

Hip-Hop Culture is More Than Rap Music

Written by Robert ID1325
Friday, 06 May 2005 22:24 -

Canada is the home of a hip-hop DJ that is much more than the typical DJ. DeeJay Ra is a DJ, a radio personality and an activist. He has produced tributes on many topics; from hip-hop cultures late rap icon Tupac Shakur to Huey Newton and the Black Panthers. His stand on human rights is very commendable. His involvement and endorsement by many (including Dr. Mutulu Shakur, Tupac Shakur's step-father) shows that he is taken seriously and his work is noticed by those who are in the know.

In the Summer of 2001, the concert industry floodgates were opened and dozens of international artists flocked to Toronto from far and wide. They came in search of their major record labels' most profitable touring season.

One independent artist found something different on the multi-cultural avenues of nearby Mississauga suburb, selling out a thousand seat concert hall in hours as fans arrived past capacity from as far as California to witness a rare live performance on June 1st. He had never been seen on US/Canada television screens, commercial radio had never played his music and his photo had never appeared through the countries' print media, in his CD insert or even on his own web site.

Upon previous day's notification of expected fan turnout, Hip-Hop Journalist Raoul S. Juneja (a.k.a. DeeJay Ra) immediately embarked from CHRW Studios in London, Ontario with longtime co-producer turntablist Keso-Swif determined to chronicle this mainstream ignored North American premiere, and be the first in US/Canada to interview a new UK rap artist/producer determined to one day cross traditional Indian "bhangra" music over to the masses.

He was Rajinder Rai, but only two years later the world would know him by another name - Panjabi MC.

The "Bhangramentary" TV Special was successfully taped in the Summer of 2001 at Mississauga's Payal Banquet Hall by Canada's Asian Television Network and hosted/produced by Raoul in collaboration with NuHype Promotions. Finally available on VHS/DVD, it contains Panjabi MC's first and most extensive North American interview as the future 2003 WorldMusicAward recipient discusses his Hip-Hop roots, unprecedented collaborations with legendary South Asian vocalists and even film scoring for "American Desi," the first Indian-American film to be screened and reviewed in mainstream cinemas across the globe.

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Originally termed "Bhangramentary" as a play on the National Film Board of Canada's acclaimed "Raisin Kane: Rapumentary" title, Raoul's TV special also features top Indian-Canadian remix producer DJ Jiten discussing the significance of Panjabi MC choosing multi-cultural Mississauga for his North American premiere, in addition to Ontario light-flyweight boxing champion Pardeep Nagra praising the traditional-modern mix of what NuHype billed as Canada's first ever female versus male "bhangra breakdance" battle, ending just as Panjabi MC appeared behind the turntables for an unexpected live DJ set to conclude Raoul's TV Special.

While hundreds of fans shouted for an encore of his new "Bhangra Night Rider" mix heard soon after by hip-hop rap artist Busta Rhymes in 2002 at a Europe night club, Panjabi MC summed up his North American premiere backstage as "Halfway through a road," explaining how "After tonight, in the future, I just wanna cross our "bhangra" over to black people, to white people, to everybody, so watch out for that."

"Now that the "Bhangramentary" TV Special of Panjabi MC's North American premiere in Mississauga is out, I'd be happy if just one record label realized the potential of Canada's Hip-Hop and R&B fanbases, who often come from diverse heritages and are quite ready to give innovative local or even ethnic global rappers a chance," explains Raoul.

"And the minute Canadian media starts giving our own emcees, DJs and producers half as much attention as they do the latest American rap idol, I think the world will recognize Canada loves the multi-cultural dream with a vengeance, and that's something our kids will be proud of."

For more about Panjabi MC or DeeJay Ra visit www.Panjabi-MC.com and www.LyricalKnockout.com respectively.

DeeJay Ra has just announced – 'DeeJay Ra Presents "From Oakland To Mumbai" Radio Special CD!*

Following a National Film Board sponsored Canadian "Hip-Hop Appreciation Week" May 2003 launch honoring Canada's Hip-Hop emcee divas Michie Mee and Tara Chase, Lyrical Knockout

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Entertainment has released DeeJay Ra's long awaited second Radio Special CD to accompany the new "Bhangramentary" TV Special DVD in time for 2005's "Hip-Hop Appreciation" Canadian campaign, taking place May 18-25 across the country's top campus radio stations.

"From Oakland To Mumbai" compilation CD consists of a KPFK 90.7 FM "Divine Forces" Bhagat Singh themed interview by Southern California activist Fidel Rodriguez, a CHRY 105.5 FM "Bigger Than Hip-Hop" Huey P. Newton themed discussion by Toronto turntablist DJ Grumps, and a CHRW 94.7 FM "Bhangramentary" Panjabi MC themed segment by Hip-Hop Journalist Raoul S. Juneja, hence the CD title also reflecting on the diverse radio episodes" subject matter.

From Rodriguez discussing US media response about Raoul's "Mahatma Gandhi: Racism's Latest Target" Globe & Mail Comment to Grumps and Raoul premiering singles in Canada from the Black Panther Fugitives youth rap group, DeeJay Ra's second radio special CD even closes by airing a live Panjabi MC 'switchin' scratch-mix as a tribute to Canadian college radio turntablist legends DJ X and DJ Mastermind.

"Our first Radio Special CD, "Comedy Meets Hip-Hop," focused on building campus media unity between Canadian entertainment genres, which The Comedy Network's Mista Mo, CTV's Gavin Stephens, PhunnyNations" Rasul Somji, ShoStoppas" Keso-Swif and The Gazette's Holly Mitchell couldn't have done a better job helping to produce," explains Raoul.

"We wanted to appropriately expand to educational media unity with "From Oakland To Mumbai" but still by using rap music as the conduit to satisfy fans of "Comedy Meets Hip-Hop" - recording Tehran emcee Imaan Faith giving shout-outs to South Africa for a Mandela Children's Fund Canada PSA amidst conversations about 2Pac, Jam Master Jay and Alex Haley all on the same CD will hopefully get us in the history books as pulling it off."

For more about DeeJay Ra's "Comedy Meets Hip-Hop" and "From Oakland To Mumbai" Radio Specials or to download visit the below web links:

<http://www.mixtapemp3.com/deejay-ra-comedy-meets-hiphop.html>

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<http://www.mixtapemp3.com/deejay-ra-from-oakland-to-mumbai.html>