

## Go kray for Kay

Montreal-based producer Kaytranada is a seriously hot topic at the moment, and he's about to play his biggest date yet – in London. Just don't tweet to the beat, he tells **Tristan Parker**

**'S**kype is trippin', says Kaytranada, AKA Kevin Celestin. The connection then fizzles out for the umpteenth time during our transatlantic interview. If only the super-savvy producer could utilise his tech-wizardry to win over a malevolent Skype connection.

Even without such otherworldly powers, Kaytranada has risen from an underground name beloved of beat geeks to a white-hot, buzzy artist. He's now on the fringe of mainstream success. It's all due to his silky smooth blending of hazy R&B and experimental hip hop: think D'Angelo meets Flying Lotus – about as on-point as it gets right now.

For someone on the bleeding edge of music, Kaytranada certainly doesn't come across as arrogant. He's softly spoken in his responses, yet naturally charming and quietly cool. Despite being measured, he's making all the right noises. His sound has tickled a ton of people, reportedly including Janet Jackson. She's one star to get Kay's remix treatment, when he reworked her song 'If' in 2012. 'When I dropped the remix her people told me that she really liked it,' says the producer.

And why the heck wouldn't she? The sexy electronic grooves massaged into the song are infectious. Though it was this remix and another sublime rework (for R&B singer Teedra Moses) that nudged Kaytranada towards the spotlight, his own productions are just as irresistible. Check the hip hop-driven 'Drive Me Crazy', featuring Chicago rapper and Kanye pal Vic Mensa, for a taste of his killer skills.



Kaytranada is currently holed-up in his native Montreal. He's putting the finishing touches to his debut album, due for release later this year on the white-hot XL Recordings label. However, he is venturing out to play the occasional show, including a performance at Brixton Academy on Friday.

'I love the London vibe,' Kaytranada assures us. He must have spent some time here, then? 'Yeah, I was there for a week before a show. I pretty much hung out eating Nando's and record-digging.' No feasting on wagyu beef at Chiltern Firehouse for this guy – Kaytranada is a man of the people.

Back to the show: Brixton Academy is 'probably the biggest place I've played', he reckons, before checking something: 'Is it bigger than KOKO?' It is. 'Oh yeah? You just taught me something right there! I never thought it would be that big.'

Frankly, with his kind of talent, Kaytranada had better get used to playing vast venues. A word of warning, though, for anyone heading to the show: spend your time dancing rather than fiddling with your iPhone. 'I don't want awkward shows with people looking at their phones or tweeting,' he explains. 'That's something you should do at home. People should be going to shows to have fun and express themselves – just enjoy it!' So in short, if you're catching Kaytranada this weekend, prepare for a sea of hands in the air – hopefully without any iPhones in them.

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**Kaytranada plays Brixton Academy on Fri Mar 20.**

### KAYTRANADA *In his own words*

#### 1. HE'S GOT A LOT OF STRINGS TO HIS BOW

'I'm maybe a hip hop producer, but I'd call myself a musician, as I make all types of music. I might want to do bossa nova, R&B, house...'

#### 2. HE KNOWS HOW TO WOO LONDONERS

'I get so much love from London that I never had from other places. It's crazy. The people there understand music so much more.'

#### 3. HE KNOWS WHAT HE LIKES (TO EAT)

'Nando's: boom! That's what I'm thinking of whenever I'm in London. I go there every time. There are only a few of them in the US.'

#### 4. HE'S NOT AFRAID TO GIVE THE CROWD SOME TOUGH LOVE

'Y'all motherfuckers better dance and shit, instead of staying on your goddamn phones.'

#### 5. HIS TATTOOS ARE A SORE POINT

'At a [wild] Montreal party, people were talking to me and touching my chest... I'd just had a new tattoo there, so I didn't want people touching it!'

ASH KINGSTON