

Stellar Sounds from Planet Oakenfold

Kalani Wilhelm

DJ Paul Oakenfold deserves his own star sign. Right there in between something fierce like Leo and Scorpio—his sonic gravity is just that powerful. The Weekly spoke to the British record producer about his career highlights, DJ competition and the current state of electro.



With a career that's amassed a virtually endless list of credentials, Paul Oakenfold's contributions to dance music are well revered. When Madonna and U2 handpicked him to headline some of their highest grossing tours ever his status was forever imprinted within the electro-dance music galaxy.

"Oakey," who famously said, "dance music will sooner or later conquer America," highlights Saturday Night Sessions with his trance/techno Godlike aura this weekend at Sea Life Park, supported by his current album *We Are Planet Perfect, Vol. 1*.

Will you be DJ-ing for Madonna at the Super Bowl?
No, I won't be there, that will be her stage.

If you were coming up as a DJ-producer today, do you think it would be easier for you to gain success because of the technology that exists? Or would it be more difficult simply because the competition and numbers?
Regardless of any technological advantages, it's always going to be about talent, passion and dedication. You have those three and you come up with a sound and style that is unique enough, you'll make it.

Will this be your first trip to Hawai'i ever?
No, I was there back in 2003. I think I remember it being a very different gig. I got to hang out with a really cool bunch of people. I'm pretty excited to come back.

How important is it for DJs, producers and just fans of electronic music to knowledgeable about the history of the sound?
A lot of newer DJs are not so interested to know about the history, but I think it has an importance, to know who was doing what, when and where. It's an art form and like other forms of art often

those that excel are the ones who have an appreciation of the origins and history.

What is your viewpoint of electro's presence in American pop music today? Do you believe it's just a trend or will the popularity sustain?

It's very popular right now and I think it will change and evolve as new sounds are introduced. All music evolves. All music genres have stages of being popular and then unpopular. It's an ongoing cycle and right now in the US, dance is certainly enjoying a period of popularity, which is great.

How have the interests and needs of a crowd changed, if at all?
The crowds want more interaction, they want to be recognized, acknowledged and led, but they also want to be directly involved now.

Has the growth of Ibiza [Spanish isle in the Mediterranean] become too commercial in your eyes?
Yes, it's commercial in the sense of it being a major tourist destination, but musically I would say there is plenty of room for the most underground nights to be just as successful as the commercial ones running alongside them. Some of the biggest nights on the island...are underground techno parties.

What is the biggest event you have ever played?
An event at Wembley Stadium circa 1998 and the Hand Over Party in Hong Kong 1997. Both were 90,000 plus.

Do you think there should be an international DJ Hall of Fame? If you were on the voting committee, what would be some good criteria?
I don't necessarily think there should be, but with everything else in recognition, there probably will be.

What have been your highlights of 2011 and what do you have in store for 2012?

My highlight thus far for 2011 was playing in Ushuaia, Argentina, it was just so very special and something that will stick with me. Ushuaia is right on the southern most tip of South America on the Tierra del Fuego peninsula and we took a thousand people and a killer stage and sound system down there to put on the most southerly party in the world. It was really special.

In a career filled with many highlights, what would you call your most notable achievements?
Working with U2, Madonna, Hunter S. Thompson and also getting recognized by the Queen for my services to British industry. All these were pretty special.

What have been the keys to, one, staying driven and two, remaining personally creative?
One, the challenge. Two, passion.

Final thoughts for your fans in Hawai'i?
I'm looking forward to hearing those wonderful words "Aloha Paul" and replying "Aloha" back to you.

Makapu'u Meadows (Sea Life Park), 41-202 Kalaniana'ole Hwy. #7, Sat., 12/17, 5PM-1AM, \$30-\$75, saturdaynightssessions.com

5 Essential Tracks

1. Starry Eyed Surprise (2002)
2. LTJ Bukem - Music (1997)
3. Ready Steady Go (2002)
4. Voyager III: Prana (2001)
5. Southern Sun (2002)