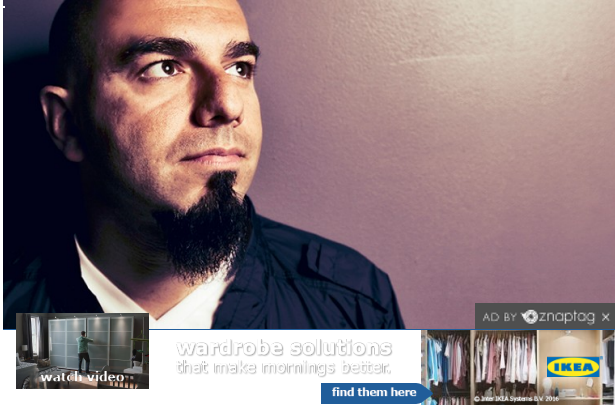




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## SAEED YOUNAN TALKS ABOUT NEW MUSIC AND DJING IN THE DIGITAL AGE [INTERVIEW]

[SYD VICIOUS \(HTTP://WWW.YOURED.M.COM/AUTHOR/SYDVICIOUS/\)](http://www.youredm.com/author/sydvicious/) x JUNE 23, 2015

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**Saeed Younan** is one of the most renowned DJs you've probably never heard of. With over 20 years in the scene, Younan is a driving force in underground tech house, having been voted in the Top 50 on *DJ Times'* America's Best DJ poll five years straight. His tracks have been released on labels such as **Suara**, **Toolroom**, **Spinnin' Records** and John Digweed's **Bedrock** imprint, which have earned him a number of spots on the Beatport Top 10. **Younan Music**, one of the first all-digital labels, has become a staple for tech house artists, having released tracks from **Pleasurekraft**, **Wally Lopez**, and **Stacey Pullen**. Now after having spent a year opening for the legendary **Carl Cox** and preparing to release a slew of new tracks on Cox's **Intec** label, this tech house veteran shows no signs of slowing down.

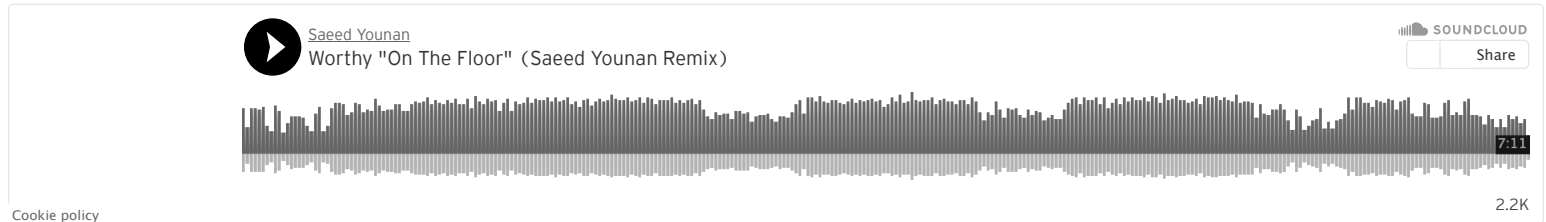


**This is now your second year being tapped by Carl Cox to open for his Vegas residency and join the Carl Cox & Friends Stage at EDC, how does it feel having your talent recognized by such a legend?**

*It's definitely amazing. I've known of Carl for 20+ years as a producer, so we've always crossed paths. He always knew who I was and I knew who he was, and then we finally had a chance to play together I think about a year ago. He really enjoyed what I did and he just asked me to come on board and play a couple of US dates with him. I'm thrilled and honored, and it's a blessing and I had a really good time.*

## I've heard you're gearing up to release some new material on Intec and have actually posted some works in progress on your SoundCloud. Any idea on when we can expect a finished project?

*I just spoke to Jon Rundell, he runs Intec Digital for Carl and he's just been in a whirlwind because of EDC. They've got the premasters, there's going to be a release date and everything. I'm just waiting on the paperwork and hoping it comes out by the end of the year; the label has a lot of unreleased music at the moment.*



The image shows a SoundCloud player interface. At the top left, there is a play button icon and the text 'Saeed Younan' and 'Worthy "On The Floor" (Saeed Younan Remix)'. To the right, there is a 'Share' button and the SoundCloud logo. Below the text is a waveform visualization of the audio track. In the bottom right corner of the player, the duration '7:11' is displayed. At the very bottom right, outside the player frame, the text '2.2K' is visible. A 'Cookie policy' link is located at the bottom left of the player area.

## You also recently released a compilation (<http://news.traxsource.com/articles/1914/saeed-protect-virunga-campaign-lp-helps-stop-mountain-gorillas-extinction>) in conjunction with Traxsource with all proceeds benefiting a charity working towards the conservation of Virunga National Park in the Republic of Congo. How did that come about?

*I have a big love for animals and endangered species, the planet, and anything that has to do with the environment. I just did a lot of research and I saw a movie about what's happening with the national park and I know they need a lot of help. They need funds for ammunition for the guards to keep the park protected from the poachers and oil companies are trying to come in and dig up the park; there's a lot of crazy stuff happening there so I figure I would contribute what I can from the label and see what happens. Even the national park contacted us and they are retweeting our stuff and pushing the compilation themselves. We are actually #5 on the Top 100 on Traxsource and now we are getting some love from Beatport as well, so am I excited.*

## Were any of the tracks inspired by the project?

*A couple of the tracks had cool earthy names. Some of the artists decided to give up their shares of the royalties and donate to the charity for Virunga National Park. That was a really nice gesture, and with others looking at the project and helping it along at the end of the day I achieved what I wanted which was to get a little recognition for what's going on in the DRC.*

## You've been in dance music for over 20 years now. What has it been like to witness the evolution of the scene up to this point, and where do you see it going?

