

YOSSEI FINE

BIO



Whether as a producer, arranger or bassist, Yossi Fine's unique and undeniable talents have made him one of the most in demand names throughout a number of different genres. Throughout his years of playing and recording, he has worked with everyone from David Bowie and Lou Reed to Stanley Jordan and Gil Evans and even as far outreaching as Ol' Dirty Bastard, Naughty By Nature and Gnawa master Hassan Hakmoun.

A career spanning two decades and six continents includes seven gold and platinum CDs, Yossi fully engineered and produced over 25 albums, while contributing the bass on more than 150.

Surrounded by music and musicians ever since the very beginning, Yossi was born in Paris, France to a West Indian vocalist and an Israeli guitar player. By age four he had already picked up a guitar and by his early teens was already an in-demand session artist playing with some of Israel's top artists.

Yossi's intercontinental background and undeniable talent on the bass were quickly put to use in 1985 when he entered the New York City scene, working with such legendary artists as Delmar Brown, Kenwood Denard, Gil Evans Orchestra, Kenny Kirkland, John Scofield, salsa great Ruben Blades, and later on, neo-soul artist Me'Shell N'Degeocello.

Yossi went on to achieve national recognition in 1991 when he received a Grammy nomination for his instrumental composition for "Always Know" on Jordan's Cornucopia. More doors began to open as Yossi was invited by David Bowie and Brian Eno to play on Bowie's Outside and was also invited to participate in Deepak Chopra's A Gift of Love featuring Madonna, Demi Moore and others.

Riding high from all of his success, in 1995 Yossi decided to return to Israel where he worked prolifically as a record producer, coaxing the sound of some of the most influential bands in that country over the next 10 years, making a profound impact on the way hip hop and reggae is produced throughout Israel.

With a focus on keeping the bass heavy and groove-oriented deliveries, his production works lent Yossi to be considered by many of his peers in Israel as a ground-breaking producer and the current leading Godfather of Hip-Hop, Reggae and World Music sounds. In 2005, Yossi cemented his recognition receiving Israel's prestigious Acum Award for his role as Producer of the Year for Hadag Nahash's hip-hop album, Homer Mekomi (which also went on to win the group band and song of the year).

Since then, Yossi's influence in the production world has gone global, producing top Jamaican artists including conscious-dancehall master Anthony B to the modern roots sounds of Prezident Brown & Chedizek; mixing Malian blues griot Vieux Farka Toure; to Indian electronic musician Karsh Kale; Fine's engineering skills remain in high demand.

Yossi's production style of using traditional African instruments alongside funky grooves and deep bass lines was noticed by the famous hip-hop label LOUD Records in 2000. There, Yossi was to produce modern World Beat music and Jamaican artists into the label as well while developing the reggae division.

That year, Yossi's world music project 'Ex-Centric Sound System' was signed by LOUD and the first CD, Electric VoodooLand, was released in 2000 to critical acclaim and became a successful internationally touring band. The progressive world music collective released two additional albums and went on to embark on numerous successful worldwide tours, performing at such prestigious venues as Los Angeles' Hollywood Bowl, New York's Central Park Summerstage and the Montreal Jazz Festival, winning the praise from such publications as Source, Vibe, New York Post and Chicago Reader while gaining fans across the globe.

His most recent project comes in the form of Live from Jerusalem, an album of his solo bass performance recorded during last year's tour of Israel. Funky and deep at times, Yossi creates multiple loops live on stage and then layers the brief samples over top of each other: all free style and 100% improvised. Engaging audiences worldwide by building the energy in the room with sheer sonic waves, Fine's solo bass shows stand as a remarkable accomplishment, a testament to both the places he has been and those that he is still heading.

YOSST FINE

ALL ABOUT DA BASS



YOSST FINE IN HIS OWN WORDS:
WHY IS IT ALL ABOUT DA BASS?

Bass master Yossi Fine explains why it is 'All About Da Bass: "The bass is one of the few instruments that is self-described by its sound. The sound can work wonders on so many levels by exploring and understanding the nature of the sound."

Throughout the years of producing reggae, hip-hop, rock, and DJ'ing drum & bass and dance, I've noticed that the younger generation really responds to the bass. Yet there is a big gap between the live musicians' approach to music and the electronic musicians' approach to music.

WHY SOLO BASS?

It's part of the ever-growing bass culture in electronic music. Bass may be the loudest instrument in electronic music yet it is hardly played by a live musician. As a live musician, I am one of the few bass players who can deliver the 'old school' sounds of bass playing (funk, reggae, jazz, rock) with the new style of bass playing (drum & bass, dubstep, trance).

WHAT HAPPENS ON STAGE?

What I'm doing on stage is building layers of sounds and grooves similar to the way I construct beats when I produce. I'm using a loop station/sampler and lots of effects to create layered sounds that keep evolving endlessly throughout the performance.

