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Wednesday, January 05, 2005
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Donald Glaude: Master of the house

Ice hires Donald Glaude as first national resident DJ

By Mike Prevatt

Five years ago, signing on a national DJ as a resident of a Las Vegas club would not have been big news. But for 2005, it's considerable--not only for the local club scene, but for regional nightlife and perhaps that of the rest of the country, too.

Last Friday's New Year's Eve party marked the beginning of Seattle-based DJ Donald Glaude's weekly residency at Ice, the Harmon Avenue stand-alone club formerly known as Drink and currently famous as the epicenter of "The Club," a reality-based television show on the Spike TV cable network. This Friday, Ice will officially launch its weekly "Thank Glaude It's Friday" promotion, with Glaude as headliner. (Michael "the Funkler" Fuller, Faarsheed and Justin Hoffman are the club's local resident DJs).

Residencies were hot during the electronic music explosion of 2000, but since the decline of the nightlife scene--thanks to federal scrutiny of clubs, anti-rave legislation and abysmal sales of electronic music in the post-Napster age, among other things--they've all but disappeared in recent years. Glaude's new gig--he previously enjoyed a quarterly residency at the now-defunct Utopia a few years back--is the only non-local residency in Las Vegas and one of the very few big-room DJ residencies in the country. To put things in perspective, Los Angeles, which now boasts three megaclub events every Saturday, only has one non-local residency: Brit DJ Sasha's monthly "Fundacion" party at Avalon.

Glaude, whom DJ Dave Aude once dubbed "the James Brown of DJs," might just be one of the hardest working turntablists in the business. He enjoys a huge demand among national clubs, as well as a global following that includes England, Russia, the Far East and South America. (At press time, he was in the middle of a three-date stand in Colombia, thus unavailable for an interview). He owns two dance imprints--Eden and Jacked--produces his own tracks and records mix albums for dance label Moonshine. And, he's renowned for his inclusive interpretation of house music--a funky, flamboyant, tech-tinged aesthetic delivered via four turntables, complete with cut and scratch trickery.

"He's versatile," says Fuller, who's also Ice's marketing director. "He's willing to work with the audience. He won't stick himself in one category of music. That's important to Vegas."

For many clubbers, Glaude's expertise behind the decks doesn't compare to the extroverted and charismatic presence he offers in front of them. "He's totally dynamic," says Fuller. "At the beginning [of one of his performances], you could tell the majority of the room didn't know who he was, but at the end, their hands were in the air and they were screaming."

Glaude began DJing 17 years ago in his hometown of Tacoma, Wash., before becoming a popular DJ in the Seattle area. His big break came when his former Seattle peer and good friend DJ Dan, who had relocated to San Francisco, suggested Glaude play for Bay Area underground syndicate Funky Tekno Tribe. Shortly after, Glaude became one of its permanent residents. Since then, he has played West Coast cities as San Francisco, Los Angeles and Las Vegas so often that he's amassed a loyal and sizable fanbase consisting of both clubbers and ravers.

Glaude's residency signing comes smack in the middle of Ice's resurgence in the local club scene. After some high-profile management changes last year, Ice found itself partnering up with U.K. clubbing institution Godskitchen--formerly aligned with Ra at the Luxor--which recently acquired most of Spundae, an American clubbing brand established in several other U.S. cities. This teaming has played a part in "The Club," which



DJ Donald Glaude

Who: Donald Glaude (with the Funkler and Justin Hoffman)

When: Fri., Jan. 7; 11 p.m.

Where: Ice

Admission: \$20 (subject to change)

Info: 699-5528

chronicles the (sometimes dramatic) operation of Ice.

The club has also become the only Vegas nightspot to regularly book international DJs--which is significant given that five years ago, several local clubs were touting global talent every week--and make house music its defining sound. Is it afraid its neighboring competitors will soon follow in its footsteps?

"Quite honestly, there's no way in the world with Godskitchen being home at Ice that another club can compete with the consistent draw we have," says Fuller. "They'll try. I hope they do. The more they push, the more they have to come to Ice."

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