

Alataj Interview YokoO

The artist has just launched his own record label and tells us more details about the project

From the first moment I met the work of Frenchman **Julien Beltzung**, a.k.a **YokoO**, it was love at first sight. The bass line is always very immersive and the musical construction of the sets is precise. I consumed everything that came out of the artist on the internet and shared it with as many people as I could. In 2017 I was able to see him live and I can say that I lived a very remarkable set in my life that made the admiration for him grow even more

Since then I can say that I missed very few sets from him here in Brazil and I had the pleasure of receiving him in the line-up of my own event, when I got to know a little more about him, his ideas, spirituality, passion for music, travel and a good party. So when I heard about the release of his new label, **Satya**, and that I was going to interview him, the feeling was one of great happiness.

YokoO is a free spirit person and great honesty in his opinions, so knowing what he thinks about the music scene and his intentions with the new projects was really cool. Satya launched its first release in late April with *Basics*, a VA featuring tracks by YokoO, **Mathew Dekay**, **Zone+** and **Retza**. Check out now how our conversation went.

Alataj: Hi Julien, how are you? Glad to have you here! Let's start talking about your new project, Satya. When did you feel the need to have your own record label?

YokoO: Ola! Doing just fine, merci. On a plane from Guadalajara to Los Angeles as I type this. I never felt starting a record label was a need but rather a growing desire, and a natural continuation of my artistic expression.

The label's first release is a VA with four tracks well connected to the minimal house. Will this be the sound base of the label or do you intend to work this aspect freely?

I would like to think that the label will not be tied to a specific genre but rather to a sound that resonates with my heart at a given time. Right now, as a DJ, I feel strongly drawn to the faster, groovier, more ethereal and hypnotic side of the minimal house movement. I imagine that the next releases of the label will be reflective of that.

How did you pick the artists who launched this project together with you?

I hold these guys close to my heart, and deeply enjoy their music. All three inspire me in various ways. It only made sense to have them at the core of the operation.

We are living in a market where labels have become gigantic and popular brands, often dictating sound styles prevalent at parties and festivals and influencing artists when producing their tracks, as they wish to achieve success. Do you believe that this scenario can harm creative freedom and daring at the time of creation?

I do believe that such labels, being as influential as they are, have a tendency to drive artists into creating with limitations.

The pandemic might have had positive repercussions on the matter. The fact that DJs/Producers have had time away from the touring circuit indubitably will have led to an outburst of creativity. I personally enjoyed not seeing other artists perform their music during this period and seized the opportunity to dive a little deeper into my own creative self.

In your case, I know that you are an artist who takes long tours, spending a long time away from home. How does your creative process work at the time of production?

I have indeed been known as someone who gets on the road for extended periods of time. I usually stay away from trying to create throughout my travels, unless I feel deeply compelled/inspired to do so. I very much enjoy the comfort of my studio space at home. My daily routine helps me delve into flow states where creation becomes natural, and a process driven by forces detached from the thinking mind.

In addition, productivity is also an important factor at work. How do you maintain the mental and physical balance to carry out all your activities in the midst of a hectic schedule?

My spiritual practice is everything to me. I try to hit the mat every day. I enjoy being alone and holding space for myself. I spend much time nurturing my energy levels by being healthy, eating well, practicing yoga as regularly as possible, consciously breathing, and simply being.

I also know that you have a very deep relationship with Yoga and that influences your life as a whole. But, specifically in your relationship with music, how does Yoga impact the work you do inside the studio and on the dance floors?

Yoga has shown me a path to the infinite. It has taught me to see without eyes. It is attuning me to feel into a much broader frequency spectrum and connect to an energetical world that appears to exist beyond the space / time modalities. My awareness of the endless multi-layered universes is slowly expanding to a level of integration. The constant desire to rise and the work that lays beneath it all has a profound impact on the

energy at the source of every thought I have and every action I take. The higher vibrational energy flowing in and out of my being defines my relationship with both my internal and external environments. All is connected, somehow.

We are beginning to see a gradual return of party and festival activities around the world, but I believe that we still have a long way to go. Do you think this pandemic will change something in our scenario when we fully return to activities?

Indeed we are. I am no one to predict the future but have witnessed and experienced a drastic change whilst playing at some gigs this last month. People are showing a lot more gratitude for social gatherings and rightly so, appreciate them for what they are worth.

For 2021, can we expect more news from YokoO and Satya?

Fresh music on both fronts, and hopefully some label showcases further down the track.

We always end with a traditional question from Alataj: what does music represent in your life?

Music is my bridge to a universal language of emotions. It is a connecting tool and a means of expression. It represents the audible vibrations of different feelings and barges into the soul with no boundaries or limitations.

Music connects.