

DJ Pop Daddy Roc celebrates 20 years at Arnellia's

Written by By S. Brooks

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"That's my cut!"

"That dude knows he can jam!"

These are just some of the phrases you'll hear at Arnellia's, 1183 University Ave., St. Paul, anytime Pop Daddy Roc – whose real name is Verdarrell Duncan – is in the house. Pop Daddy Roc plays the hits and brings positivity to St. Paul through his music. He recently showed his self-taught, high-tech electronic skills as the soundman and DJ for the AT Productions play "I'm A Deadbeat Who?" recently featured at Arnellia's.

Following the play, this smooth DJ continued to keep everybody happy with his mesmerizing choice of music (Kurtis Blow, Patti Labelle, LL Cool J, Aretha Franklin, the Isley Brothers, Gladys Knight & the Pips, Michael Jackson, Kanye West and so many more). Pop Daddy Roc also emceed with his almost poetic baritone voice that makes you want to chill, dance and stay awhile.

I had to venture over and meet this person. I was humbly surprised at the story he told.

Pop Daddy Roc's DJ career began around the age of 10 years old at bar-b-cues and other family functions in Gary, Ind. He's originally from Clarksdale, Miss. and says his cooking can prove it. His first piece of DJ equipment included an equalizer that required toothpicks be inserted strategically in order for it to work. His speakers were made from giant-sized Pampers boxes with homemade wiring that produced blasting sound and no one knew (or cared) about the difference.

"Good music speaks for itself," said the personable DJ.

Pop Daddy Roc credits his uncle, Jerry Jones, for giving him the basics on "real" DJ techniques. He also pays homage to "The Fly Jock," Tom Joyner and Bob Walls for all of their influence on his DJ and emceeing styles. These teachings remain with him, particularly the lesson of being relaxed and comfortable enough to fully communicate with the crowd. Today he is the "voice with personality" that plays all the hits. Pop Daddy Roc has a catchy commercial airing now on KMOJ-FM in support of popular R &B singer, Ray Covington. When not DJing, this single dad is

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an active participant in his church and also very involved with Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Twin Cities. Pop Daddy Roc said that along with his five natural born children, he is "stepfather" to many children in Big Brothers Big Sisters.

Pop Daddy Roc has been the DJ at Arnellia's' since the club opened 20 years ago.

"I stay with Ms. Arnellia (Allen) at her establishment because of the way she treats me," said the DJ. "It's with dignity and with respect. She is a very phenomenal person."

Come enjoy Pop Daddy Roc's flavor at Arnellia's, 20th Anniversary Celebration, on Sat., Sept. 8. There will be food, fun and you better know it – lots of good music.

Congratulations Pop Daddy Roc for providing Arnellia's with 20 years of great sounds.