

Spotted



Jay Sean smoking shisha with friends at IKandy Ultra Lounge at the Shangri-La Hotel on

Sheikh Zayed Road. British glamour model and TOWIE star Maria Fowler walking along the beach at the Atlantis The Palm and later partying at Sheikh Zayed Road hotspot Cavalli Club.

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Hot seat

Mike Skinner of The Streets

Ahead of a DJ set at the launch of a new alternative night, *Rob Garratt* sits down with the man who revolutionised British urban music



You're playing a new night called Superheroes. What superhero would you be? I would want to fly, that would be my stipulation, so I guess it's got to be Superman. But I'm not so into the idea – it would be quite a lot of pressure. But I would like to be able to fly. If anything comes my way, I'd help out, but otherwise just let the world do its thing.

Last time you were out here was one of The Streets' last ever shows, Barasti in 2011. That was pretty mad. We didn't really think about the farewell bit, it was just a case of what came in and what time. It was great. When I'd been to Dubai before, been to clubs, the obvious stuff that involves the things you can't do, the differences... You expect that might have a bearing on the crowd, but it didn't feel any different to any other gig. And it was on the beach, which was a bit special.

Before your fifth album was even out you'd announced it would be the last – how did you know it was time? Five albums was the record deal, and I'm a big fan of working within the boundaries. If the record deal had been for four albums, then maybe there would have been four Streets albums. It was just how I felt.

'It's really exciting being famous, being in magazines'

Yes – at the time you sounded pretty unenthusiastic about album number five, Computers and Blues. Right at the end I was pretty exhausted, I'd been doing it for ten years pretty much without stopping, and I said some things which probably just reflected how tired I was.

But I was really obsessed with every album, I didn't work any less hard on any of them.

Another brand you called time on is your label, The Beats, which had signed Professor Green and Example. You must have missed out on a pretty penny there. No – what they did after The Beats would never have come out on The Beats, which was a rap label and never would have been not that. Elliot [Gleeve; Example] went onto to make dance music very successfully, and Green took it into the realm of pop, which is where rap went to. They did that on their own.

What are you working on? We're just about to get started with the new D.O.T. stuff [a duo with Rob Harvey from The Music], we're going to be doing a song every two months. I'm also doing various bits for possible TV shows and a film, all stuff I'm sworn to secrecy.

Sounds like a slower pace – do you miss the fame? It's really exciting being famous, being in magazines and stuff, it makes you feel really powerful and it's got all of the things that you think it's got. But it's a lot of hassle, a lot of strain, and I don't miss that really. When you're in your twenties all anyone really wants is to be a pop star, I can't think of anything better – even footballers don't really get to have that much fun. Musicians are truly independent – actors get paid more but they're always working for the man in some way. But musicians, they have a really good time.

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