



An interview with Rhia

by JGirl

It's Saturday January 20th and we're at JGirl's living room. We're hanging out with Rhia tonight and she's been rocking the decks in Vancouver for about 5 or 6 years, making a splash actually. We thought we'd ask her a few questions while she's here in Kelowna.

What got you interested in DJing?

RW: Well, a few things. I guess the first things was when I was about eleven years old and I was at my first dance and I saw a DJ playing and watching him put on one track, and another track, and layering them and gave me an interest in how creative you could be in music. By the time I was 15 or 16 going to the raves, I was thinking: "Wow, you can DJ with Electronic music? No way!"

How long had you been attending raves/nightclubs before you stepped up to the decks?

RW: Haha! Well, I was "raving" for probably about 4 or 6 months until I really wanted to start DJing. Someone told me that you have to follow your dreams. I thought: "Ya! You are totally right!" I went for it only a few months later.

You were immersed in a multicultural environment while growing up in Vancouver and you travel to many places across the pond, how have your experiences affected your musical interests?

RW: So much! I guess I could say that being in a place of multi-culturalism like Vancouver, I mean I was always a minority at the school I went to. I was always exposed to Hindi music, Chinese music, Spanish, Latin and just so much music and then with traveling to Australia, Thailand, and Europe and always being interested in other cultures. I just love world music and I have always been interested in everything.

Do you play any instruments?

RW: I play piano, the recorder, and I attempted the guitar until I had a really mean grade 8 teacher. I've always wanted to get into music and I've always loved singing. I never knew what style I wanted to play but with DJing you can be so versatile and basically try anything.

Do you or do you intend to write/produce music?

RW: I've been working on. It's finally getting on the go and moving! I've attempted with Garage Band and other things like doing remixes and editing. I've always kept a book and written lyrics. So hopefully, I can take some vocal lessons and maybe I can start singing one day.

Singing with your DJing? Like a combo type thing?

RW: Who knows? We'll see.

What is your most memorable DJing experience to date?

RW: I always remember my 2nd DJing gig when I was playing Drum and Bass and I had an MC performing with me. It is the most thrilling thing ever!

RW: Otherwise, it has been playing on the Grandville strip of Vancouver at one of their biggest clubs with 400 people and the energy was so intense. It was end of summer and the crowd was just screaming and yelling the whole time. It was just phenomenal. I loved it.

I guess the crowd's energy is something that really gets you pumped and inspired?

RW: Oh definitely. I find that when you opening and there is no one there I am more nervous but when there is a big crowd it gives me confidence and energy and that is the best.

'Play it Tonight' is one of your affiliations, tell us about your involvement with them...

RW: Well 'Play It Tonight' was originally started by Dan, DJ Timeline. You see, a friend of mine Seam Gallagher started 'Pacific Room Digital' by himself and he was always looking for people who are loyal and willing to help. I was by his side and gave him advice and helping him out where I could. I went down to the Winter Music Conference with him. It was soon after this that he joined with DJ Timeline to create 'Play It Tonight.' I'm happy to support them and am always there for them.

What they have done is very impressive.

As an event organizer, what things do you focus on when shaping your event? (Be it music, atmosphere, fundraising.)

RW: Traveling has probably been the biggest inspiration for me. Apex is probably where I've done the most in terms of a big event. We got to show some big things. The 1st year I did a Thailand theme based on my trip to Thailand. The full moon parties over there were just a blast and I wanted people in Vancouver to see that, especially with House music. I love the beach vibes and the good feelings that everyone brings. And last year, I did a theme based on Miami from my trip to WMC. I like to do the decorations and I like to have the DJs sounds like that theme because it's about bringing to Vancouver what a lot of people haven't seen. It is such an experience.

That sounds like a really wonderful thing. Sunshine. Beach. House music. I certainly wouldn't complain.

What is the most valuable thing that you learned in your 'career' so far?

RW: Well, there are 2 things. One I learned a few years ago from IC Lite who is a Deep House DJ of 18 years from New York. He told me: "You can't please everybody." Which is really important because it's one thing I've always tried to do but as a DJ you have to face it that not everyone is going to like what you are doing.

RW: Tyler Johnson told me: "You can't get involved too much into the politics of DJing. It will really bring you down. Just enjoy it and have fun." This has really helped and well it helps has helped me get through those tough times, you know.

If you could share the stage with anyone, who would it be?

RW: Deep Dish and Miss Nine! Oh and Pete Tong.

Describe yourself in a color.

RW: Turquoise. It reminds me of beachy blue waters in those tropical areas and I love blue and green.

What do you love?

RW: I love music, drawing, and art. I love visual art. Music Videos are just ... I love them.

What do you hate?

RW: Ugly things? Haha!

Are there any tricks up Rhia/Ree Fresh's sleeve for 2007?

RW: Well, in 2006 I got to meet a lot of cool people who are really driven, passionate, and loyal. I've got a couple of projects in the works with a couple of the people who I really want to start working with so it's kind of joining forces. Two heads are better than one.

Great! Thanks for meeting with us tonight and we look forward to partying! Beachin' It!

*Catch Rhia at Believe at the Red Room on Saturdays and at Proper at The Plaza Club on Granville. Both in Vancouver, BC.
www.myspace.com/rhia_wellbelove*