

Rave

Countdown to a techno nation

by Tricia Romano

"It's finally happening," said Las Vegas DJ Shoe, as he looked around, awestruck by the dancing crowd in a 20,000-square-foot warehouse. Shoe was one of five deejays for "Journey Through Middle Earth," Las Vegas' first successful large-scale underground rave. Hosted by promoter Shane Gibson, the event attracted roughly 1,200 people, and was home to what many consider to be the biggest deejay and sound lineup to hit Sin City.

The event was three months in the making. Gibson credits the show's success to "all of the hard work, all of the love."

Raves originated in England during the '80s and have since made their way over to New York and California during the latter part of the decade. Since then, these moving underground dance parties have flourished.

Attending a rave might seem like taking a trip to Mars with the futuristic music and outlandish fashions, and, oh, the drugs.

"Journey" marked the beginning of an era in the Las Vegas rave scene.

Considering the scene is still in its infancy, the club is a step in the right direction. But as Shoe pointed out, regular rave-goers shouldn't expect immediate results.

"It's like we're going to high school with braces and zits

but I just have this faith. It's like opening up a business, you're not going to make the money back the first year."

One person who is not completely sure about the direction the Vegas rave scene is taking is Los Angeles DJ, Eli Star. While Star sees potential here, he also sees several flaws which may prove to be harmful.

"The animosity, the lack of trust, the cutthroat nature of the idiotic money-hungry promoters, is one of the fastest ways to kill any scene that's exciting," Star said. "People approach the rave scene as a get-rich-quick thing. Nobody is throwing parties in Las Vegas right now that are really the spirit of how this thing started."

Star pointed out that if the focus is on money, the attention that should be given to the creative and artistic aspects of a club will be overlooked, a sentiment that is echoed by many local promoters as well.

"It's quality, not quantity," said Favio of Pluto Fresco. "It brings more creativity. What is culture? Art and music."

Shoe agreed, "They need to appreciate them (the clubs) and protect them and enjoy them. There are lots of things that are holding us back," he said.

The culture seems to be important to the people involved. John and Brian of Planet 10 pointed out the cultural aspects of the techno nation. What they felt reflected many other promoters in the scene.

Says John: "You do it for the music, the interest. It's not just a party. It becomes like a lifestyle."

Brian agreed, "I saw that there was a whole entire culture... It was so much different, in every way from every other kind of scene I've been into."

The rave scene does include elements of what can be called a culture. It has different styles of dress, customs and attitudes, and it includes art and music. As Brian put it, "It's the perfect mixture of art and technology."

Noel Casimiro, best known for the Mindwarp series, stressed the importance of unity saying, "I want it to get really big. Being selec-

tive is totally contradictory to the rave scene."

One element of the scene that seems to rub all of the promoters and deejays the wrong way is the drug myth. On the one hand, it does seem as if everyone present is using X, nitrous, or acid, but many of the promoters feel the scene is shifting away from drugs.

"There's a big anti-drug movement going through the techno scene," Gibson said. "I feel it's on the decline. We don't allow nitrous at our clubs."

The prevailing belief that raves are just "X parties" sets off a strong chord in Casimiro as well. "I don't like that. When it comes to the rave scene, when it comes to drugs, drugs are everywhere. You go to Sharks, go to the Metz, go to the Sports Pub, you'll see drugs everywhere you go."

In the end it is up to the individual to decide on whether or not they want to do it. As Shoe stressed, "I think drugs are as important as you make them to be...but I think that if you start emphasizing and exploiting that side of it, then you're missing out on what it's all about."

So where is Vegas headed? Does it stay underground, always on the verge of being broken up, or will it head

for bigger and better things? No one seems to know at this point, but as Adan put it, "It can be big, it can be small, as long as it's real."



Ravers journey to middle earth

Shoe spins away (left) while the lights and dancers groove to the music (right). Shoe and Eli Star take a break from the action (below).

Eli Star and Shoe's interplanetary guide to techno

For those not entirely hip to the techno scene and it's music, Los Angeles deejay Eli Star and Vegas' Shoe spell it out for you.

All house musical forms have the same basic elements: a kick drum with a 4-4 consistent beat, usually using a drum machine. It's what happens around the beat that differentiates the different forms.

1. Techno rave- very fast house with electronic sounds and occasional interjected vocals. ("James Brown is Dead.")
2. Deep house- sometimes includes organ, lots of vocals with reverb.
3. Garage- more like a song with gospel-like vocals. Very similar to deep.
4. Acid house- very futuristic, surreal, employs the use of a special synthesizer.
5. Hardcore- the most aggressive and fastest form of techno. Very repetitive with consistently rapid beat.
6. Trance/Ambient- repetitive with subtle changes, much calmer than most techno.
7. Tribal- tribal music set to house beat.

Note: if you are looking for techno music here in town, good luck. As Brian from Planet 10 puts it, "You have to respect Vegas deejays because up until recently, there wasn't very much around.. They have to go to L.A. to get \$10 and \$15 records. It's just a lot harder deal."

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