



German-born RALF GUM is at the top of the soulful house tree. His productions, mixes, collaborations and DJ sets have won him world-wide acclaim since he started out in the 1990s. Now residing in South Africa, he's also released three albums under his own name. The latest, 'In My City' (see our reviews pages) is a masterwork in the potential of soul-based dance grooves... little wonder it's drawn praise aright across the soul spectrum; from the modern crowd through to the house heads. As usual Ralf uses a stellar line up to help him flesh out his ideas and there's no bigger name in this cast list than South African musical icon, Hugh Masekela. With such a great buzz on 'In My City' we needed to know more about our Ralf..... Linking up, we began by finding out a little about his background.....

I grew up near Würzburg, a small town in the south of Germany, and don't come from a musical family background. Everything started when music came calling in my early teens. Back then I preferred funky, jazzy and soulful music and started to search for and collect such records. As the collection grew I wanted to play the music to other people which led me to DJ-ing. The wish to make a professional career within the music industry started in my late teens, but I finished my studies as a civil engineer nevertheless. ... Just in case I would not be able to make a living out of music.... I wanted to have something to fall back on. During my studies I spent as much time as possible in the studio and after finishing my studies, I felt that it was safe to make my passion a profession.

Tell us about the music and artists that influenced you as you were growing up...have your tastes subsequently changed?

It feels impossible to cut it down to just a few. I guess that I took influences from many genres and countless artists, which eventually and hopefully led to my own style. I have always been drawn towards soulful electronic music, while I always listened to various genres since I started out. But my taste has never really changed.



What about your first steps in the music business.... and how did your career develop to the position you're in now?

BY GUM: The Ralf Gum interview.....

Written by Bill B

Tuesday, 16 September 2014 13:05 - Last Updated Tuesday, 16 September 2014 14:32

I made my first steps into the industry as a DJ in 1990. My preferred sound then was clearly US-House but I had to play a mix of House, Nu-Jazz, Hip Hop and early Techno. Pure House Music nights were simply not understood at that time in my home town! Producing followed in 1993. A friend who owned a studio invited me to look over his shoulder while working. I was fascinated by his drum machines and samplers right away and soon started to invest in my own equipment. Reflecting on my whole career nowadays, it looks like I went through a slow but steady rise. I don't mind this at all, as my skills had time to grow alongside my position in the music industry.

When and why did you decide to move to South Africa? How does living there affect your sound?

As a DJ I travel a lot, almost 20 years now and I saw many different places all over the world, but when in 2008 I came for the first time to South Africa, I felt a special vibe right away. The more I visited the country on subsequent tours, the more I fell in love with it and its people. My wife started to tag along on SA tours and we extended our stays whenever possible to get a better feel of life there. The more time we spent in SA, the more we felt at home. After a while it actually felt as if we were leaving home, when we flew back to Germany. In addition the friends we made in the country played a role in the decision, just as the fabulous music scene did. The weather is much better than in Germany, my studio rent is cheaper and of course the huge love for soulful music which exists in the country played a role, too. And surely everything surrounding an artist does influence his sound. "In My City" is the first album I fully produced in my new home. While I think that I kept my signature touch, there are definitely influences, which I would not have without being here.

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**"RALF GUM'S "IN MY CITY" IS RELEASED ON GOGO
MUSIC AND WILL BE AVILABLE FROM OCTOBER 6TH.
There's a full review in our reviews archive**

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