

THE EDM LIFE INTERVIEW: SAEED YOUNAN



GREG WASIK - JANUARY 25, 2015

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EDM Life: Starting off with going back to last year, you played with Carl Cox at a couple of dates at Light and I believe at the Echo Stage? How did that relationship start where the two of you have been playing together here in the States?

Saeed Younan: It actually all kicked off kind of in the summer of last year when we played together at Echo Stage... I was like a last minute add-on to the bill. And I went ahead and played with Nic (Fancuilli) and Carl and then after the show I guess Carl liked what I played and everything. We didn't say much after the show but the next day I sent him a message "Yo, it was amazing playing with you." And he hit me back right away "hey, I'm going to have a Vegas thing going on, would you be interested in playing with me doing this thing?" And I was like "Yeah, for sure."



So we did the first date in Vegas, it went really well. Then I was asked if I wanted to do the second, third date. I said sure, so we did that. I was also asked if I wanted to play The Carl Cox & Friends Stage at EDC and of course I said yes. I was the only DJ to play the Carl Cox & Friends stage two days in a row, Friday & Saturday. Then I was asked to do the closing of Haze nightclub the day after Halloween with Carl. And it's just been a wild ride since then. We played about seven or eight times together last year. This year we just had a nice talk and we're looking forward to what happens. It's been amazing.

EDM Life: Do you have anything confirmed yet this year that we can talk about where you're playing together?

Saeed Younan: No, nothing is set in stone but we did talk at BPM where he pulled me aside, had a nice little chat and he told me what's going to happen, what he plans to do and he definitely wants to get me involved. It's still all talk, it's a lot of logistics behind it so until I get the full confirmation, then I'll go ahead and disclose it. But if it happens, it's going to be amazing. So its just one day at a time but that talk was definitely motivational.

EDM Life: If we're reading the tea leaves, we'll see you at Space Ibiza this summer?

Saeed Younan: Oh yeah, that would be awesome.

EDM Life: Now, also talking about Carl (Cox). You have a project working with Carl's Intec label. And can you talk a bit about that?

Saeed Younan: Yes. So I did this track, it's almost a kind of a take on an old track, break dancing track by Newcleus (Jam On It) but in my version I pretty much played all the parts, the base lines and everything. And I gave it to Carl, he absolutely loved it, he smashed it in Vegas and he turned right back at me and said "You know, we've got to talk. I want this track." We're trying to get some clearance done for it even though all the parts on the track are played and nothing was sampled except for a couple of vox or vocals. Carl wants to take extra precaution to make sure that we don't deal with any issues down the line when we release it.

So, yeah, it's a track I just finished and he's been hammering it, I actually played it at BPM which you get to hear in the first hour of my set, the live set at BPM. And we're just going to work on getting the full licensing from the original so we don't have any issues.

EDM Life: Definitely remember Jam On It, I have the Twelve Inch.

Saeed Younan: Yeah, good stuff, man. I love that stuff.

EDM Life: Besides that what sort of tracks or upcoming releases do you have? I noted that you just put up on Soundcloud a new sample of a track you remixed "On the Floor." Can you talk about both the new track, when is that is released as well as anything else interesting

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coming up with new releases?

Saeed Younan: Yeah, it's a project I work with my good friend Worthy. He had an album that came out and he's releasing remixes and I chose this track to do a remix for him. It's basically just a fun track, the original is actually in a completely different direction. So I just wanted to do something totally different from the original because to me a remix should be a remix. So, it shouldn't really sound too similar to the original so I just try to take it to a whole different direction, just have fun a little bit. So it's coming out in March or early April.

I've got a couple of collaborations I'm working too on right now with Sebastian Ledher. And I've got one with B Cliff from New York. What else am I doing? Well, a couple of projects on my own. But basically it's a lot of stuff that I'm just going to be either shopping around or probably sending it over for Intec to Carl and do a couple of follow-ups. So as soon as the ball starts rolling, after WMC is when I hit the studio and start grappling with a lot of the projects that I've already started.

EDM Life: And can we be on the lookout for an artist album of all these singles this year?

