

He's been described as the Miles Davis of dance music, and when you look at his credentials you can see why. A resident DJ at Studio 54, he's produced house-music classics alongside Todd Terry, remixed Donna Summer and Janet Jackson, and is one half of the most respected duo in house music – Masters at Work.

It's rare for a musician and DJ of this caliber to pass through Phuket, but with the island's club scene constantly evolving, you'll find "Little" Louie Vega at Seduction discotheque in Patong on December 11.

The son of jazz saxophonist Luis Vager and nephew of singer Hector Lavoe, Louie grew up with music and started his DJ career when he was 13 years old. By the time he was 20, he was rocking nightspots in the Bronx, New York, establishing a devoted fan base as house music first began to take shape.

Louie went on to hold residencies at the likes of Studio 54 and the Palladium in Manhattan. He became renowned for his innovative approach to music, incorporating everything from Latin and jazz to hip hop and new wave.

Meanwhile, in Brooklyn, Kenny Dope was putting on parties under the moniker "Masters at Work". After being introduced to each other by Todd Terry, Louie and Kenny went on to record as Masters at Work – and under various other guises – establishing one of the most successful acts in dance music.

Twenty years later, with countless productions and remixes under his belt, on November 29 Louie embarked on a world tour that will see him play in Switzerland, Belgium, the Philippines, South Africa – the list goes on. "I'm very excited about my Winter world tour. Many interesting countries, lots of great parties," Louie told the *Gazette* in an exclusive interview.

Evolution in the mix



'House music has many forms and that keeps the sound interesting – evolution is natural,' says House music icon Louie Vega, who is coming to Phuket.

digital-music equipment now the norm, Louie has embraced this newfound technology, although he admitted that "illegal file sharing sucks", in response to how illegal music downloads mean that Louie's tracks can be nabbed by anyone.

On the subject of technology, Louie said, "I will always love the analog, warm sound of vinyl, but for a global DJ, with all the traveling, it's convenient to carry CDs or your laptop, a hard drive and, for example, Serato [DJ software that allows users to play digital-music files on vinyl turntables]. The music you carry can be endless. If I had to carry vinyl for all I'm bringing, I'd have over 12 cases to check in. With modern equipment, there is so much you can do."

Speaking about his forthcoming trip to the island, Louie said, "I've heard good things about the party scene in Phuket. I've been to

With flights almost every other day, Louie's tour doesn't give him much time to relax. "With my busy schedule, it's hard to stay in one place for days," said Louie, "but on occasions, I get to stay at places such as Ibiza, Mykonos, Japan, South Africa and a few others.

"The traveling really takes its toll on you physically. I will slow down on DJ world traveling within five years. I have lots of artists to produce, soundtracks to create, my own albums and I have a great night in NYC at Cielo called Roots," said Louie.

Before his tour, Louie was working in the studio and on his record label, Vega Records.

"I've been producing Anané's new album Selections, which is now licensed by Vega Records to Tommy Boy Records. It is my new masterpiece, to be

released in April 2008. Vega Records is now up to its 50th single and has released five albums, including my albums Elements Of Life and Elements Of Life Extensions. I'm about to start on the new Elements Of Life album, One Dream," Louie said.

While house music has gone through many phases, Louie has been consistent throughout his career, innovating while ignoring trendy sub-genres. "I'm very true to our sound and the most important thing is that I stay creative and keep recording with new artists, concepts, albums and not be afraid to experiment. House music has many forms and that keeps the sound interesting – evolution is natural," said Louie.

Remixing other artists' tracks, particularly pop-music stars such as Madonna, is a lucrative niche explored by many dance-music artists. While remixing is considered an art in its own right, some producers use it as a way to make quick cash, putting out substandard tracks for the clubs. House-music icon Armand

Van Helden once said he could remix a track in less than four hours – on some of his efforts, it shows.

"A good remix is when you give an existing song a new life – with a new groove and new melodies – and it rocks the clubs worldwide. You usually get an a cappella to work with these days, so it's hard work to create an entirely new track. Lots of artists who are not in this genre hire remixers to have their jams in the clubs. It's also good to hear a pop artist like, for example, Justin Timberlake in the clubs. He writes wonderful melodies and to hear his voice in the clubs under the right track works."

Traveling the world as a DJ means lugging music around. While DJs traditionally use vinyl, DJ technology has evolved to the point where DJs don't need to take bulky record crates with them. With CD turntables and

Good vibes

By Matt Crook

Bangkok, but never to Phuket. I'm looking forward to an incredible time and hope to see everyone very soon. Special thanks to all who have supported MAW, Louie Vega, Kenny Dope and the Vega Records family."

Louie Vega will DJ at Seduction disco, Soi Bangla, Patong, on December 11. Admission is 500 baht and advanced tickets are available from the club. Visit www.seductiondiscotheque.com for details. For more information about Louie Vega visit www.vegarecords.net or www.mawrecords.com

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