

Is it the sound of progress? There's definitely something going on in Phuket. Six months ago, you'd have been hard pushed to find anything remotely resembling a "club scene" on the island.

Now, there are major Thai and international acts coming to Phuket, playing out and asking to come back – the music scene finally has more to offer than just dingy discos and karaoke bars.

Enormous progress in the club scene was made in 2007, partly thanks to the open-minded approach to music employed at Club Lime.

Whether played by resident DJs Eddie and D(r)readmongey or by high-profile guests, the venue has been steadily making a name for itself.

The first major milestone was passed when DJ Nakadia played at Lime on October 12. That gig alone proved there is a market for clubbing beyond generic rock, hip hop and maddening euro-techno.

Another first for Phuket is minimal techno. D(r)readmongey has been championing the genre at Club Lime for a while, but the style of music received a big boost when "Jay" Montonn Jira brought his laptop full of tricks to Lime on October 31.

The girls danced out of compulsion and admiration for their fantasy sweetheart while he played a style of music most of them had never heard before.

It isn't just minimal techno that is making waves – there is also something of a drum 'n' bass movement occurring in Phuket. Prominent Bangkok DJs such as Dragon, T-Base and Pichy have played in Phuket recently – and there's more to come.

Club Lime is once again on the pulse here, playing drum 'n' bass on a regular basis.

The twice-monthly Bass-load event was pulled back to

Hey DJ! What's that sound?



David Morales (right) is one of 25 DJs and bands who will play at Thailand's first major dance-music festival, Culture One, which will be held in Bangkok on January 19. He will be joined by the likes of indie band Slur (left).

With Phuket's club scene experiencing some major changes in 2007, events like Culture One could be just what the island needs. DJ D(r)readmongey (above) was one of the first DJs to champion minimal techno in Phuket.

once a month but looks set to return to two times a month for 2008.

Rumors that a major drum 'n' bass artist (hint: think of "the best of the best", but I am not allowed to say who just yet...) will be coming to Phuket have been floating around and should be confirmed once all the i's are dotted.

Another strong rumor is that a former world number one DJ, according to the top 100 poll compiled by DJ Mag, will be playing at Seduction some time this year.

If you haven't noticed, Se-

duction has been booking some heavyweight names.

Recent DJs at Seduction include party-animal Brandon Block and US house maestro Louie Vega. On January 12, Judge Jules will arrive loaded with CD-Rs and trance tunes galore.

The club scene is experiencing change all over Thailand, as well as in Phuket. On January 19, Bangkok will play host to what is being billed as Thailand's first international dance-music festival.

Think Creamfields in the UK, Future Music Festival in Australia and Zoukout in Singapore.

Culture One is being organized by the people behind Club

Culture, who were previously behind Club Astra, the venue that kick-started the trend of international DJs playing in Thailand.

The event is taking place at Helicopter Port, BITEC, Bang Na-Trat Highway. The fact that such a festival is even happening is phenomenal for Thailand.

Four arenas will play host to various styles of music, from house, through hip hop and indie, to psy-trance. Headlining the bill in the main arena will be David Morales with support from the likes of the Stanton Warriors.

Marco V and Brian Cross will lead the charge in the Amnesia arena, with John "OO"

Flemming the highlight in the Godskitchen arena. There will also be a Dude/Sweet arena where indie kids can enjoy the sounds of Slur, Filthy Dukes and Twilight Actiongirl.

Tickets for Culture One are 650 baht in advance or 850 baht at the door, inclusive of one drink. For the sake of history and because it's on a Saturday night, make this one event to venture away from Phuket to attend.

Doors open at 4 pm and advance tickets can be bought from www.thaiticketmajor.com

What would ideally come next would be a similar event in Phuket.

Promoters, club owners and DJs are starting to look favorably upon Phuket over Koh Samui and Koh Phang-ngan.

The Phuket Jazz Festival is a start and the Phuket International Blues Festival has made inroads over the past few years, but a dance-music festival during this or the next high season would cement Phuket's reputation as a serious nightlife destination – not some place lost in the club scene of yesteryear.

The logistics of organizing such a festival are, sadly, horrendous.

In Phuket last year, the Hilton Arcadia Phuket Resort & Spa played host to the Nation VI party, which was touted as the largest gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender party in Asia.

The event attracted 1,500 partygoers and DJ Kate Monroe span until 8 am on October 23.

Party-organizers Fridae pulled the plug on the Nation parties to focus on other projects.

It's unclear whether an event similar to the Nation parties could be organized on an even

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By Matt Crook

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larger scale in Phuket.

At the speed of change in Phuket, anything is possible. The island now has its own DJ store – RST located at 23/14 Chao Fa East Rd.

The shop sells all the latest DJ and sound equipment and offers an already-popular DJ training course, which has been a hit with quite a few girls on the island. Could it be the Nakadia effect?

Setting the foundations for the club scene in Phuket are the local DJs. As well as the DJs in Lime, there are a string of quality acts playing out across the island, most of whom were on display at the Phuket DJ competition held at Jungceylon in September.

DJ Q, DJ Touch and others are playing tunes against the grain that people are starting to enjoy.

One of the problems in

Bangkok is that clubbers rarely turn up to support local DJs, instead opting to venture out only for headline acts.

In Phuket, the local DJs are starting to make names for themselves, but the all their hard work could come undone if there is a sudden influx of big name DJs arriving in Phuket every weekend.

This past year was a great year for nightlife in Phuket – things can only get better in 2008.

Support the scene, attend the parties and there won't be any more talk of Samui or Phangngan – it will all be about Phuket.

For more information about Culture One call Tel: 02-2623456 or visit www.culture-one-bkk.com See www.thaiticketmajor.com to book tickets. RST DJ shop can be contacted by calling 076-264675.