Saeed Younan: Yeah, I actually started working on an artist album, in fact I'm doing it now because a lot of this stuff just came out of nowhere. I do want to do an artist album but I'm going to do it more in a way where I'm going to have all the artists on my label be a part of. So I'm going to do a full on artist album of all tracks that I've done before and probably either remix some or touch them up or do something different with them. And do some collaboration with some of the artists that are on Younan Music and get them on the album. I'm all for collabs. I enjoy working with other people even though they're not in my studio but sending files back and forth, I think is just a great way to learn from each other. And a lot of the guys are on the label right now, they're just like young and hungry but they have some amazing ideas. And putting my old school thoughts and theory with their way of twisting things, it's kind of cool how everything kind of comes together.

So, if the album works out, I'm hoping – shooting towards the end of the year. But I don't want to wait too late so I'd rather do it right than rush it. Depending on how many tracks we get and who I'm going to be working with that will be something to look forward to toward the end of the year.

EDM Life: So, you just played at the BPM fest, how did that go for you?

Saeed Younan: It was amazing. This is my fifth year at the BPM Festival, I think my second or third time at Mamita's and this was by far one of the best parties that I played at the festival. I just like the venue, Mamita's and I just think it's got an amazing vibe and you can really work with the crowd. You know, it's a day venue, but then again you've got a really nighttime vibe to

it. It's kind of weird, it's hard to put it into words. The people are there to party and to dance. So it's not like a kind of beachy kind of place, it's like a full on club right on the beach. Just the sound system, the whole production was just great.

And I was really rad to be a part of it. I'd done a couple of label parties at BPM in the past. And sometimes it's actually less headache to play with other artists than to do your own label parties because there's just so much on your shoulders. Two years ago I had a label party at Mamita's and Mendo couldn't make it, he got stopped at a border and had to be sent back to Europe so I ended up playing an eight hour set by myself. I enjoyed it but still, when one of your head liners is not being there and you're trying to make phone calls as you're djing is just, it gets crazy.

EDM Life: Sure, I can imagine that. That would be pretty stressful. So, you're playing the Groove Cruise, the Miami-based one in about a week. And we've heard nothing but great things about the Groove Cruise. We haven't been on it ourselves but everyone seems to rave about it so to speak. That's something you've played before and talk a bit about what you expect from that next week.

Saeed Younan: Yeah, this will be my second Groove Cruise and it's definitely changed a lot compared to the previous year. When I first saw Groove Cruise it was a lot of EDM based DJs playing on it. And nobody of my style, or anybody in the genre that I'm into. So it was really EDM based for my taste. And I've just seen it grow in the past couple of years and now they're bringing on a lot more techno artists, tech house and house and kind of branching out to different genres.

So it's not like just a full on EDM party. On the cruise now you have people like Boris playing and Chus & Ceballos and Erick Morillo so it's a nice little mixture now compared to the way it was years ago. So yeah, I'm really looking forward to it, it's a five day mental craziness like you wouldn't believe, like every cabin is having a party, every cabin next to you is doing an after-party. It's just like constant partying. It's funny because I'm playing there right after BPM so it's like another five days on the water and just house music in your ears. It's going to be crazy in the way the Groove Cruise is but it's also really nice to be in a whole different kind of crowd than what the BPM is. It's just a different party altogether.

EDM Life: And I think one of the things that we heard a lot of people say about the Groove Cruise also is just because you are on a cruise ship, you're not really just flying in for your gig, flying out, you're really interacting with your fans a lot. And kind of getting to meet them on a first hand basis and have those kind of chats and talks that you usually don't experience a lot of times when you're playing other sorts of gigs.

Saeed Younan: Yeah man, you're basically sitting at the buffet table next to club kids, ravers, whatever, like everybody is one.

EDM Life: And I'm sure some record ideas kind of came out of it as well when you guys sit down, there's some collaboration ideas also.

Saeed Younan: Of course, yeah. That's the one thing I look forward to in stuff like BPM and Groove Cruise and stuff. It's just sitting down with people you don't get to see and you finally get to meet face to face instead of through text or Skype or whatever.

EDM Life: Exactly. So and in two months we have coming up the Winter Music Conference. Can you talk about in terms of any parties you may be throwing this year or any events you're planning, any info on that you can give us?

