

Waxing lyrical at Sandance

As Dubai prepares for the final Sandance before summer, **Rob Garratt** speaks to downtempo sunset soundster **Nightmares on Wax** and rounds up the other headliners

Sandance is now notorious for its sundown slot, where a major international name plays a chilled-out set segueing soulfully between day and night. And things don't get much more chilled than Nightmares on Wax. George Evelyn is known for his LPs of trippy electronica on Warp Records and his legendary Ibiza beach sets – which have earned him a Best Downtempo DJ award two years running. But he's equally known for his notoriously 'relaxed' workrate, with just six albums released in 22 years. We catch up with the 43-year-old Brit as he limbers up for the gig.

You've lived in Ibiza for seven years now. How has the scene changed in that time?

It's changed massively. I remember moving here and not believing what wasn't here – it had the house club thing, but there wasn't any variety. It was a real blank canvas. The VVIP thing is happening here now – it's not the high-life, it's the plastic life, I say.

Has being out there changed your music?

It's taken me back to where I was when I started out. In England I got a bit disconnected with DJing – the scene was going in directions I wasn't really feeling. I've rediscovered just playing music.

What are you expecting from Sandance?

I played at Nasimi Beach before, and I know this is ten times bigger. I'll showcase a couple of new tracks that no one has heard before – they're from my new album that isn't out until August.

What do you remember most about Dubai?

Dubai is funny because you're going somewhere new, but you've seen it all before – it's just bigger and more new. Finding so many expats there, it's like we've all entered an alternative reality where everything is really new, and we're all in a country none of us are from.

You were the second artist to be released on Warp, in 1989, and you're its longest signing today. Many think it has had its day...

I'm their granddad! It's only if you're worried about fashions and trends – I'm not. The purest music comes from

where you are. Music is expression, and do you ever stop expressing yourself? I don't. People say a label has had its day if it's not delivering music or it's running out of ideas – which Warp isn't.

What do you think of the electronic music scene in 2013?

The problem it faces is the tags people keep coming up with. 'EDM' – why are we pretending this is something new? Do we need a new label? Do we need to rehash the past to sell it to the masses? I can see what will happen: whenever there's a mainstream going on, there's something underneath, there'll be an underground coming up.

You're notorious for your slow workrate – it's four years since your last album. Why does it take you so long?

What's the rush? For me, I believe my greatest moments of music-making are when I'm happy and content. That's part of the groove of who I am. You should never rush to make a record; it's ready when it's ready. It's a battle. When you make a record you want it out, but if you're being truthful in your music you've got to let it out when it's ready.

Feelin' Good is out in August.



Nightmares on Wax, aka George Evelyn

The biggest Sandance bill yet?

Florence and the Machine

Florence Welch's almighty Machine may be the most relevant act Sandance has ever hosted – if not the biggest. Thanks to some canny collaborations, including the Calvin Harris remix of 'Spectrum (Say My Name)', they've managed to capture the casuals while keeping hipsters happy and teenagers in the thrall of their dark baroque-pop. Renowned for (melo)dramatic stage shows, we'll see how all that gothic garishness translates to the sunny sands.



Keane

Perhaps it's only fair that Sandance's most edgy headliner should be counterbalanced by arguably one of its most middle of the road. It may seem baffling that Tom Chaplin and co have managed a string of four UK number one albums of piano-driven, anthemic and emotionally charged alt.rock, but we expect a greatest hits show that will go down a storm in Dubai.

Groove Armada

Barely 18 months since bringing their Red Light rave concept to Sandance, the vintage UK dance duo return with a DJ set of big beats and clap-happy house. Expect vintage hits such as 'Superstylin' and 'I See You Baby' to kick off, in between electronic nuggets drawn from the savvy souls' record collections. See next week's issue for a full interview. *Sandance takes place at Atlantis The Palm on Friday May 10, 2pm-2am. Tickets Dhs295-500, www.timeouttickets.com*



► **NEXT WEEK:** A profile of the local UAE bands appearing on Sikka's new CD