

Faith in music

AFTER slipping off the radar Faithless are back, and, on top of releasing a new album, they'll be giving a long-awaited performance in Leeds next week.

This time they'll be appearing in a slightly different guise as Faithless Sound System, providing the sounds as part of the third anniversary celebrations of club night Filth.

nightscene caught up with Sister Bliss as the group prepare to take to the decks for the mother of all birthday parties at the O2 Academy.

What, exactly, is Faithless Sound System?

Well, we really enjoyed gigging last summer so that's why we're doing it again. It's a way to reach fans old and new and we wanted to do much more of a club thing. It allows us to connect in a way which would be impossible with the full Faithless show because it needs so much space and equipment - this way we can play in smaller venues all over the place with the Sound System.

Rest assured, you'll hear old Faithless stuff but in a bootleg way and there'll be 5 or 6 new songs too. It's getting our music out there in a different way really.

How much practice goes into it? There's so much to do! Now, with the new material, we have six albums of stuff. It's hard work for me to choose which songs to play - Maxi's happy though because he knows all his lines so doesn't have to come to

rehearsal which makes him happy, but I've been in and out a lot working on things. After each show we watch it back, too, to see if we can perfect and improve it. It's hard work!

Can you tell us about the new album and the influences and inspirations behind it? Are they much different to influences on past records?

I'm seeing the world with fresh eyes now as I've been at home more with a child, but my passion never went away. When we had a remix done by Mark Knight and the reception was great, it

reconfirmed how much people want to hear the music. I've got very excited about dance music again so the albums quite dancey, but it still asks big questions about what it is to be human. We've

got some great collaborations we're very excited about, too - all will be revealed in Leeds.

How important is it to you to include the messages Faithless often do? Our main aim is to get people dancing, but those messages of spirituality and things are still there. Mainly we want to entertain, but also connect with hearts and minds with beautiful music.

What are your thoughts on the scene now as against how

it was when you started out? What do you think of all these laptop producers?

If you take people like Deadmau5 - he's doing a full show on a laptop of all his own material which is cool. Then you look at current acts now like Dizzie Rascal and Chase & Status where it's just one act with a DJ and it's an interesting idea - it's how it used to be years ago. We never wanted to just do a live PA though so that's why we started the Sound System.

What do you have planned for your gig in Leeds in February?

As well as the music there's a full light show which I've directed as well as Max bouncing about on percussion and me on the decks. I'll be DJing too afterwards which is really exciting - I get a real buzz out of playing the music I love to other people. Maybe Maxi will hang around on stage for that as well!

● Feb 26, O2 Academy, Cookridge Street, Leeds, 10pm, £25. Tel: 0113 3891555. www.o2academyleeds.co.uk

HEARTS AND MINDS: Sister Bliss and Maxi Jazz of Faithless

