



MIXING BEATS

DJs fuse Indian, American music

Juliana Discher | Staff Writer

DJ Jeet and DJ-PJ have something new to bring to the table—turn table, that is.

Being a disc jockey isn't simply a hobby for juniors Jeet Srivastava and Paraj Arora; it's a way to appreciate and explore their Indian culture. Both students DJ Indian, non-Indian and mixed events in an effort to spread their culture through music and dancing.

Srivastava began DJ-ing when he felt that there was a lack of good DJs who were able to combine both English and Indian music at mixed parties.

"At my friend's graduation party, they wanted an Indian and American mix with English hip-hop and Bhangra," Srivastava said. "The music didn't sound very good, so I felt like if I started DJ-ing, I would be able to combine the two genres better."

Trying to fuse the two cultures' music together can prove to be challenging, according to Srivastava, especially with requests.

"Sometimes I will have a person come up requesting a traditional Indian song, but then have another person request an American hip-hop song, so I have to find a balance between the two," Srivastava said. "I have also learned to mix songs together, so I can kind of play both at once."

Srivastava said he is able to incorporate his Indian culture through his garments, depending on what kind of party it is.

"If it's a more traditional Indian party then I will wear more traditional Indian clothing, but if it's a formal party, graduation party or some sort of wedding then I will wear formal clothing," Srivastava said.

According to Srivastava, even as Indian music progresses and leans more towards a hip-hop style, the traditional instruments are still used, thus creating a unique sound.

"The great thing about Indian

music is that there are different kinds to fit your mood; there is a more classical style that uses an instrument called a dhol, which is like a drum," Srivastava said. "In modern times, there is more upbeat, hip-hop style music, but it still incorporates the classic dhol beats."

Becoming a DJ is what kick-started Srivastava's passion for Indian culture.

"I used to never listen to anything Indian-related until two or three years ago when I first started out," Srivastava said. "It helped me to open up to my heritage and want to explore my culture."

Arora said that being a DJ and listening to the music is not only pleasurable, but educational—helping him learn his native language.

"The lyrics help me learn words," Arora said. "I can speak some of the language, but when I watch a movie it's hard. Especially with the speed in which they speak it."

As his two passions began merging together, Arora said it became a no-brainer to pursue DJ-ing.

"I have always had an interest in music and technology," Arora said. "I thought DJ-ing would be the best way to combine those two. Why not make a business out of something you love?"

Being a DJ has also taught Arora a lot of interpersonal skills.

"Dealing with requests and rowdy people can be challenging," Arora said. "There is a psychology in knowing how to handle them. The whole business though has taught me a lot and help(ed) me grow as a person."

At the end of the day, Arora said he finds being a DJ most rewarding by seeing happy party guests.

"I really enjoy seeing other people on the dance floor having a good time," Arora said. "I am the DJ, life is the dance floor, love is the rhythm and you are the music."