



Local musical activists Raoul "Deejay Ra" Juneja and Imaan Faith

## Hip hopping for a cause

Musicians hold benefit in February by David Fleischer

**A PAIR OF** local entertainers are raising funds and bringing attention to political causes with their music.

On Feb. 3, Raoul Juneja (aka Deejay Ra) and rapper Imaan Faith will hold a release party for their CD, *You Got a Choice* — a fundraiser for the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund of Canada (NMCF) and CapAIDS.

Faith came to Richmond Hill from Iran, via New York and Juneja followed a similar path with his parents stopping in New York after leaving India before settling in Thornhill.

It was through his work on the 2008 Olympic bid that Juneja met Bahadur Madhani, the chair of the NMCF, which raises funds for development in Africa.

"After I came back to Thornhill [from university] I wanted to get the Mandela Fund involved with some of my new record label's charitable initiatives," he said.

Beyond selling records, Juneja's Lyrical Knockout Entertainment has made politics an important part of its mandate. Among his most successful efforts is a "hip hop literacy" campaign which has garnered the support of author actors like Michael Madsen.

Faith and Juneja put together an AIDS awareness rap CD and from that grew the idea of a fundraiser.

"I was happy just having put the song together. But to now get the Mandela fund's blessing and be able to perform it live for them is more than I ever expected," Faith said.

Faith will perform the song at the Rivoli in Toronto at the Feb. 3 event featuring several other performers. The night will be hosted by CBC host George Strombolopolous.

"I'm thrilled every time a movie personality wants to be involved with the Hip Hop Literacy Campaign and every time a DJ plays our AIDS awareness song,"

says Juneja, "but the most valuable to us will be students who actually put our messages into practice."