

AROUND TOWN

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Next week sees two world-class electronica acts hit Taipei on the same night at roughly the same time. What's a partygoer to do?

While it can't yet claim the crown as Asia's party mecca, Taiwan has matured from a dance music backwater to a major port of call for many of the big players who tour the region, thanks, in part, to the efforts of dedicated promoters.

Next week sees two world-class electronica acts — 2manydjs at Legacy and Diplo at Luxy — in the same town, on the same night, at roughly the same time.

With rumors of sabotage and infighting doing the rounds, promoters were eager to set the record straight.

"When we heard that 2manydjs were going to be in Taipei the same night," said Marcus Aurelius, who is co-promoting the Diplo gig, "we approached the other booking agents and tried to make this Thursday the best Taiwan has ever had. I'm not sure they took us seriously. Then they told us their ticket prices were \$1,800."

"They didn't want to raise it further by adding another artist," said David Frazier, who is also promoting the gig, "so they weren't into it."

For its part, a spokeswoman for [comma · comma] production said that the "contract with 2manydjs was finalized weeks before

Diplo was officially booked, and [that] was pretty much it. Under the terms and conditions of the contract, there's nothing we can do. It's a total coincidence, and hopefully a good one."

Though more choice means tougher decisions, in this instance partygoers could have the best of both worlds.

"It seems to me that if you have money to blow, you would go see both shows and make it a killer night," said Aurelius.

"Is it anyone's fault? Hell no! Everyone just wants to hear good music and promote the scene. Taiwan will be one step forward after Jan. 21," said Aurelius.

No such thing as too many DJs



I went in there [Brazil's favelas] strictly to work on music ... A lot of kids were really into exploring music with me and were excited I was a DJ.

— Diplo, DJ and producer

Diplo:

Thomas Wesley Pentz, aka Diplo, plays in the Galleria room at Luxy on Thursday. This is a great scoop for Taiwan's music scene as he's one of the hottest producers and DJs currently working the circuit. He is credited with helping popularize baile funk from Brazil and dancehall from Jamaica: Not bad for a white boy from the US.

Having grown up in the southern US, Diplo now resides in Philadelphia, where he blew up as a DJ in 2004 after releasing his first major work, *Florida*, a chilled, almost trip-hop-like album. From here Diplo started collaborating with MIA and they worked on a mixtape called *Piracy Funds Terrorism Vol. 1*, which received critical acclaim, although it could not be legally sold because of copyright legislation.

About two years before working with MIA, Diplo had, along with friend DJ Low Budget, started a party night called Hollertronix, held in New York as well as Philly, which mixed genres such as hip-hop, crunk, funk and dancehall, to name but a few.

"We haven't done a party in Philly for about two years," said Diplo, "but we did 12 bootlegs over four and a half years and 10 12 inches, so I think that is kind of it, you know."

It is estimated that only 2,000 copies were made. Several of the tracks feature baile funk, music predominantly from Brazilian favelas that focuses on social issues such as poverty, crime, drugs and sex.

"I went in there strictly to work on music," said Diplo. "A lot of kids were really into exploring music with me and were excited I was a DJ. People were cool. I wasn't buying drugs, I was making music. If I was going to kill people or buy cocaine, maybe I would have had a problem, but I was just making music."

With no record industry to speak of, and rudimentary technology, the kids created an original and emotional sound.

"There are a bunch of DJ crews, and every favela has their own gang faction," said Diplo. "When I first went there they were using all mini-discs. But since then they have moved to CDJ and a couple of them are using Serato now."

In 2006, Diplo began his own record label, Mad Decent, and further promoted the baile funk sound by signing acts from the favelas. In the past couple of years Diplo has spent time working in Jamaica, focusing on dancehall sounds.

"There are a lot of creative people there," said Diplo. "We just started working on tracks and making friends there. There is a whole community that we have established out there that are forward thinking, cool — producers and people who take chances."

Last year, Diplo formed Major Lazer with his partner Switch.

"[It is] like a big crew of people," said Diplo. "I think we go to Jamaica and people really appreciate our work."

This loose collective of artists, with Diplo and Switch at the helm ("about 15 people," said Diplo), last year released their first album, *Guns Don't Kill People ... Lazercs Do*, which garnered critical acclaim for its use of samples and original sound, while still staying true to Jamaica's dancehall roots.

Many music lovers in Taiwan will have already heard *Pon de Floor* and seen the stunning, trippy and cartoon-like video for it.

