

Getting down for the party



READY TO RAP: Jay Sean to light up the stage at Ibrida and, below, performing on stage

CHART-TOPPING singer, songwriter and rapper Jay Sean plans to light up the stage with his silky smooth vocals and Bhangra-infused beats for Formula One's Grand Prix Opening Party at Ibrida.

Kamaljit Singh Jhooti, better known by his stage name, will heat up Ramee Grand Hotel's dance destination in Seef on Thursday, April 16.

The 36-year-old artist looks forward to visiting the kingdom for the first time and said: "I always love getting the chance to come to a new place and see my fans! It's always really special to see fans around the world who know and love my music. It always makes me feel very lucky."

Jay Sean originally had plans to study medicine when he enrolled in Barts and The London School of Medicine and Dentistry at Queen Mary, University of London. However, he left in 2003 to follow his dream of becoming a professional singer.

Later in 2003, he teamed up with mates from the Rishi Rich Project, (consisting of Rich, Sean and Juggy D) and forged the way for a Bhangra-R&B fusion. He began his solo career in 2004 with Virgin Records and then later worked with labels such as 2Point9, Jaded - his independent label, as well as American label, Cash Money Records.

While the sizzling Brit with a South



EXCLUSIVE

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Asian background is known for blending the upbeat Bhangra style of Punjab with the soulful and sultry sounds of R&B, he isn't afraid to mix it up with new musical flavours.

"I think I am always open to whatever sounds good or I just enjoy. It's not always a conscious choice to say I'm going to use 'this' in my music. Sometimes things just present themselves, and I say, 'let's try it!'"

"Sometimes trying works really well and sometimes not, but often I just go with what I'm enjoying at the moment. People are always evolving and so is the music we listen to," he said.

As a solo artist, he has been in the Top 10 on the Japan Hot 100 with hit *Maybe*. It was included alongside another big-seller *Tonight* in his second album, *My Own Way*, which reached No. 6 on the UK Albums Chart in 2008. His American debut single, *Down*, sold more than six million copies worldwide and has been certified Platinum in several countries, including the UK, US, Australia and New Zealand.

Down also earned him a spot on the US Billboard Hot 100 chart in 2009 and recognised him as the first South Asian solo artist and first UK urban act to top the chart.

Although Jay Sean has also been referred to as a 'one-man, boy band', he has successfully worked with other illustrious artists in addition to his solo projects.

"I have been so lucky to collaborate with so many legendary artists," he explained. "People like Mary J Blige, Sean Paul, Busta Rhymes as well as Lil Wayne and Nicki Minaj to just name a few!"

"It's very hard for me to choose my favourite, but I think I'm really lucky that this Punjabi boy from Southall, London, got the opportunity to work with so many other artists and we got to bless each other's music," he added.

He draws inspiration from the tangible as well as the fanciful to come up with the magic behind his songs. Some of his tracks have been about his wife, American R&B singer and model, Thara Prashad. The two have been featured on each other's tracks and have drawn artistic inspiration from each other.

"Ahhh my muses ... I'm very creative and I have a massive imagination. Sometimes my muses have been real, like when a lot of my songs were about Thara. But then for things like *The Mistress I and II*, those are really my imagination at work. Or sometimes even what I see other people going through and then I turn it into a song," he said. "That's the beauty of being a songwriter. You can write whatever story you want."

While he is keeping the set list a surprise, he did imply that there would be lots of goodies in store for his loyal following in Bahrain.

"You can expect lots of energy and connection," he said. "I will perform some of the old and some of the new hits to give everyone something they love!"

His albums *Me Against Myself* (2004), *My Own Way* (2008), *All or Nothing* (2009) and *Neon* (2013) have earned him many awards and plenty of recognition, but his latest undertakings also involve the joys of fatherhood and quality time with his wife and child.

He said: "I think my best project now is our little girl, Ayva. There is nothing better than being a dad! And then Thara and I are also opening up a yoga studio! This has been a long-time dream of hers so I'm so happy that we could make it come true. And then of course, I'm always busy in the studio making new music."

Luckily for Jay Sean's Bahrain fans, they can have their dreams come true too by joining the star at his show.

● Tickets to watch Jay Sean at the F1 Grand Prix opening party at Ibrida are being pre-sold for BD25 and will be BD35 on the door. For details, contact 36897378.

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