



Clubbing in Los Angeles

Jonny Coleman tackles the multi-farious scene in one of America's biggest cities.

Los Angeles has always been a capital of pop culture. Outside of rave, however, it's never had much of a reputation for its dance music culture. Until recently, that is. The efforts of local promoters have given rise to enormous EDM festivals, the Low End Theory-driven beat scene and thriving techno and house crews—and have led to the city finally becoming internationally recognized. Now, it seems, a place that houses four million people inside the city limits and 18 million in the greater Southland area, is finally representing itself on the world stage.

True to its geography—a set of suburbs fronting as a megalopolis—Los Angeles doesn't have a dominant sound or theme. Instead, there are many scenes tugging for attention and battling over the few legitimate dance venues the city has to offer. It's enormously difficult to acquire a liquor license in LA, thanks in no small part to club-owning cowboys like Eddie Nash (of Wonderland murder fame), and those that do can't serve all that late anyway. Most nights last from 10 until 2 or 3 AM (a reality that often results in seeing your headlining DJ for two hours).

It doesn't help that many of the historical clubs/bars in places like Hollywood and West Hollywood are a tough sell to fans of underground music, as the price points, degree of parking difficulty and douchebaggery quotient are all high. That means that many parties of note take place downtown or in other east side neighborhoods (if not a private estate). Costs of living in the east are relatively cheap, and many of the blocks are industrial, so it's easier not to bother the neighbors. There are a few clubs on the west side, but any attempt at growing a scene there would be met with conservative resistance. (The west side, after all, is home to some of the priciest zip codes in the country.)

Most histories of how electronic music came to Los Angeles begin with DJs like Marques Wyatt and Doc Martin. But there are plenty of names that are also integral to the story that often go unmentioned. As journalist Dennis Romero pointed out in an article on LA's early rave scene a few years ago, British ex-pats like Mark Lewis and Michael Cook were playing acid house in clubs in the late '80s. Steve and Jonathan Levy started the Moonshine parties in 1989 in a warehouse in West Los Angeles, an event Romero called "the seeds of raving in the United States."

Doc Martin, who moved to the city in 1990, says that "whereas in San Francisco most things were in clubs, at that time LA was all about warehouses, clubs and places like Park Plaza." Taking cues from the UK rave scene, anywhere that could reasonably house a party was considered. Absurd/Acid Test head Oliver Bristow reels off a collection of oft-forgotten party names that took advantage of empty spaces in the illegal warehouse heyday: "Flammable Liquid, Does Your Mama Know, Wicked, Citrusonic, Melodic, Bang The Drum, Unlock the House..."

Mainstream interest grew at the same time, and rave producers that are still hugely successful today started in this era as well. The infamous Rave America took place in 1993, while the first editions of Electric Daisy Carnival, Monster Massive, Nocturnal Wonderland and Together As One all took place throughout the mid-'90s. But as the first generation of ravers got older, Dennis Romero says that they wanted the same things that Europe and New York had transitioned toward: "superclubs like Ministry of Sound and Twilo." While "two of the biggest promoters, Insomniac and Go Ventures, began holding events at the LA Coliseum and Sports Arena in 1999...they felt like throwbacks to me," explains Romero. But "they held on and, as you know, came back strong more than ten years later."

"Strong" may be a bit of an understatement. The Electric Daisy Carnival, for example, has established itself as one of the premier big festival brands in American dance music. It's hardly the only one. The greater LA area offers a bevy of larger, legitimate festivals that operate, for all intents and purposes, like raves of the '90s—except with a much higher level of scrutiny and regulation. Crowds are still keen to dress candy rave or something equally over-the-top. Also, like parts of the first wave of rave, the commercial success of these events has made these promoters and headlining DJs the wealthiest men in West Coast dance culture.

Indeed, while the music may have changed in some cases, perhaps not much else has. Promoters like Giant and Insomniac are still around and relevant, in addition to mainstream concert promoters like Goldenvoice, AEG and LiveNation who are producing events entirely dance-driven or have been incorporating dance into their existing programming.

EDC and similar events were once open to crowds age 16 and up, which was a huge draw for the hundreds of thousands of high school, undergraduate, and graduate students in the region. However, in 2010, 15 year-old Sasha Rodriguez snuck in and died of a drug overdose at EDC, which sent the Insomniac-run circus packing for Vegas and had conservative California lawmakers trying to pass a bill that would make it illegal to host an event where prerecorded music was played for longer than three-and-a-half hours. It later passed in a much more diluted form, and EDC is now aggressively trying to return, no doubt with the hope that LA will

go through with construction plans for two new enormous football stadiums in the coming three years.

The impact of the warehouse scene that led to large-scale EDM events continues to reverberate in the underground as well. Angelenos Paul T and Junior Chacon, for instance, were throwing events in the mid-'90s that hosted the likes of David Mancuso and Daniel Wang. The most common booking of their party—called Sarcastic, after Paul's clothing line—was a man named DJ Harvey. Along with Doc Martin, Marques Wyatt and John Tejada, Harvey's influence on local DJ culture has been tangible and emphatic. DJ Garth, who brought Harvey over for the first time to America, says that it "really kind of changed the musical spectrum. The disco, laidback style...Everything got slower."

