

Mario Ochoa Returns to Miami With His Integrity Intact

BY ELVIS ANDERSON

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Mario Ochoa

Courtesy of artist's management

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Imagine the best attorney in the world failing to book a local client or a plastic surgeon with Michelangelo-esque butt-sculpting ability with no nearby patients.

Imagine any professional at the top of his game, booked solid for work nearly everywhere else in the world, but unrecognized at home. That'd never happen, right? Not unless you're a DJ.

Medellín, Colombia native and DJ/producer Mario Ochoa hasn't played in his hometown in more than two years. Why? Who knows? Medellín talent buyers know the difference between good and bad, and Ochoa has plenty of talent and allure. But whatever the reason, that city's loss is Miami's gain when Ochoa comes to Heart Nightclub this Friday.

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Ochoa has been a full-time DJ/producer for 15 years and has a long history in the Magic City. His first Miami gig was at Club Space in 2008. He met Alex Omes, the late co-founder of Ultra Music Festival, and recalls a nice, humble guy. Ochoa played Heart twice last year and loves the vibe.

"There is something magical about that place," he says. "People don't want to leave. People go there with an open mind and respect whatever the DJ wants to play."

That's not necessarily the case at other venues. Producers, who can spend thousands of hours making one track, can grow to despise a song they've heard literally a thousand times. But fans at clubs around the world beg for the hits. Ochoa is over it.

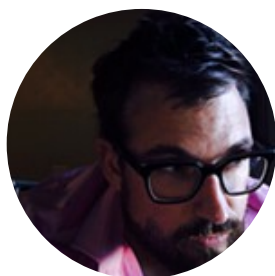
"I made 'Big Spender' eight years ago, and I am so fucking done with it," he says. "Whether I am in Peru or Spain, there are always people asking me to play it. It has a tribal-house sound, which is what I was making at the time. I must admit, though, it still works in the tech-house sets I am playing now."

Ochoa plans to craft an upward trend in energy for the night at Heart. He wants people to dance but not jump. He likes to play for five to ten hours, which is like a drive-thru Tropicop for Heart's dance-floor all-stars. Integrity is paramount to him: He says he's been offered to ghost-produce but has never accepted a single Colombian peso. At the suggestion that he wear gimmick headgear – which would instantly yield riches, fame, and a schedule of main-stage gigs – he laughs and declines.

“I’m not in this for the money. I want to stay true to myself, and if I ever accepted ghost-producer money, I would not be happy with myself. By the way, you would be surprised at the offers I get,” he says. “I have a friend who is paying someone a lot of money to make a lot of music for him, and I’m about to end that friendship. I’m thinking, *Come on, bro, you’re fake as fuck*. Honesty is the most important thing to me.”

Mario Ochoa

11 p.m. Friday, April 28, at Heart Nightclub, 50 NE 11th St., Miami; 305-912-3099; heartnightclub.com. Tickets are free before 1 a.m. and cost \$20 before 3 a.m. via tickets.heartnightclub.com.



Elvis Anderson has been a devout Kraftwerk fan since the fifth grade. His favorite dance-floor move is the somersault. He was a better football fan than student at Florida State but graduated nonetheless. He enjoys trance, house, techno, and countless other music genres. Anderson serves on the board of the Woody Foundation, a Miami-based not-for-profit organization that improves the lives of those living with paralysis.

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