



PHOTO BY SHANE MCCAULEY

Many are saying that Mad Decent Block Party is going to be the biggest, bestest music event of the (end of) summer. Tickets have been sold out for some time for this all-star, all-boy “block party” boasting some of the leading names in a scene all the cool kids are talking about: EDM (electronic dance music). The grandmaster, **Diplo** (aka Thomas Wesley Pentz, who runs the Mad Decent label), will be joined by **Dillon Francis**, **Zeds Dead**, **Big Gigantic**, **STRFKR**, **Flosstradamus**, **GRiZ** and **Kaytranada** onstage at the Cuthbert for the event *Rolling Stone* ranks at number 26 for “Summer 2014’s 40 Must-See Music Festivals.”

So get ready to get low — while bouncing to “Get Low,” the infectious megahit Dillon Francis released with DJ Snake in February. The single is a taste of *Money Sucks*, *Friends Rule*, Francis’ first-ever full-length album due out Oct. 28.

EW caught up with Dillon Francis over the phone to talk about the album, fashion, drugs and Mad Decent.



DILLON FRANCIS

“It’s a whole different amount of music that nobody has really heard from me before,” Francis says. “I love really happy music. I wanted to make a progressive club-style record with big vocals on it.”

Big vocals and big collaborations, like Panic! at the Disco’s Brendon Urie and hip hop’s Twista. “I used to listen to Panic! at the Disco — a great guilty pleasure when I was in high school,” Francis says. “I never thought in a million years that I’d have a track with Twista. It’s so cool.”

Diplo also contributed to the album via his project Major Lazer; Francis released the fruits of their partnership, “We Make It Bounce,” Sept. 16.

“Diplo and I have been working on it for a long time,” Francis says. “The melody on it is one of my favorite melodies I have made in a long time.”

For a leader in EDM, Francis — who prefers a suit and tie — stands out from the fluorescent-clad legions of fresh-faced coeds that make up a healthy portion of his audience. When asked what he thinks of this prevalent style, Francis laughs.

“Do whatever makes you happy,” he says. “I love suits so much. I kind of look up to Mark Ronson for that, too. It does separate me from the fans.”

Part of the of the EDM uniform is kandi — the colorful plastic beads often worn as bracelets, which brings us to the throbbing day-glo elephant in the room: drugs. Many festivalgoers have been concealing drugs, mainly MDMA, in kandi bracelets. After attending the Mad Decent Block Party in Columbia, Maryland, in August, two men — ages 17 and 20 — died from drug overdoses and 20 people were hospitalized.

“A lot of people immediately think that everyone is on drugs no matter what,” Francis says of EDM culture. “There are a lot of kids who do drugs and there are a lot of kids who don’t.” And what about the Columbia show?

“People die every day. It sucks people are dying at shows,” he says, but points out that people die at all sorts of festivals and events. “Kids are going to be idiots, period. You remember when you were 18? You thought you were never going to die.” He pauses, and adds, “Our music does lend itself more to taking quote unquote those drugs.”

For the block party, the Cuthbert has banned kandi along with a long list of prohibited items (that reads like an inventory of a kid’s prized possessions): stuffed animals, dolls, Frisbees, pacifiers, balls, balloons, stickers, water guns. To see the full list, go to wkly.ws/1te.

So Eugene, get low but be safe.

Mad Decent Block Party kicks off at 4 pm Saturday, Sept. 20, at Cuthbert Amphitheater; sold out. — *Alex Notman*



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