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MAGAZINE

## Ali B making it international

by Donnatella Connolly



the Smalltown DJs were like "Why don't you come play on Saturday at Commonwealth," and I was like, "Why not?" The invitation was based on a friendship that has been developing between the Smalltown DJs and Ali B, who first shared a stage with them in Calgary at the Night Gallery before the HiFi existed. That invitation was later extended to playing at the HiFi club and reciprocated when Ali B started his weekly Saturday night at Paradise Club.

"A friend of mine that used to run Fabric, who worked with me on my Air events, opened the venue five years ago. I wanted to get back into playing funk records again because it is where I started as a DJ. So I created this night upstairs [in Paradise] where you just get all sorts of DJs—Smalltown DJs played there, Mat the Alien, Vinyl Ritchie, Czech, lots of guys from Canada."

**A**lthough it happens quite regularly in places like Los Angeles and Las Vegas, it is not an everyday occurrence in Calgary when a world renowned DJ takes up a weekly residency in our city. Just recently, Commonwealth Stage and Bar introduced their newest Saturday night residency with DJ Ali B. Hailing from London with a DJ career that has spanned over two decades, he has graced stages all over the world, held regular residencies in clubs such as Fabric, Paradise and the Blue Note, and transformed his breaks night "Air" into a global phenomenon, hosting arenas in places like Global Gathering, Glastonbury, and Australia's Future Music Festival.

That is why the announcement of a weekly residency in Calgary came as a surprise to many who follow Ali B, whether it be through his gigs, mixes or remixes. When put to the question, his answer is very simple: He loves Canada.

"I have worked in the music industry and in various parts of London for two decades and I thought that I would like to come to Canada now. When I started looking into how to do it,

When deciding on a concept for the downstairs space in Calgary's newest bar, Smalltown DJs were quick to ask Ali B to recreate the vibes that you would find at Paradise, but with its own unique spin. "It couldn't be a carbon copy. It is going to be its own thing. It is largely going to be decided by how the crowd reacts to me."

And when describing his lounge brand of funk and soul that will vary anywhere from James Brown to downtempo Major Lazer, the consensus is there is nothing to be had besides a great time.

Catch DJ Ali B at Commonwealth Stage and Bar, downstairs every Saturday Night and for a taste of what to expect check out vol. 3 in his "Oh Shit" mix series <http://www.mixcloud.com/alib/all-b-oh-shit-paradise-vol-3/>