



Zac Haley performs his psychedelic sets as Bazooka Zac and released a new album in January.  
COURTESY/ZAC HALEY

## Space cadet

Bazooka Zac

### Local producer and musician Bazooka

Zac, or Zac Haley, has found himself in a new era. After playing an estimated 70 shows all over the West Coast last year, he has left the myriad side projects and collaborations he's been involved with for the past few years to focus on his own brand of trippy, electro-tribal beats. In the spirit of new beginnings, Haley released his first album in almost two years on Jan. 1.

"The album is called *Opening Cosmic Gateways* because that is the intention of what the music was written to do," Haley said. "Like, the way I see it, there is a route in this universe for whatever you see for yourself as possible."

Haley created the album as a reinvention of his sound. Before uploading the album, he removed at least 60 other singles, EPs, albums and other collaborative works from his online catalog. *Gateways*, he hopes, will be the new signature sound for his loftier aspirations.

"This is hopefully the key to open up all the correct paths for the festivals like Burning Man, Lightning in a Bottle, Coachella, High Sierra [Music Festival]," Haley said.

The sound, he said, is best described as electronic dance music, drawing heavily from world music, tribal rhythms and hip-hop beats. The result is a trance-like groove through spacey trap beats and chilled-out samples—equal parts synthesizer and sitar. The album sounds like it would play in an opium den on Mars.

"There's, like, nine tracks and each one starts off with some, like, world sample," Haley said. "I would go find these Japanese string instruments that were recorded 100 years ago and just find this really incredible lick that somebody recorded, and then use that to create hip-hop drum and bass around it."

The instrumental mix of vintage samples and modern beats reflects Haley's

preference for the balance he finds in nature. While developing the album, he would often bring his laptop and beat-pad with him on hiking excursions or desert bike rides, stopping to experiment with his sound in the tranquil setting.

"For me, it's just like, everything is just trying to come back to nature, you know, in terms of like spiritual enlightenment," Haley said. "And what that means is just, like, wellness. Like, how to enjoy your life and get the most out of it. And for me, it's all about returning to nature, learning everything you can from nature in the silence and the flow and the harmony and the stimulation."

His live performances have also evolved through experiences like providing the soundtrack for the Sacramento-based fire dancing conclave *Surreal Fire* at last year's Burning Man, or opening for one of his own favorite acts, TokiMonsta, at 1-Up last April. Bazooka Zac usually performs with an Ableton beat pad in one hand, and a real-time image processor in the other with which he manipulates the psychedelic visuals projected onto the wall behind him—an integral part of his show, he said.

"It's become a more fluid, improvised process, where before I was, like, literally rehearsing fucking every single day," Haley said. "If I had a show on Friday, I would rehearse for, like, three to five hours every single day leading up to the show. ... But now what I'm doing is I'm putting more energy into the creative process, and then the live show is like a window into that creative process."

Haley believes he could end up on the festival circuit this summer, but for now, he has nine show dates in the coming months, including Feb. 9 at Ecstatic Dance in South Lake Tahoe, and Feb. 14 at Alibi Ale Works in Truckee. He will also be returning to his residency at Pignic every second Friday and will be starting a new residency at Rum Sugar Lime every third Thursday. □

*Opening Cosmic Gateways* can be heard on Spotify, iTunes and at [bazookazac.bandcamp.com](http://bazookazac.bandcamp.com)

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