



The Selectors

DJS BEHIND POPULAR PORTLAND DANCE PARTY
PLAY FREE SHOW IN EUGENE

By Will Kennedy

According to *Merriam-Webster*, a musician is “a composer, conductor or performer of music.” Portland DJ Stephen Strausbaugh, who performs as The Incredible Kid, says this definition doesn’t apply to him.

As a DJ, Strausbaugh is known for mixing Asian drum and bass, reggaeton and meren-rap into his house music sets, along with elements of hip hop.

Strausbaugh spends his time researching music from all over the world to simply present a mix of music made by other people, he says.

Read between the lines, however, and a musician is really anyone who takes sound, blends it with other sounds and, in doing so, produces some third thing greater than its parts.

From this point of view, a DJ is no more or less a musician than a visual artist who works with collage.

In the late ’90s, Strausbaugh met Anjali Hursh, who performs as DJ Anjali. Their partnership is a Portland story: They both worked at Powell’s Books, crossing paths at union organizing events.

“We did one party together. There was a lot of chemistry between us,” Hursh says.

“She was playing contemporary bhangra songs that I’d never really heard,” Strausbaugh adds. “That literally opened up a whole new universe.”

“Both of us were rabid music obsessives,” Hursh says.

Strausbaugh and Hursh joined forces as **DJ Anjali and The Incredible Kid**, founding Andaz night, a desi dance party. The event is a fixture in Portland’s nightlife and one of the oldest events of its kind on the West Coast.

Hursh’s dad, an Oregonian, met her mother when he was in India, serving in the Peace Corps. They married and moved back to the states.

“My childhood soundtrack was old Bollywood tapes,” she says. But, as a teenager, she rejected her Indian heritage. It wasn’t until her mid-20s that she took another look at the music of her childhood, particularly via the bhangra music coming out of the UK.

“It spoke to me because so many of the Punjabi kids making bhangra music in England were second and third generation. I felt an affinity,” she says.

On Thursday, Aug. 1, DJ Anjali and The Incredible Kid perform as part of the Hult Center’s Party on the Plaza concert series, presenting Punjabi folk dance and bhangra mixed with hip hop.

Hursh says these “concert-in-the-park”-style events are a little different than what they normally do in the club.

“I don’t really DJ. The Kid DJs, a drummer comes down from Seattle. I do dance lessons and a dance performance. It’s much more interactive,” she says.

In general, Hursh agrees with Strausbaugh: What they do doesn’t fit the traditional definition of what it means to be musician.

“We don’t make original music,” she says.

Instead, Strausbaugh and Hursh are “old school selector-style DJs,” she adds.

DJ Anjali and The Incredible Kid perform 5:30 pm Thursday, Aug. 1, in the Hult Center Plaza; all-ages, FREE.

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