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## BEARDYMAN

*Beardyman is one of the UK's top beatboxers. He was UK Beatbox Champion two years running and this year won the award for Best MC/Vocalist at Breakspoll. He's supported Groove Armada, Jazzy Jeff, Blondie and Sly & the Family Stone and has performed at practically every festival going. This month he's at the Edinburgh Fringe, teaming up with long-time collaborators JFB, Klumzy-tung, Jay Foreman, and visual artist David Hopkinson.*

I only started beatboxing when I was at uni and my mate Dan rushed into a room with a copy of Rahzel's album, Make the Music 2000. Up until then I'd done a lot of music - playing banjo in Italy, playing piano in a Majorcan restaurant - all these things that weren't beatbox related at all.

But I'd always been interested in making beats. I started out as a tapdancer. I was 12 at the time. It was the rhythm of the clacking feet, the clickety-clacking feet that first got me into the business of rhythm production. I'd tap out a beat and then when I couldn't tap - like in maths class or something - I'd do it with my fingers on a table.

I found Rahzel really inspiring. It was a bit of a realization because I felt like I'd already been doing that thing, just not out loud. To be a good beatbox you need to have a second brain. You need to use your reptilian brain more than you do your conscious brain. You need to get it to the point where you've got a sound that other people can't make and you practice putting those sounds into rhythms and you practice putting those rhythms into songs and you practice putting those songs into sets. It's a long and arduous process.

No one really gets beatboxing in the adult world, in the real world. No one understands how much of an art form it can be when you start looping with it. I'm really into looping; producing live, being able to make music as you think of it. I've got this whole flashing spaceship with buttons and knobs and sliders. And all these mad units enable me to produce music live, it's awesome.

My aim at the moment is to try and change the way music is made by highlighting to everyone how it's possible to make totally finished music as it happens. You can do it as one person, you can do it with more than one person. I'm not talking about jazz, about noodling around, about free improv, where it doesn't really make any sense. I'm talking about producing some sick tunes just by using a loop. And it's always increasing, I'm always finding ways to use more and more equipment. I'm always coming up with more ideas that demand more stuff. Trying to find better ways of doing things.

There's so much more to be done. Basically, every beatbox, including me, is crap. Someone needs to come along who's better than anyone that's come before. There's this kid called Miles. He was 14 when I met him and he was one of the best beatboxes I had ever heard. His voice hadn't even broken and it didn't even matter. He was sick.

Right now I'm working on the craziest shit you've ever seen. I can't tell you about it, it's a secret. But it's some crazy shit.

Beardyman was talking to Jo Caird

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