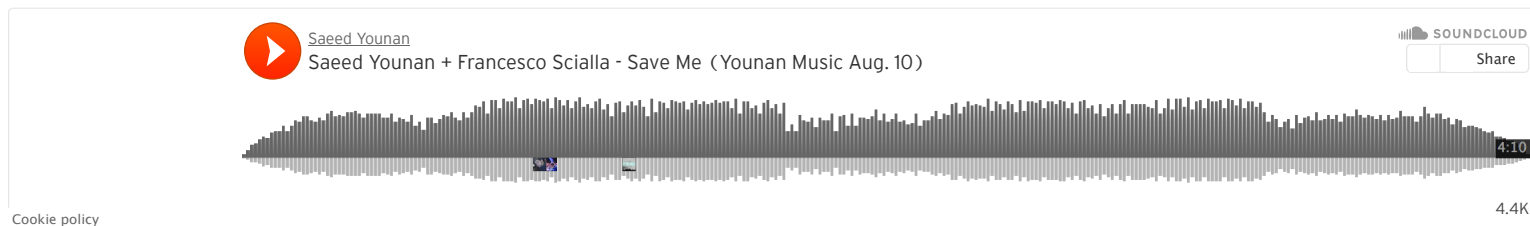
*I started back when everyone was playing vinyl, well before the digital age. I honestly see DJing becoming more of a performance now. It's not about DJing skills per se, it's more about setting up your gear. Almost like a lot of the performers when we started DJing, like The Chemical Brothers and The Prodigy. I think that's where DJing is going. It's more about a performance now, which I am happy with and not, but I do like the aspect of the DJ skills, turntables and a mixer or a sampler. Then everybody is using bigger boards and bringing their own drum machines.*

## Speaking of vinyl, do you ever get the urge to take your old records out for a spin during a set?

*I did do a vinyl set and I have to say I don't miss it too much. I'm so used to tracks looping at the end, so I can layer, manipulate the track. You don't have time with vinyl because in eight minutes you have to find your next record or it's going to scratch at the end. It's about how fast you have to be with the vinyl, you have six, seven minutes to figure out the next record and it has to gel. I love the sound of vinyl, I still to this day extract my vinyl, but I like digital because you can do so much more, it's like mixing in the studio except in front of people.*

## Do you think technology has enhanced what you can do as a DJ or do you think it's made some DJs lazier?

*It's both. There are a lot of people taking advantage of being a DJ because they can hit a sync button and put a playlist together. I don't like when people are not being creative and not respecting the artistry of DJing by just basically slapping tracks together. But, what I do like about technology is freeing my hands. With a turntable and a record you can only do one thing at a time. With technology, you can do multiple things: you can loop a track on your laptop, sample something on a CDJ, bring in another track up to four decks. There's so much to do and it allows you to become more creative. It's like being an octopus, you can do so much more.*



**Your sound has evolved from very tribal and percussive to funky and more melodic. Was there anything in particular that influenced this shift, and do you see yourself continuing in that direction?**

*Well my music still has elements of percussion which you can still hear in the background, but it's not as heavy as it used to be back in the days, when it was all in your face tribal. Now, it has kind of undertoned the music. I like a lot of funkier stuff because I'm old school and I've been around for a while. I like the old vibe, hip house and I'm always layering a lot of stuff in my music so I think I am going to keep going that way. It seems like it's catching a lot of people's attention. I have all these vinyls I can do so much with, which I am now incorporating into my sets. I'm extracting them and adding a lot of stuff and people are saying, "I haven't heard this in a while," but it's a whole different version of it and that's what I like.*

**Last year you celebrated the 10-year anniversary of your label Younan Music. Did you ever imagine that not only would your label continue to live on a decade later, but that it would continue to thrive and become so revered as an underground label?**

*Not at all! Actually when I started the label back in the day it wasn't even a label; it was my S-Corp. My S-Corp is Younan, which is my last name. I just tagged on doing business as Younan Music. My vinyl label, when vinyl kind of started dying out, I had nowhere to go to release more music, so I used my corporation name as the label, and I never thought in a million years it would last a decade. I didn't even think it was going to last five years with everything that was happening at that time. Napster came in and everyone was ripping stuff and I never thought it was going to get this far. I'm amazed and I'm blessed that it has.*

**Looking to the future, what's next for the label?**

*Signing more people, doing more charity. I really like charity. A lot of people already know and whoever is probably reading this and hearing this know that labels, are a labor of love. You're not going to be rich from it and you're not necessarily going to be poor from it. You just have to look at it in a different light. It brings fortune in other ways. You are helping other people. With the label I have, I want to sign younger artists and open the door and avenue so they can showcase their music. To me, it's all about paying it forward. I wouldn't have had the last ten years of my career if it hadn't worked for me. I can throw label events and invite all the DJs, I have Wally Lopez, Stacey Pullen, Mendo, etc. and we're still growing.*

**With the younger producers, do you feel working with them gives you a fresh perspective in your approach to your own productions?**

*The young kids are hungry. You hear what they do and they want to sign a track and a lot of times I'm like "man, I don't know where they are getting this stuff," so I'm learning from them. As much as they want to work with me, I want to work with them. There are a lot of creative kids out there on the label which gets me excited. I've seen a lot of these kids get signed to my label and now they've blowing up but they are humble guys which is awesome.*

Website (<http://www.saeedyounan.com/>) | SoundCloud (<https://soundcloud.com/SaeedYounan>) | Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/OfficialSaeedYounan>) | Twitter (<https://twitter.com/SaeedYounan>)