitz introduced his fellow student Nils (BassWar), who brought the exact same drive: to build tracks with strong ideas together. An online acquaintance turned into a really close friendship. Within just a few months the first joint tracks did so well on YouTube that demand kept growing — so we turned the collab project into one single act. BassWar & CaoX was born.

02 What's behind the names BassWar and CaoX?

For Nils, BassWar always stood for hard, powerful sounds in electronic music. CaoX, who's eight years older, has carried his name since 2016: "Cao" comes from the old Irish for "Kev", and the "X" is the initial of a long-time friend — an honorary tribute he's stayed loyal to ever since.

03 Who does what in the duo?

Kevin as CaoX is the creative lead and handles business, strategy and all kinds of administrative workflows. Nils as BassWar is in charge of production and the musical side. On stage, we both stand together.

04 What does "The Rebels Of Rave" mean?

It's our attitude and our promise: uncompromising rave energy and a community that sticks together — our REBEL ARMY and FAMILY. For us it's more than a slogan, it's our identity.

05 How would you describe your sound in one sentence?

Melodic hooks meet the hard festival energy of hits from the '90s to the 2020s — hard dance and mainstage at 160 BPM, with the odd cliffhanger and a few wild ideas that are guaranteed to get your ankles moving.

MUSIC & CREATIVITY.

06 What makes a BassWar & CaoX track?

A hook that lands instantly, a drop that lifts the crowd, and instant recognizability. We combine familiar cover moments with our own originals.

07 Around 65% covers, 35% originals — why that mix?

Covers bring us to people who already love the hook, and originals show who we really are. Both are craft, and both are part of us. And our share of originals keeps growing.

08 How do you keep up the two-week release rhythm?

Up until six months ago we were still dropping something every single week — bootlegs, covers or full original productions. The two-week rhythm is honestly a golden move to bring more creativity and flow back in. With clear roles and a well-rehearsed workflow, we've managed everything so far. We think in pipelines, not in single tracks — in five years we haven't missed a single release slot, bootlegs included.

09 How do you choose what to cover?

Songs with a hook everyone knows and that translates credibly into our sound — plus the right timing, often around festival season or the holidays. Sometimes it's something that shaped Kevin, sometimes something that only shaped Nils. Fair split!

10 What was your breakthrough release?

We're still endlessly grateful to the guys from Harris & Ford — out of nowhere they came to us with a collab request and the idea to give "Apologize" a fresh shine together. That was the moment we knew: okay, we're definitely doing something right. Tracks like "Let This Party Never End" with Loona and Mark'Oh as a remake, or "Believe" with HBz, are among our strongest songs — those definitely belong on this list.

11 Why 160 BPM as your core tempo?

It's the tempo that ignites the mainstage — driving, melodic, with a sing-along factor and a heavy load of bass and pressure. And there's the signature dish from our kitchen, haha. That's our identity tempo: 150 BPM would be standard, but 160 BPM with our style is a lot rarer.

12 How does your production process work as a duo?

We develop ideas together and then split the work according to our strengths. Our own formats like "Hard Is My Heart Radio" keep us creatively on the pulse.

LIVE & PERFORMANCE.

13 What sets your live show apart?

In 2026 we finally found our definitive setup — colour, a unified show outfit, sound and visuals brought into perfect harmony. It's not about forcing something new with ever crazier ideas or outfits; it's about simply doing what we love — and adding our own pinch of "crazy" everywhere.

14 Your favourite gig so far?

Shows like Bootshaus Cologne, Europa-Park Rust, or — without a doubt — ZRCE Beach with the GGZ/AGZ crew!

15 Club, festival or mainstage — what suits you best?

We love all three. The mainstage is the goal, the club stays our root and the most direct line to the crowd.

16 How do you prepare for a big show?

We build every set around the crowd and the slot, plan the energy arc, and tailor the visuals mostly to the location and playtime — because we haven't yet had the honour of presenting a fully official timecode show.

BRAND, BUSINESS & ACTIVATED.

17 You're also founders of ACTIVATED — how does that fit together?

BassWar & CaoX is our artist project; ACTIVATED Network is the company we founded — at first a pure label, since 2026 a harder-styles network that unites label, agency and store as sections. We're connected to all of it more as Kevin & Nils than through our artist portfolio. That always felt a little awkward to us, because we built the label as a home for newcomer talent and never wanted to give the impression that we were pushing ourselves as artists — or have it come across the wrong way.

18 How do you separate the artist project and the business?

Creatively, we keep both worlds strictly separate — own colours, own sound, own design. That way nothing gets diluted. Except for Fluffy! It's the craziest invention and idea, and we just couldn't resist bringing it into the BassWar & CaoX style too — and that's how Fluffyboy came to life.

19 What's the vision behind ACTIVATED?

To give newcomers and talents their first real home for their releases, and to build a fair ecosystem of label, agency and store — with genuine passion and an eye for detail.

20 What's the deal with Fluffy and Fluffyboy?

Fluffy is the mascot of ACTIVATED and lives with his whole crew in the store world. Fluffyboy is our own counterpart at BassWar & CaoX. They're two different characters — even if they look incredibly alike.

21 How important is your community, the REBEL ARMY / FAMILY?

It's the core of everything. Without them, the Rebels Of Rave wouldn't exist — the community actively carries this project. We always had the fear of maybe taking the wrong turns, of people no longer connecting us to our core, or being disappointed. But over the years it turned out that even the smallest message from the smallest fan — somewhere on socials or on stage — is like fuel for our inner flame. We love doing what we love and getting others excited about it at the same time. We've actually had fans who were inspired by us and, a few years later, are now part of our label team themselves — we give them our full support and couldn't be prouder.

MINDSET & PERSONAL.

22 How do you keep up the consistency over five years?

With systems, routines and real passion. We don't rely on hype, we rely on discipline. That got in our way every now and then — but we still don't let it throw us off track!

23 Your biggest challenge so far?

Holding the balance between high output and consistent quality — while building an artist project and a company at the same time.

24 What drives you?

The moments with the crowd, and the urge to build our own world — and to keep sharing the harder dance styles, with our own ideas, all over the world.

25 Your advice for newcomers in the hard-dance scene?

Stay consistent, build your own identity, take care of your community — and bet on quality over quick hype.

FUTURE & TRICKY QUESTIONS.

26 Where do you see yourselves in five years?

On bigger stages and with more originals — constantly producing cover after cover is honestly starting to wear on us, even if we still depend on it right now. ACTIVATED as a fixed name in the scene, with our crew that held on just as hard and never gave up. And the Fluffy universe keeps growing too, of course — ideas are bubbling up there every single day, haha.

27 “You mostly do covers” — how do you handle that?

Covers are craft and they bring reach; our originals show who we really are. We stand by both, and the share of originals keeps growing.

SENSITIVE Sensitive: stay confident, don't get defensive.

28 What's coming next?

New originals and anthems, a full live season, and more building around Fluffy. And every now and then something completely different ... let yourselves be surprised!

SENSITIVE Sensitive: only name what's confirmed, don't promise anything unreleased.