WHAT IS THE METHOD BEHIND YOUR IMPROVISATION?

Even though I have a good idea of what I like to have happen throughout the show, I keep improvising constantly because I play 'to the room.' I sometimes play a theater with seats and sometimes it is dance-oriented raves. I always keep improvising stuff on the spot while keeping a vibe relevant to the energy in the room because I am not restricted by the limited parameters one has with a band. All the improvisation is really 'being in the moment,' but keeping it very, very groove oriented.

IMPROVISATION PART 2

Part of improvising and being open to the moment is realizing and hosting guest artists and musicians: be it rappers, horn players, poets, or any other ethnic musicians in the audience, my goal is collaboration on the spot. The tension that gets created on the spot in front of an audience always produces great tension on stage and within the audience, because no one knows what to expect.

DOES IT WORK?

Oh, yes indeed! For instance, one time I hosted a whole funk/jazz group, The Apples, on stage where they played their songs and I would be on stage listening to it for the first time. At certain points, I would step in and start constructing a 'remix-like' version of their song by offering a new beat and new bass line inspired by their performance. Slowly, the band stopped playing, I would be left alone and once I would get the whole beat aspect of it completely jumping, then gradually the group would rejoin playing their parts on top the new version as instantly remixed.

When you're in front of an audience, you've got to make it work!

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YOSST FINE

ALL ABOUT DA BASS



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ISN'T IT BORING? PLAYING BASS ALONE ON STAGE?

It's entertaining, a little bit like a 'musical juggler', watching one person create a whole musical experience on the spot. At the same time, witnessing how music is being constructed instantly like the way a track is built in the studio.

For generations, people have gone to see singer/songwriter night or a piano recitals, on stage I am now introducing the new generation's approach to a solo performance or recital by using loop stations and different sound devices creating a unique and whole musical experience coming out of one person.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN YOU & THE LEADING BASS PLAYERS?

I'm more groove/beat and sound oriented rather than just playing fast, jazzy scales. I concentrate a lot on the low end aspect of it and how that could vibrate the room and the bodies in it.

The bassists now that are considered to be the best in the world are the ones who play the fastest and most intricate solos, typically in the high register. Yet the bass players who are the most fun are the groove players such as Robbie Shakespeare, Aston 'Family Man' Barrett, Bootsy Collins, etc.

WHO ARE YOUR MAIN INFLUENCES?

I like to explore that approach and come up with new and better bass lines that would move you, rather than dazzle you with speed, even though I do that from time to time. After all, I still am a Jaco Pastorius freak and I continue part of his tradition of looping that he began over 30 years ago, but I apply it to the music of today.

I am to bass what hip-hop is to funk.

IN WHAT WAY?

Funk needed a big band and hip-hop needed a scaled down approach (using turntables, sampler, mic, etc). Hip-hop took the best parts of funk and extrapolated its key elements and concentrated on those while creating a new approach. Its new incarnation is still funky, yet hip-hop is just part of the evolution.

I feel that bass playing is stuck in an old paradigm. Since during the last fifteen years, most of the bass lines that rock the clubs around the world are being created by non-bassists, the whole approach has progressed into what is called 'bass music' today.

It's time for a bass player to step in and play some bass music!

YOSSEI FINE

MEDIA QUOTES

**Yossi The Prophet Ran on 'Music 24' (Israeli MTV) translated
from Hebrew December 27, 2006**

Before we start, here is a little introduction. This is not a regular critique of the show. This next article will try to explain in words a new world that is being created by a craftsman virtuoso. It looks like him and his music came to us from another planet on an unusual tour.

If this is the music that is going to be done in the future, then we have a good future: at least musically.

Yossi Fine does to bass what Hendrix did for electric guitar. In an extravagant show, he stands at the front of the stage with a lot of effects and a spacious sound system that makes you drool and gives you over two hours of something that probably never happened before.

The explosive talent, musical understanding and perfect control over the instrument, are all some sort of hypnosis. Lots of people in the audience were standing with their jaws dropped, with no movement, and sometimes looking over their shoulder to the person next to him, trying to ask for an explanation to what's happening on stage.

My God, what is he doing? Or moreover, how does he do it?

In all honesty, you don't need to ask questions to understand the maestro. It is better to just get hooked and feel the bass frequencies boiling deep in your stomach and the fire in the big soul of this Rastaman. Just enjoy the sounds that make you jump — or just look at him while he is playing.

So what do we have here? A show that sits all around Fine's bass that constantly improvises nonstop and gets impossible sounds. It's very simple actually. Yossi Fine stands on stage with a bass guitar, the uniqueness comes from the soul he puts into the show, because he succeeds in getting a sound second to none.

Fine starts every tune with a musical loop that starts from his computer, continues to play a certain bass line, loops it with one of his pedals and what we get is a one-man jam session. That creates stuff for the first time and creates layers upon layers of sounds and gets into a full musical compositions.

