

Golden Boy

Saeed Younan shakes off the Ibiza sound and stakes out his own ground

By Kiran Aditham

Consider Washington, D.C.,'s musical heritage from a modern viewpoint: Dance music doesn't usually register at the top of the list. The city's lineage traces back to the 1980s era of Bad Brains, Minor Threat, and the Dischord dynasty. But in the past decade or so, an underground renovation has evolved the past ideologies into a worldwide movement for the BPM culture.

In an ever-progressing DJ society, the mix masters of old have become burgeoning producers; Ibiza's better-suited for an episode of *Wild On!*, and our nation's capital, thanks to the likes of Deep Dish, has been transformed into a bastion of dance music's continually promising potency. But one of its other featured players, **Saeed Younan**, feels its significance rests on shaky ground. "D.C has changed a lot in the past ten years," he says. "It's nothing like L.A., Miami, or Ibiza. The true underground scene has gotten much smaller. There is a big commercial trance scene, which I'm not too crazy about. It seems as if the people here just go where everyone else is going and music is secondary. This sucks for DJs who are trying to educate and give people something original."

As one-half of world-renowned duo Saeed & Palash, Younan, an Iraqi native who moved to the States at age 13, knows plenty about educating those who believe dance music is just an aural accessory to glow sticks and drug use. Following in the footsteps of their high school pals in Deep Dish, Saeed and partner Palash Ahmed quickly broke into the ranks after meeting in college in 1994. The duo started its Addictive Records imprint and was soon headlining clubs from Tokyo to San Francisco with progressive, tribal house sets, simultaneously lapping up adoration and extracurricular work from the likes of John Digweed, Danny Tenaglia, and Carl Cox.

Even though *DJ Magazine* described his mixing "as if everything he plays turns into sonic gold," Younan has continued to break off from the standard model of a DJ with two-turntables technique. Younan, who remixes everyone from Frankie Goes to Hollywood to Kylie Minogue to cutting his own tracks, believes the lines have been blurred between producer and DJ. "I think DJing and producing go hand in hand," he states. "I love to produce just so I can play out the new stuff and hear other DJs play it as well. Mixing your own production for releases is something that DJs and producers have been doing for years. I did that with my *Addictive Beats* disc that came out in 2003 on STAR 69 on the tracks 'Tweakin' by Thick Dick and 'Phat Dope Shit' by Loco Dice."

As Heraclites once stated, "Nothing is permanent except change." Citing individual artistic fruition -- not differences -- the duo recently decided to part ways, musically and businesswise, ending their partnership on a high note with a number-one remix on the Billboard dance chart (Celeda's "The Underground") and the adored two-disc *Tide:Edit:07*. Younan insists it was a premeditated, amicable parting. "This was something we've been meaning to do for a while, and last summer felt like the right time to move on," he says. Wasting no time, Saeed has already staked his claim as an individual force, picking up a Dancestar nod for Best Breakthrough DJ for his *Addictive Beats* mix and starting his own label, Younan Music. "The label focuses on the digital side of things," he says. "It's an MP3 label that deals strictly with MP3 shops. Our first artist, DJ Wady from Florida, is the number-one-selling artist for three weeks straight. We've also signed producers from Panama, Malaysia, and California."

With his enterprise booming, more remixes coming, and his latest single, aptly coined "You Know I've Got It," already working its way into Deep Dish and Victor Calderone sets a month before release, the DJ with the Midas touch is taking his dance music clinic on the road, disseminating the gospel of thumping dark-house and ritualistic rhythms. "This will be my first appearance in Fort Lauderdale," he says. "I'm really looking forward to it. I think Miami has an awesome scene, and I'm hoping Fort Lauderdale will be the same." Whether solo or attached, Younan's passion for dance music simply validates his longevity and importance in upholding its integrity. If you aren't familiar with the name yet, you soon will be.



Saeed Younan: A revolutionary hits Revolution.

Details

Who / What:

Saeed Younan

Details:

10 p.m. Saturday, November 13. Call 954-727-0950.

Where:

Revolution, 200 W. Broward Blvd., Fort Lauderdale