



This week: previews

Paul Oakenfold

Is there anything Paul Oakenfold hasn't done? He's already (deep breath) signed Salt-N-Pepa, produced the Happy Mondays, managed the Beastie Boys, been the first DJ to play the main stage at Glastonbury Festival in the UK, penned the theme to the UK's *Big Brother*, recruited Hunter S Thompson as a guest vocalist, remixed the Bond theme for the 21st century, gigged with a 75-piece orchestra and reinvented Madonna. What more can the Brit DJ/producer hope to achieve? Oh, of

course, a four-part series of concept albums and tours with an accompanying hypergalactic light show. In Dubai we'll get 'The Winter Edition' of his megalomaniac, 12-month Four Seasons tour, which concludes in November and introduces a new mix album for each of its four incarnations. Bafflingly pretentious, we can't help but be intrigued. *Dhs150. 10pm, Thursday February 2. Trilogy, Souk Madinat Jumeirah (050 624 5751).*

Seven things you didn't know about...

Arrested Development's Speech

Afro-centric hip-hop pioneers Arrested Development originate from a forgotten time when rap came from, and spoke for, the streets. Debut album *3 Years, 5 Months & 2 Days in the Life Of...* – named after the length of time it took them to get a record contract – was a hit back in '93, propelled by radio-friendly single 'Tennessee'. It's that influential work that the seven-piece will be revisiting on their second trip to Dubai on Friday February 2. Ahead of the gig, softly spoken, eloquent frontman Speech, 43, opened the vaults.

Its 20 years since their chart-smashing debut, which Speech thinks is a 'unique piece of art in music history'.

'I don't know why the first album resonated with so many people, but I'm so glad it has. I think it stands out as a unique piece of art in music history, a mixture of hip-hop, spirituality and consciousness. It's a special moment in the evolution of hip hop. Mos Def, Black Eyes Peas, the Fugees and Erykah Badu have all told me they couldn't do what they do without it. It's a generational thing; I'm passing on what I learned from De la Soul and Public Enemy.'

He hates 'strip-club hip-hop'.

'I think modern music is amazing, but the biggest problem is promotions – the only music that gets promoted in the mainstream is the materialistic stuff, the strip-club stuff. A lot of the diversity and creativity is not getting promoted and people are disenchanted with the way hip-hop is characterised. I have a word with the young 'uns and try and put them on the right track whenever I can.'

His worst memory is when his son Jahl, now 17, nearly died.

'It was the scariest thing in my life. He was seven years old, we were in a restaurant and we gave him a piece of ice to suck on; he choked and started turning purple. Thank God a doctor was eating nearby us; he saved his life.

Afterwards I broke down and cried. I thought, "I almost lost my son".'

He owns every record ever released on jazz label Blue Note Records.

'I'm very lucky – I was given the full back catalogue. I play them all the time. I listen most to the '60s and '70s stuff, Jimmy Smith, all those guys, good old-fashioned jazz.'

He's glad the band split up for five years, between 1995 and 2000.

'That was the best thing we could have done. This is a group that's all about voices; we're a family and when we started to fight it was time to let go. I don't regret it at all. I used to think about what we could have done if we'd stayed together, but now we're focused on what we're going to do.'

The band are making their reality TV show debut in the US in *Made*, which sees Speech coaching young rappers in the craft.

'The most important thing I teach them is to have your own voice. If you can't find that thing that makes you unique – that to me is the calling card that makes you special. I always wanted to be a teacher. If I didn't do the music, that's where I'd be, teaching history – it's the only other thing I can imagine doing. I don't know what era, but I'm interested in African and American history.'

He wants to retire in seven years.

'I see myself doing it until I'm 50 and then chilling out; just doing the shows that have some symbolic meaning, like Martin Luther King Day or the anniversary of apartheid. As soon as I'm 50, that's it. Just two nights ago I was doing a show with Public Enemy: Chuck D is 51, Flavour Flav is probably 50. It's one of these beautiful but cruel realities – you get better with time but you lose the audience. We did a show with James Brown just before he died and he still had it.' *Interview: Rob Garratt. Arrested Development play at Chi@The Lodge, Al Nasr Leisureland on Friday February 2. Dhs150 (regular), Dhs250 (fan pit),*

www.timeouttickets.com



The Beat

Possessing the most to-the-point band name ever, The Beat, arguably, are what The Beatles should have been called – John and Paul wanted to conjure the drive of rhythm and blues and the heady spirit of beat literature, thus 'Beatles' rather than 'Beetles'. But, anoraks aside, it's a fitting moniker for the Birmingham act who claimed the name eight years after Ringo and co had recorded their last notes. Stylistically stemming from the same cultural milieu as Two-Tone stalwarts The Specials, Bad Manners, et al, The Beat combine Jamaican ska and rocksteady with punk in the same quixotic way. Reformed a decade ago,



there's been talk of a new album for years now, but we're still waiting. *Dhs150-250. 9pm, Thursday February 2, Chi@The Lodge, Al Nasr Leisureland, www.timeouttickets.com*

Billy Ocean

We've got a soft spot for Billy Ocean's sultry, soppy soul-pop. Not quite in the so-bad-it's-good camp, Ocean is left off the hook for some of his greater transgressions of taste: the video for 1986's 'When the Going Gets Tough, the Tough Get Going', complete with a cameo from Michael Douglas. Ocean broke a 15-year retirement from touring back in 2007, and we've heard mixed reports about his recent form, but how could anyone resist the groove of mega-hit 'Caribbean Queen'? *Dhs120. 7pm, Saturday February 4 (note date change due to birthday of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The Irish Village, Garhoud,*

www.timeouttickets.com