"Right now *Pon de Floor* has a huge impact in Jamaica," said Diplo. "[It] has become really big there in the dances ... and all the artists are voicing it."

Making it large in Jamaica took dedication, hard work, respect and a sharp ear for music. "The sound we are trying to make is a really progressive-sounding rhythm," said Diplo. "Some of the stuff you might hear on first count is like, 'yeah I don't know about this stuff,' but then eventually this stuff is crazy. The roots of it are reggae and a digital 90s sound but we want to include everything on the record."

Diplo at Luxy, 5F, 201, Zhongxiao E Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市忠孝東路四段201號5樓), from 10am until 4am. Tickets are NT\$600 pre-sale and admission is NT\$800 at the door. For more information, visit www.diplo-in-taipei.com.

ON THE NET: Diplo's latest mixtape, *FreeGucci*, was released last week and can be found at www.maddecident.com. A tasty *Paper Planes* remix can be found at www.myspace.com/diplo



Never enough.

2manydjs:

Belgium, the land of lace, bureaucracy, brussels sprouts and the waffle. Electronic duo 2manydjs, one of the country's more exciting exports, fly the flag at Legacy in Taipei on Thursday at roughly the same time as Diplo plays Luxy. Comprised of brothers David and Stephen Dewaele, who also perform as live band Soulwax, 2manydjs are on tour, showing off some new visuals, as well as putting together their most audacious mix yet.

How did they make the move from playing live to deejaying?

"It wasn't a conscious thing," said David. "We just liked playing records. It wasn't a career move. More like being bored on tour and thinking, 'Hey there is a party tonight and we wanna play records.'"

Luckily for clubland, this boredom spawned one of the world's biggest DJ partnerships.

Diplo and 2manydjs are known for their mash-ups, a form of musical unprotected sex between tracks, leading to pregnancy and the birth of an entirely new track with features from both parents. Some are ugly; some are sublime. It is in the latter category that many of 2manydjs mixes are born.

"The cool thing with Diplo is we have played together many times but never back to back. Usually at festivals," said David. "He comes from a similar place from us style wise, but at the same time [he is] very different. He has more of a hip-hop way about it, and we come more from a rock background."

While some see the mash-up as a cheap sellout, 2manydjs' mixes are painstakingly put together by deconstructing each track into its constituent parts and then reforming them bit by bit.

In 2003, 2manydjs exploded onto the scene with *As Heard on Radio Soulwax Pt. 2*, an album of remixes of work by hugely diverse artists, throwing together the likes of The Stooges and Salt-N-Pepa, and Royksopp and Dolly Parton.

David's favorite remix is not on that album though — "a remix for LCD Soundsystem called *Get Innocuous*," he said. "I didn't think it special at the time, but now I think it is really good when I hear it out."

Although the mash-up might be a little old hat, 2manydjs are nothing if not innovative.

"The new thing we are doing now is a whole production show," said David. "We are doing a normal set, but with corresponding bespoke animation visuals of the record sleeve of that track, for every track."

"If we play Prince, you see the sleeve and record, animated in sync to the music. We spent months developing it in such a way to make it free and not the same thing we have to redo every night with DVDs and sound."

2manydjs fly in to Taipei after playing on Wednesday at Bengkel Night Park, Jakarta,

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— David Dewaele, half of 2manydjs

Indonesia and then head off to gigs in Japan, South Korea and Macau.

"This is a five-week tour and it is a pretty long stretch," said David. "This is the longest we have gone without going home."

When they return to Belgium, do they want a break from the late nights and hectic touring schedule?

"The next thing we are doing is quite complicated," said David. "We are gonna release 24 hours of music, making 24 compilations of an hour each. All will be themed differently so we can go further than what we play in clubs, which is predominantly for people to dance to. We just finished an hour of hard-core funk. Plus we will do an hour of space disco, pop, rock and Brazilian, for example."

The finished product will be released at the end of March, said David.

Seeing as the boys have the future all planned out, what's on the cards for Thursday?

"Ummmmmm, ummmmmmm, ummmmmmm," said David. "We know the first 10 minutes and the last 10 minutes. Should be a bit of everything in between."

2manydjs at Legacy, 1, Bade Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市八德路一段1號), on Thursday from 10pm until 2am. Advance tickets, available at FamilyMart (全家便利商店) stores, are NT\$1,700. Admission is NT\$1,800 at the door.

ON THE NET: www.comma9comma.com for more info and www.myspace.com/2manydjs

Bigger than a diplococcus.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MIA/PRELUCE

