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George Acosta: the clubplanet interview

08.15.2000

The forceful energy source that drives the dance floor every weekend at Miami's hottest nightclub, Shadow Lounge, is none other than DJ George Acosta. Internationally renown as both a DJ and producer, Acosta's high-voltage music shocks listeners with a lightning bolt of melodic trance.

Known and respected for his two-year residency at Shadow Lounge, he has sharpened his DJ knife to diamond-like perfection. His pounding rhythms, along with the support of local fans that return month after month, year after year, have been instrumental in the creation of a healthy dance music scene on South Beach. Although Acosta shuns categorization of his work, his sound is a bit rougher with higher tempos and melodies that are more anthem than progressive house. Influenced by a mix of Taucher, Sasha, and Oakenfold, his sound has a German or Belgian flare. Only thirteen years of experience on the decks can yield the maturity of Acosta's signature style. His is indeed the sound of Miami.

Acosta first received international recognition as the brainchild behind the surprise crossover platinum selling hit Planet Soul's "Set U Free," and then as the driving force behind Waxhead Records & Grooveman Music. He has had various releases under the monikers of Fever and Planet Soul, and also independent releases under his own name.

He chose DJing over sound-engineering school, adhering himself to the decks at the tender age of fourteen. Past performances include Twilo in New York, Spinclub XS and the Love Parade in Germany, Zen Fest and Ultra Music Festival in Miami, as well as sets with DJ deities such as Sasha, Paul van Dyk, Paul Oakenfold, Taucher and Dave Ralph. Despite the Jure of international flings, Acosta remains loyal to his first love, the Shadow

Lounge.

Recen

.com's Parish caught up with George a few hours before his set at New York City nightclub Exit. After George ripped apart Exit a few months prior everyone at The Planet wanted to know just what made him tick.

> Parish: Your last two sets at Exit went off really well, were they your first NY

gigs?

George: Well actually I played at Twilo for a record release party for my album, it was a Planet Soul party, it was like 3 or 4 years ago.

P: Any sort of changes in the scene that you've notice from then 'til now?

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Trevor Forever

Recently I attended a charity event at Chelsea Piers that was **G:** Well, I guess they were two different venues, the music I'm playing now is all trance and stuff like that now, so for me it's been a big change.

P: What were you playing before that?

G: Well I mean I used to play breaks. I played my drum and bass back in the days, I mean I started as a hip hop DJ like 10 years ago, so I've come along way.

P: You want to give us a chronology of your style, where you started, how it's built up, and how you got to where you are at now?

G: Well it's been a long road. I've basically just been doing clubs and stuff for a long time you know. There is a point in time where you say, ok, you know you want to be a DJ and you want to get ahead or do something else, so that's when I started buying my own equipment and doing my own music.

P: How old were you?

G: I'm 28, so I guess I was about 20 or 21. It was like the day that I grew up. It's like you decide to go to college, get a degree, you know? I went to college too, but at the same time I was doing the DJ thing at night, so like I said, there wasn't much I could do, just keep playing at clubs and stuff, so I wanted to do something extra. I started doing tracks and started playing raves and stuff and I did one track, and it went real big.

P: That was the Planet Soul?

G: Yeah, and then after that, I started DJing everywhere with the group and then when that was done, I came back home to like a hero type thing, it was like "Oh George, this and that".

I did a couple of clubs and that was successful, and I was still doing records. Then I hooked up with these people I'd known for years, that I dealt with in the past and they were opening up a new club. They were like, "look we trust you, play whatever you want here." So, what I tried to do was create what I was doing playing out. People respect you for what you are in other cities, so you could be playing an hour of your own tracks and people would be like "Yeah George," but when you are at home you have to play politics, and the

"I like to adjust to the vibe that's happening. I don't like to come in and be like, okay, now this is my show. I don't do that. I just keep it going."

commercial tracks, you know, it's like the club thing. So I did sort of like what I would do when I would go out on the road. It was a hard struggle, but I've been playing at the Shadow Lounge now for 2 1/2 years, which is the club that I am a resident at in Miami. All the big major DJ's have been playing there to now, like Paul Oakenfold, and Taucher, all the big guys, and then after that it was like, ok what now?

P: Yeah, now what?

G: Yeah and now I guess it's to be an international DJ.

P: If you have to. (laughs)

G: Yeah, I mean what else can you do now, you know? So then I had met with Stephanie (at Ultra) and Todd (as in Liquid). Todd was the one that introduced me to Patrick (at Ultra), and from there we were in negotiations for like a year. Since then the album came out, I haven't been home at all. I am always on the road.



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- P: What about Shadow?
- G: I mean I'm home like once a month.
- P: You still do Saturday nights?
- **G:** Yeah Saturday nights. I'm trying to keep it at a point where I am there twice a month on Saturdays, because people are starting to be like "Yo where the fuck is George?" You know, it's like, "He's is our DJ, why is he everywhere but here?" I won't forget where I came from so I always need to give some of that back, I have it now so that in June I am only out once that month. Then I got a 30-day tour coming up that starts in August.
- **P:** Is that to support the album?
- **G:** Yeah, it's big. It should be good. I mean it's good now, but it's just like in every city that I go to, there's been tremendous support, everybody has been really into the music. I hear people say, "I just saw your picture here or there and I picked up the album. It's the best album I've ever heard of, and compared it to other stuff that's out there -- it's the best, and I've seen you at the Shadow Lounge." And you know it's cool, it's been something that's been going on for two or three years now and I just keep pushing and pushing.

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