## Intuit-Solar shifts the musical climate



Jon Layne these days. The owner of the Birming-ham-based Intu-it-Solar record label rarely label rarely takes a break. Between pro-moting new

A. CASOLA moting new records by his artists, like DJ Assault's latest, Jefferson Avenue, flying out to high-profile events like Miami's high-profile events like Miami's Winter Music Conference where he organized a music showcase, and staying one step shead of the music scene, the West Bloomfield native never scemes to rest. He even runs the label out of his quaint Birmingham home - a way to make living and bireathing the business that much more comfortable. It start-ed out simple resouch.

"The label was created from our club night, Solar," he

recalled of the company's five-year history. What started as a weekly event at Ann Arbor's Blind Fig spun into a burgeoning opportunity for Layne and a handful of intriguing local artista It isn't easy to catch up with Jon Layne these

handful of intriguing iocai arrita. "Disco D came to me and said he wanted to put out a record," said Layne. "I had some money and said Leyne. "I had some money and said Leyne or D-Down EP. Layne considers Intuit-Solar and its related projects - such as Area Code Management and the hip hop subsidiary DTW - to bo "a platform for emerging Detroit arritets." A bordher the day, the

different perspective. He's even chosen to keep the company sub-urban-based. 'It wasn't wy fault Ameritech changed my area code from three-one-three to two-four-eight,' he said with a smile. "Basically, 1 don't look at this as Birmingham, I'e Detroit. It's where the music comes from -the inner city and the people that support it. It's all here." And it certainly doesn't sound Birmingham. From the electro-And it certainly doesn't sound Birmingham. From the electro-sonic beauty of Deason's music to the brazen attitude and beats of DJ Assault. Intuit-Solar artists don't fit any existing

artists don't fit any existing mold - city or suburban. "I wanted to help propel things to a much higher level, and get this music heard by the masses," said Layne, from a comfortable room in his home-office. There exists no one characteristic that links Intuit-Solar artists to one another, except perhaps a pen-chant for innovative, experimen-tal sounds. Those sounds fall into many categories - from

ed with the label and managed by Layne's Area Code Manage-ment, Adams' notoriety has sky-rocketed. DJ Assault seems to be

drum 'n' bass to hip hop, techno to electro. The label known for compilations like the Comin From Tha D installments (fea-turing tracks by DJS codfather, Terrence Parker, Ectomorph, Recloses, Scan Deason and Disco D) keeps gazing toward its future.

Di keepa gazing toward its future. Layne realizes some listeners arent quite prepared for Intuit-Solar's artists, but he carries on believing that someday it will be understood. With the label and artists, we are very advanced, very futuristic. Today, the world might not be ready for us. This is a new vision of Motown, another reason to make Detroi-ters proud of the music coming areas. We're going to keep doing what we're doing." Layne proposes nothing short of a sonit take-over. 'You just gotta hear it and be part of our experience, part of our world."

## Learn more at www. intuit-

this all-ages event cost \$50. Call (248) 645-6666 or see www. tick-Stephanie Angelyn Casola

solar. com. Don't miss artists like DJ Assault and the Detroit Grand Pubahs featured at Mekka along with Danny Tenaglia, Doe Martin, Armand Van Helden, Josh Wink, Junior Sanchez, Derrick Carter, H-Poundation, Stacey Pulene, Roni Size, Talib Kweli, DJ Jazzy Jeff and more, beginning at noon Saturday, Aug. 4, State Fair-grounds Park, Eight Mile and

Woodward, Detroit, Tickets to etmoster com

writes about popular music for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. She can be reached at (734) 953-2130 or e-mail scasola



## BY STEPHANIE ANGELYN CASOLA STAFF WEITER

scasola@ce.homecomm.net "Music is not as good as it used to be six or seven years ago," laments Detroiter Craig Adams. Ti's hard. Its just a luil. Craig Adams should know. After all, he was raised on Top 40 craig. The sounds of Run DMC, LL Cool J and the Beastie Boys filled his home at age 10. Even his parents, avid R&B fans, exicourared music. And when he encouraged music. And when he reigns behind the turntables, there's no telling what's going to

happen. Adams started spinning records in 1993 while attending records in 1993 while attending college in Atlanta. "I knew I did-n't want to work for anybody," he said during a phone interview. "I

continued thinking of my own ideas. Not always music. I liko my time to be my own." His time deesn't seem to be his own these days, though, as he traipees across the globe spread-ing his brand of accelerated funk to the masse. Assault's latest offort, Jefferson Avenue, hit stores July 24 to show a new side of the artist once deemed "ghetto-tech." Replacing his speed-of-light

"ghetto-tech." Replacing his speed-of-light beats and techno-driven dance tracks with what's being called the future of hip hop, a more complete Craig Adams has omerged. He wrote, produced and recorded the entire album bimself. himself.

norcketed. DJ Assault seems to be everywhere - his music is reviewed in Rolling Stone and the New York Times, and the artisk is even featured in ads for Fresh Jive Clothing. "It was kinda interesting," he said of the experience. "Maybe its like a clue or a hint to keep the body pretty tight." Around 1999 Assault met and began working with Intuit-Solar's Jon Layne. Now associat-

E 'Electronic music, you can't name me one per-son who has made as much money as Dr. Dre has. That's a fact.

Never miss a genuine opportunity.

A.

Craig Adams DJ Assault

in front of the camera. Jefferson Avenue redefines the artist -and he's proud of it. 'I was just being myself. I just kind of let it flow, natural.' Adams admits, if you're expecting Bettoitech, if you're expecting Bettoitech, if you're bound to be disappointed. 'I don't listen to that music. It's nat me.'

For DJ Assault, this is more than a sign of change - its an evolution. "I've been rapping as long as I've been DJing," he said.

"I'm sick of like, gimmicks." Look out Jay-Z, Assault isn't kidding. A marketing major in college, he knows where the lucrative side of music falls these days. "I wanna be where the pec-ple making money is, and it's rap," he said. "Electronic music, you can't name me one person who has made as much money as Dr. Dre has, That's a fact. The music is not nearly as big." Layne believes in this direc-tion. "It's the best Assault record to dato," he said. "I think he really explodes with G-String. Bounce and Ride It." To avenue, Adams is not so sure it's going to be a success." don't think it'll do real well," he said. "I'z going to bea success."

won't like this. I did something so new and different. It could work, but it would need, like, major money behind it." On this record, Assault intro-

On this record, Assault intro-duces a new personas to mutch this new outlook. Meet Craig Dia-monds. I thought it was cool to have a bunch of alianses, he said. "Then I got desper with it. I could be mynelf, so I didn't have to have a character to be who I am. The first part is me. Dia-monds... I could be mynelf and shine and (be) valuable. "If you're true to what you do,

"If you're true to what you do, you still shine."

M This is the first of two pro files of Mekka performers. Don't miss Street Scene next week for a chat with Paris The Black Fu of the Detroit Grand Pubahs.





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