

HYPE

powered by
mixmag

T H E



F I E R C E

C R E W

The cool chicks shaping Dubai's underground culture

JUST ADD SASS
Style for sisters
with attitude **p39**

It's not all about money,
says Crazy P singer
Danielle Moore **p33**

IT'S PLAYTIME
Grab the girls for a night
on the tiles **p29**

Sham De Funk
proves she's a mighty
DJ warrior **p14**



ISMAT ABIDI

Nationality: British

Dubai connection: I grew up in Abu Dhabi and moved to the UK when I was 18. Over the last few years, I've moved back and forth between London and the UAE every year or so, struggling to stick to one place. I returned for the fourth time in April 2013 and decided to stay put.

Chasing the dream: I'm the founder of Freshly Ground Sounds. I talk to community-based or

independent venues and brands and together with the Freshly team, we put together unique events about twice a month for grassroots live music in the UAE. A great side effect of the role is also jamming with local musicians and talking to people who enjoy original live music, whether they have raw talent or talent polished to perfection.

The journey: One of the many things I missed about living in London was the local music scene and the community associated with it. I missed pop-up gigs from neighbourhood bands in local coffee houses where some of the music was excellent. Most of the bands had day jobs or had a hugely successful DIY release of their music online and didn't want to go beyond playing intimate gigs around select venues in London. As an amateur musician, I also enjoyed taking along my guitar and jamming with other musicians in the area.

Proudest moment: "Ah, Freshly Ground Sounds! I went to your gig in Safa Park and I'd only been in Dubai a few months. I remember thinking that it was the first thing I'd seen in Dubai that felt real. It was so nice." Feedback like that makes me happy with what I started.

Inspiration: The people around me. I'm very fortunate to have childhood friends in Dubai. We grew up together in the UAE and have gradually all found our way back here. Many of them are heavily involved in music, sound engineering or media, and have donated their time and talent to get Freshly Ground Sounds kickstarted. Some friends I've met more recently in Dubai were looking for some inspiration or wanted to play an instrument. Freshly has encouraged them and reciprocally, their enthusiasm inspires me. It's a nice cycle. There would be no Freshly without them.

My Dubai: On the surface and at first glance, it's quite easy to dismiss Dubai as a plastic playground with a clinical culture. If you dig a little deeper, Dubai is a place that is commercially and culturally full of opportunities and inspiration. My weekends are full of camping, water sports, cooking large meals with good friends and playing music. There is not a week that goes by without a pop-up cinema or a local art exhibition. If you are naturally interested in these things, Dubai is the type of place where it's inevitable that they will find you or you will find them.

I recently attended a sound art evening in Dubai hosted by some London-based artists on a residency at Tashkeel. A woman in the audience relentlessly vented her frustration at the lack of "a 'real' creative, art or music scene in the UAE". A guest speaker relayed a quote: "Don't moan, organise." Dubai is the type of place that attracts organisers, and that makes it an incredible place to live and work.



"'Don't moan, organise'. Dubai is the type of place that attracts organisers and that makes it an incredible place"

On the horizon: The team and I run Freshly Ground Sounds for the love of music. It's not-for-profit and non-commercial. We've had some inquiries from outside the UAE about promoting original talent this country has to offer. We're also going to be featured in Season Two of the *Peeta Planet* travel TV series. It's such a satisfying feeling to be able to give back to the place I grew up in and being able to provide a platform that showcases the UAE's diverse music scene. My rule is that as long as it's fun to run, I'll keep going.

Girls talk: Look up Zahra Soar, founder of Rock Camp for Girls and Noush Like Sploosh, founder of Freedom Art. Similar to Freshly, both are grassroots, non-profit initiatives with the community in mind. Zahra and Noush also grew up in the UAE. There must have been something in the air back in the '90s.

Tags: freshlygroundsounds.com, facebook.com/FreshlyGroundSounds, soundcloud.com/FreshlyGroundSounds, @izzyabidi