

Q&A: David Guetta On The Importance Of Giving Back And Why He Is Looking For The Next 'I Gotta Feeling' In The Wake Of Coronavirus



French superstar producer/songwriter/DJ David Guetta will live stream a DJ set tomorrow (April 18) from Miami. The two-hour set, in conjunction with Miami Downtown Development Authority, will be live at 6 PM EST, 3 PM PST on Guetta's social media pages as well as the Miami DDA Facebook and Instagram pages.

As Guetta explains below, his set, which will benefit multiple charities, will be a little different in that it will have a crowd.

Though all will still of course be social distancing. They will be watching from their balconies while Guetta plays in the middle of the towers.

While a lot of artists right now have obviously taken to the live stream world, given Guetta's set finds him partnering with a major metropolitan city, I was intrigued. So I jumped on a call with Guetta to discuss the set; how Florida, which was criticized at the beginning of the pandemic for spring breakers partying on the beach, has handled the pandemic more recently; which of his dance peers he would like to see do a similar benefit performance, and why these difficult times have changed his musical focus going forward.

Steve Baltin: How have you seen the shutdown evolve in Miami?

David Guetta: I was in Miami and I saw those spring break crazy images and I was like, "Oh my god, this is so crazy." But we also have to be fair. It didn't go on for a long time. Now if you see Miami it's completely dead. I live in front of the beach and beaches are empty, streets are empty, when I go do groceries people are all wearing the mask. So I think maybe we're a little late, but then people really caught on and did it right.

Baltin: Was there a moment for you where this first became real because in some ways it does feel like a bad movie? It's just so surreal.

Guetta: If someone would pitch a movie like that everybody would be like, "No, this is not credible. No one is gonna believe this. This is really a bad science fiction movie." But I was not so shocked by the masks to be honest because I've been touring Asia for many years and it's very common in Asia to wear a mask. So this is something I've seen because Asian people are, especially in Japan for example, everybody wears a mask when they go out. Or anyone that is sick already wears a mask to protect other people. So these type of scenes I've seen before. But unfortunately it's when you hear people that are close that are getting sick or have friends that got sick it becomes very real. And I have to say also at the beginning you heard it was only people that were over 80 years old, then it was 60 and now you can see people getting sick and dying at any age. So of course it's even more scary, like no one is completely safe. But hopefully people learn something from this because it shows we should be a little bit less selfish and materialistic. It's the one moment that everybody is equal. You can be rich, poor, black or white, we're all equal in front of the disease. So hopefully there's more solidarity.

Baltin: Let's take this to what you are doing on Saturday. Have you done any sets where there is no crowd?

Guetta: No, it's gonna be the first one and actually I'm doing two things. I'm doing a more underground thing. I have an alias called Jack Back I'm doing for Beatport. And then United At Home and that is making me nervous because the way I am doing it on Saturday is a big charity event. I am still playing for people because there are 8,000 people living in the towers and I'm playing in the middle of those towers. So everybody is going to be on their balconies. It's still giving me the feel of playing for a crowd. So that's the concept. And I like this. This makes me feel more at home, more safe because I have to say, DJing for nobody when you're home feels unnatural. I think it's probably different if you play the piano and you sing. This is something you would do, or if you play the guitar. But DJing alone, except when you're learning how to DJ, which I was doing this as a bedroom DJ when I was a teenager. But I haven't done it since that time.

Baltin: Have you looked at and been inspired by other live streams?

Guetta: [Coldpay's] Chris Martin's was amazing, I loved it. That Chris Martin one I was completely impressed. And also the guy is so charming. He's an amazing artist, but also an amazing person. It was really, really cool. But what gave me motivation to do this was really to try to give money and raise money to help. That's the main goal of the operation. I see a lot of artists that are doing entertainment online every week. I'm not especially doing this. I'm trying to raise money for the World Health Organization and Feeding America, Feeding South Florida and the French Fondation Hôpitaux de Paris. I think people are going to be in a terrible situation very soon. They are already but probably it's going to get worse. And yeah I think it's important to help those in need.

Baltin: But it also seems like people absolutely need music now and a lift whenever you can get it.

Guetta: Absolutely, it's interesting what you're saying. The whole of last year I spent my time on different projects that were more underground and more DJ-oriented, going back to my roots and not trying to be on the radio and all this. And a little darker. And now I feel, "Okay, that's not what the world needs." I want to make songs that make the people feel good. I want to go back to make fun, pop records because I produced, for the Black Eyed Peas, "I Gotta Feeling," This was in 2009, right after the biggest financial crisis and this was such a good record. And I think this is what I'm trying to do again, make that feel good record.

Baltin: Is there new music coming soon?

Guetta: Oh yeah, absolutely. I'm writing songs every single day.

Baltin: Will you be previewing stuff Saturday?

Guetta: I'm gonna definitely preview some of the dance records I was making right before. But the songwriting is not produced yet, so I don't think it will be ready yet.

Baltin: Who else do you want to see this kind of set?

Guetta: The people that I'm close with are people like Calvin Harris, Afrojack, Chainsmokers, Steve Aoki. And we all do feel-good music. That's what it's about right now. I want to make anthemic, inspiring feel good music.

Baltin: When everyone is cleared to go out again where are you going first?

Guetta: I'm in a very strange situation because I'm here and I'm French, so I could go back to France. But I can go to the U.K. and my kids are in the U.K., so that's the first thing I want to do, go back to my kids. It sucks obviously to be separated at this time.

Baltin: What is your feel-good music?

Guetta: My feel-good music is the '80s funk or all the Michael Jackson. That's what makes me feel good.

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