

Cut Killer makes deepest cut of all

The French have a tradition of nurturing some of the most innovative DJs and record producers in the world. Laurent Garnier, Daft Punk, Justice, Redeyes, DJ Netik and Dee Nasty – when the French are good, they’re really good. So there was a definite buzz around town in anticipation of France’s most famous hip hop DJ, Cut Killer, coming to Phuket.

You may remember Cut Killer from the French movie *La Haine*, in which he appeared as the DJ who played KRS-One’s *Sound of Da Police* and Edith Piaf’s *Je Ne Regrette Rien*.

Cut Killer, who rose to fame competing in Tony Prince’s DMC DJ battles, released a string of mixtapes in the ’90s and solidified his reputation as a serious player in the French hip hop scene.

Of all the places in Phuket you’d expect to see a French hip hop DJ, White Box would not be among the most obvious.

The venue, as always, looked fantastic. There is no faulting White Box in terms of

conceptuality. It’s hip, in every sense of the word – and it has a dance floor.

As what you might call a clubbing snob, I become bored easily when out in Phuket, where the club scene is about 10 years behind the rest of the world and about five years behind Bangkok, with a few exceptions (Club Lime, Soundwave Sundays). When a DJ is booked and hyped up as someone worth seeing, I expect more than run-of-the-mill pop music.

Any negative feeling in this review should in no way reflect upon White Box and, perhaps, not even the DJ, but rather, the island’s stale and dated music-and-club scene. Were we treated to a masterclass in hip hop variety on the night of April 5? Not at all. What Cut Killer delivered was tired and dull – from a purist’s point of view.

My expectations were radically different from everyone else’s and as a result, I was perhaps the only person in White Box who was disappointed.

What I had hoped for was

a real turntablist’s set (à la DJ Netik) combined with a quality musical selection (à la Laurent Garnier). Cut Killer played tracks for pop music fans, which was lucky, because those were the people at White Box.

If Cut Killer had played a more “real” set, people would have probably walked out, so instead, he focused on chart hits.

For club kids to whom music means more than the contents of the Billboard 100, Phuket has little to offer. But such people are a minority on the island.

Cut Killer started off with some formulaic hip hop beats, dropping an occasional surprise, but for the most part, the set could have been played at Seduction or Banana.

Cut Killer has skills; the brief periods when he chose to cut and scratch bore testimony to his talent, but when someone who is supposedly France’s best hip hop DJ drops Soulja Boy’s *Crank That (Soulja Boy)* – a track that the credible hip hop community wholeheartedly rejected – you now something isn’t right.

Even more startling was the fact that everybody in the club knew the track and knew the dance that goes with it. These people were having fun, but everything about that track is an abomination of contemporary music, hip hop or otherwise.

As an aspiring DJ, Cut Killer found his inspiration from watching DJs such as Ca\$h Money, but there’s no way Ca\$h



Phuket’s busy socialites were out in force to see what French hip hop maestro Cut Killer (left) had in store for them at White Box.

Money would play *Crank That (Soulja Boy)*. But on this night Cut Killer was playing to a crowd with limited knowledge of hip hop.

Bob Sinclar. Those two words will make any true fan of French club music cringe. He makes awful records for the sake of commercial success. In 1998, Sinclar released the classic disco album *Paradise*. Since then, he has churned out mindless dance music tracks. So why would a French hip hop DJ choose to play two of Sinclar’s recent hits? Sinclar doesn’t even make hip hop music.

Playing Fatman Scoop bootlegs along with remixes of Swedish indie music (Peter, Bjorn and John) would have been forgivable had Cut Killer not abandoned hip hop to delve into commercial dance.

To add insult to injury, the most empathic crowd reaction of the night came when Cut Killer dropped the atrocious *Beautiful Girls* by teen rapper Sean Kingston.

All criticism aside, at face value, there was technically nothing wrong with this party. The DJ was the consummate professional, only slipping up on a couple of mixes.

The staff were on the ball. The crowd was hot and really into the vibe. However, even some of the Thai clientele were wondering why the DJ played the same music you hear in every other club in Phuket. For a guest of such magnitude, Cut Killer pulled

few surprises.

The general consensus after the White Box party was that it was a fun, worthwhile event. The management at White Box filled their club with pretty girls until well after midnight.

People danced, drank and had fun – there’s no denying that – but the night that Cut Killer played is illustrative of why I rarely go clubbing in Phuket anymore.

I would rather enjoy Thai bands at clubs such as Oasis, Blue Marina or KorTorMor than listen to substandard party tunes played by a past-it DJ.

AFTER DARK

By Matt Crook

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