The structure of the show is super-modern, futuristic even, but it also takes you back to the warm sounds of 'back in the day.' Fine takes all his influences that he ever heard as a musician, and as a constant searcher, pours them out on stage. He puts life into the computer and the drum machine and makes it human. You can tell he got really deep into whatever he does and what he can get out of it. He feels the crowd and their reaction for what they both are experiencing. By that, he continues to send signals, and signs.

There are very few musicians that can go into the category of 'super', but Fine is one of those no doubt. After the show, I heard two people raving about the show, one recalled "after what I saw here tonight, I will wake up a different person tomorrow."

Enough said.

The Fine Show of the Rasta Master on Bass NRG Mahariv (Israeli New York Times) April 12, 2007

Throughout the show that built gradually and slow until a musical explosion, Fine made sure to incorporate African music with an electronic sound, just like he does with Ex-Centric Sound System. With the help of technology: pedals, sampler, laptop, Fine's bass guitar shoots lots of different sounds that always keep you on your toes.

Sometimes it's so heavy that it shakes your body from the inside. Sometimes it's very light-hearted and melodic until you get confused and start to think that he's playing electric guitar. Sometimes he puts on a Jamaican a cappella and the whole place starts to smell like the sweet leaf.

So let's get straight to the point: slowly a sweet illusion of a whole band is standing on stage but it's only one person. One highlight of the show were where he hosted local MC's and DJ's to collaborate.

Sometimes it gets complicated but in the end, the audience becomes very satisfied wanting more.

YOSHI FINE

MEDIA QUOTES

The Fine Show of the Rasta Master on Bass
NRG Mahariv (Israeli New York Times) April 12, 2007

The name Yossi Fine vibes deep with musicians, not only because the people he's played with or because of his extraordinary musical productions, but mainly because he successfully puts the right things you need into his music. I know this sentence sounds a little pompous, but here's an explanation.

Yossi Fine is an experimental artist, using his bass, sound system, and all his effects he builds with great patience layers upon layers. (Got it, right?) He creates such a humongous, layered piece of music that you feel like yelling to him "Enough! It's too much! There's no more space!"

That is exactly the place where Yossi Fine begins to play. Sometimes it could be exhausting, but most of the time this is one of the fattest, most complex yet light, things you've heard lately.

Derek Beres, Pop Matters

"Few people are brave enough to stand on stage with a few simple drum loops, an effects board and a bass, and go for it. Yet that's exactly what he does, amazingly well, to boot. Like Laswell, Fine is more interested in sound than songs. So the landscapes he paints are orchestral, lush and textured. He relies as much on what's not played as what is; hence, his understanding of concepts like space and gravity are naturally embedded into his art. That he can make his electric bass sound like a guitar, keyboard or an upright is, in some ways, a matter of technology. The way he makes them sound that way is completely his own. One minute strains of Jaco Pastorius emerges; a few beats later, a throbbing white wall that would make Les Claypool shake his head, before dropping into a dub groove reminiscent of Robbie Shakespeare."

PAST PRESS ABOUT EX-CENTRIC SOUND SYSTEM & OTHER PROJECTS

"Yossi Fine plays with an authority and muscle of New York heavies like Melvin Gibbs and Doug Wimbush, but only since going back to Tel Aviv a few years ago has really made his mark, fostering some arresting transglobal fusions and making it clear that American's not the only melting pot with something cooking."

Peter Margasak, The Chicago Reader

"... Voodooland will easily transport the openminded to a higher place, offering the opportunity to not only unwind from their daily grind, but to also learn something about the past through smooth and refined sounds."

Ann - Marie Nicholson, Source Magazine

"Excentric Sound System, a band offering a strange cross-cultural blend - has managed to make "Electric Voodooland" a beautiful beast that displays no stitching or neck bolts... The 11 tracks of mutant music here are exotic, rich, and deeply textured. The tunes have an ambient quality that transcends the disc's basic ethnicity... It's a very unusual album that avoid pop convention and cliché's, Performed by accomplished musicians who understand the relationship between beauty and the beat."

Dan Aquilante, New York Post

"If the banal beats of Deep Forest are your idea of electronic/word - music fusion, you need to wake up and get ex-centric... Reedy African flute, earthy wooden xylophone, thumb - plucked kalimba, and other acoustic instruments are seamlessly blended with dub - style bass and treated with ethereal effects. This is spiritual food in the pop - music desert."

Mark Schwartz, Vibe Magazine

"A triumph of the collective imagination."

Chris Nickson, Amazon.com

"Several of these dance floor-driven versions are stronger than the originals, with standouts including Yossi Fine's deliciously sensual 3rd Bass Remix of Ma Hine Cocore, which blends Farka Touré's devotional lyrics with deep electronica."

Arwa Haider, Metro Magazine (UK) (Review of Vieux Farka Toure Remix Collection CD)