Saeed Younan: Yeah, every year I actually – this is going to be my fifth year anniversary, oh God. Everything is fifth year this year. I host a party called Saeed Younan and Friends at the rooftop at the Clevelander and this is going to be our fifth year doing it. It's by far one of the dopest parties at the conference because it's just bringing it back to the real WMC Feel. There's no cover charge, all the DJs play for free. And they're all just friends, they all just come out, people drink and have a good time, it's on the rooftop, just right. The setting's perfect. It's like looking right over to the beach.

So I do that normally every year and then I host another party at night which will be the label party. This is where all the artists from Younan Music will be playing along with myself. So I'll have two parties for sure and we're working on a couple of other things with other artists possibly a boat party as well.

EDM Life: What day is the Clevelander and do you have a date and venue for the Younan Music event?

Saeed Younan: The Clevelander is most likely going to be the 28th of March. For the night party this year I may do a joint party with Factomania which is a Wally Lopez label. So we are discussing doing a double label event depending on the size of the venue. If we find a good venue, we might as well get two labels involved.

EDM Life: Is there a date for that set?

Saeed Younan: Not yet. We are still working on the venues to figure out what options we have but the Younan and Friends on top of the Clevelander, that's definitely going to be most likely the 28th.

EDM Life: Sounds good. Now you definitely wear a couple of different hats so to speak being a DJ traveling all around, running your own record label, etc. How do you find the time to actually work on your own music where I'm sure all the other things you're doing take up most of your day?

Saeed Younan: That's probably the toughest question I'm still trying to figure out. Making music is actually the toughest thing. Last year in 2014 because I was working on the label, then I'd be on the road. Last year was the label's ten year anniversary so there are a lot of projects, a lot of work behind to release one of the biggest compilations we've ever released because of the ten year anniversary. And there was a lot of work behind that.

So my production kind of took a backseat because of the label but now I'm just trying to spend time in the studio as winter is usually a good time for me to work on music. I live in Washington DC and when it's too cold there's really not much to do but to sit in the studio and make some music. So, I'm trying to discipline myself and make it like a normal nine to five workday. Get up, run the label for a couple of hours, then hop in to the studio before dinner time and get some work done. But you know when creative idea comes, you just can't help it but just skip all of that and just jump in to the studio. Definitely this year is going to be a lot more studio time now that the label's ten year anniversary is all done with.

EDM Life: Understood. Last question: you kind of see different genres of music that come and go, the 'hot' music of the moment. Of course all the recent talk about EDM type music and now it seems like everyone is jumping on the deep house bandwagon. Your music I'd characterize as tech house. Would you kind of agree with that or would you say that your music style has kind of changed in the last couple of years?

Saeed Younan: To me it's changed, maybe to a listener they can't tell but I've always had my roots in certain things when it comes to my music. I like good base lines, I like percussions, I like a good groove and sometimes a driving beat. So within those elements my music is constantly changing. I know people close to me know that I don't play the same today as I did three or four, five years ago. My stuff then was as bit more heavy on the tribal and heavy on the percussions. Now it's more about like a funk feel, a party music, just like having a good time type of style. So, it's not so serious. I used to play very drummy, very like a tribal...

EDM Life: I was going to say tribal.

Saeed Younan: Yeah, so I kind of moved away from that. I mean I still love my percussions but they're not the focus point anymore of my production or what I play. So it has definitely changed.

EDM Life: Was there anything else that we didn't touch on and you think our readers might want to know about

Saeed Younan: I don't know if anybody's in Panama but I'm going to play in Panama on February 27th. And I'll be in Toronto on march 7th. And possibly a gig in New York which I'm still trying to finalize on March 14th. Then I do my birthday party at Flash here in Washington DC on

March 20th which has been my residency for the past almost three years now, in DC. So I do it there.

So those are a couple of dates. And anybody needs to get more info, just hit me up on either Facebook or my website.

<http://www.saeedyounan.com>

<http://www.facebook.com/saeedyounan>

Be sure to check out EDM Life Radio Episode 5 mixed by Saeed Younan live from the 2015 BPM Festival!!!

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