



Groove Armada

As dance legends Groove Armada reinvent themselves (again) with an ambitious 'stadium rave' project, we caught up with one half of the duo, Brit Tom Findlay, ahead of their headline Sandance slot.

What can we expect from your Sandance set?

This is a new incarnation of Groove Armada, and we're calling it Red Light. We've been on the road with a band for years and years: we did [2010 albums] *Black Light* and *White Light* and it was the high point with a live band. It was great, but we felt a desire to go back to a club-based vibe. We want to recapture the feeling of the raves we went to growing up, and bring it out into a stadium show with lasers and all sorts.

And what do you expect from us?

Last time we came out we were pleasantly surprised; there's a great vibe and a big expat community. It was really fun and we met up with a few old friends. It was a more clued-up and savvy crowd than we'd anticipated.

You're basically playing a huge beach party...

It's going to be incredible. The sort of set we deliver will really work for that. We'll be arriving in Dubai after 10 days in South America playing after Beady Eye, so we'll be used to odd bills too.

So can we expect all the hits?

You can expect all the songs you'd usually expect – but we don't play

them like you'd expect. It will be a different vibe altogether. These are our secret edits, mixed with cuts of heavy acid house and tunes we've been picking up over the past year.

The promoter told *Time Out* that he's expecting 'Superstylin' to be the highlight of the day. Why does that tune have such an effect on people?

He'll be waiting until near the end of our set then! I think it's got that element of dance music and ska – there's a lot of that reggae, skanking sound. Everyone loves ska: you put that with a banging beat and you can't go wrong. I must have played that 18,000 times, but I still enjoy it.

That's a lot of times to spin a tune. After 12 years and eight albums, how do you keep it fresh?

By constantly trying to achieve something different with each project. I wouldn't say we are great artists, but all great artists, whether it's Madonna or Bowie, do that.

What would you have done with your life if you hadn't become a musician?

I probably would have been a history teacher, shouting at people. One day I might be – you never know.

There's still time! How much longer do you see the Groove Armada brand continuing?

We say five years, but then we do another five years. There will come a point where we won't be excited any more. We're at the beginning of Red Light, then we'll do another one, then that might be it.

Also on the bill

Norman Jay

The first black British DJ to be awarded an MBE by the British monarchy, this musical encyclopedia, broadcast panellist and regular Dubai visitor is known affectionately as 'the DJ's DJ'. During the past three decades Jay has gone from playing block parties and pirate radio to headlining sets for the likes of Robert De Niro, Dolce & Gabbana, Prince and Mick Jagger. Expect classic funk and modern house grooves at his early-evening set.



Funkagenda

He started out fronting a teenage rock band, yet Adam Walder has come a long way from his roots in the UK's West Midlands. As Funkagenda, he's been making music for nearly a decade, winning the Ibiza DJ Awards' best track (for 'Man with the Red Face') and best newcomer accolades in 2008, while his remix work includes tracks by Basement Jaxx and Fatboy Slim. Known for innovation and originality, he plays dancefloor favourites that move as well as motivate.



Pete Murray

A sunset-timed set from the Aussie legend is already tipped as the Sandance highlight those of a mellower disposition. Inspired by Neil Young and Bob Dylan, Murray has scored three consecutive number one LPs in his homeland. We're expecting a chilled-out acoustic performance with a beachside Jack Johnson vibe.



Sneaky Sound System

The Aussie dance duo have the honour of being one of the repeat visitors to Sandance after proving a hit at the second shindig this March. We don't envy their slot – bridging the rock-dance gap between headliners The Script and Groove Armada – but something tells us their dancefloor-filling approach was chosen for a reason.



Sandance: essential info

Taking place on Friday November 18 from 2pm-2am, this will be the fourth Sandance to take place at Nasimi Beach, hot on the heels of last month's Richard Ashcroft-headlined 10,000-strong predecessor.

The first Sandance, held last October, attracted 6,500 people, with Armand Van Helden and Zero 7 topping the bill; a second event this March was headlined by the Brand New Heavies and Roger Sanchez. Organisers are hoping for around double the debut's audience one year on.

Yet the event's swelling numbers come with a downside – hops ran out early at last month's gig and a shortage of taxis scuppered many exit journeys. But organisers have pledged to up the drinks supplies, and will be laying on buses to help revellers get home.

Regular tickets Dhs200 in advance, Dhs250 on the door; VIP tickets Dhs350. Available at www.timeouttickets.com