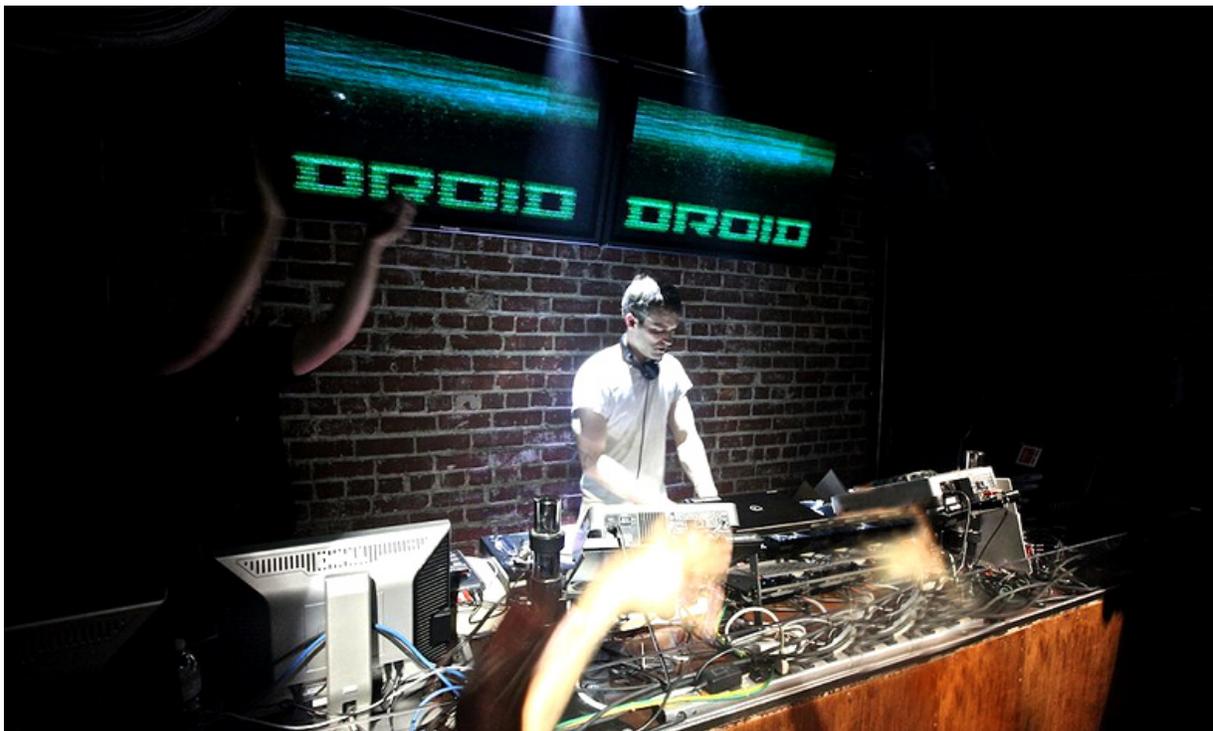
The Sarcastic parties have since become the thing of legend for many. Says Garth, "Part of Harvey's mystique was that he didn't play out much. This legend DJ who's a surfer with a harem that would pop up every couple of months—that worked very well for him." But Paul's outlook on the events has always remained the same throughout. "We're not trying to do parties to get attention or for popularity or profit. We just want to do the best to have a good party. When we have an event it's because we feel it's time to have one," he explains. "Bottom line is we do the party for everyone in our home town...that might sound corny, but that's straight up... The music, environment, sound, lighting etc. making the best that we can with what we have."

Today, many of Harvey's peers have dropped anchor in tow. Lovefingers, Garth, Nitedog, Woolfy, Travis TK Disko, and Tommy Moyo are all here, joining indigenous jocks like Cole Medina, Secret Circuit and Evan Ian. And while the Sarcastic parties are now few and far between, you can still catch Harvey playing the occasional **Rhonda**, museum party or, if you're really lucky, a beach beer bust.



Around the turn of the century, longtime club owner John Lyons similarly saw an opening in the Los Angeles scene. In 2002 he established **Avalon Hollywood**, LA's only real mega-club experience that doesn't only cater to industry folks. Avalon is a rarified venue that operates in the center of Hollywood, adjacent to the Capitol Records building, and can legally stay open until 6 AM. Ryan Draso of Control, the club's premier night at the moment, explains their unique station: "[Things] usually stop at 4 or 5. Booze is cut off at 2. Sometimes a good amount of people leave after two, but then more people come from other parties that are closing."

Because Avalon retains a very enviable license situation and because it can feel pretty Hollywood on a given night, many voices in the underground can't help but yearn for an alternative to making a living outside the fickleness of Hollywood. It's still the only reliable big club experience, though. Over the years, Control in particular has brought artists like Fred Falke, Damian Lazarus and Tiga as well as hosting showcases for labels like Trouble & Bass or Dirtybird.



Droid is the city's biggest techno promoter.

Other Hollywood clubs of note include **King King Club**, **Dim Mak Studios** and **Vanguard**, but while each has their own pluses and minuses, clubbing in Los Angeles is best understood through the promoters rather than the venues. **Droid Behavior**, for instance, are the city's most visible torchbearers for techno. (Their official motto? "eat.sleep.shit.techno"). Their origin story is a familiar one: The trio simply weren't satisfied with the city's offerings. Vidal Vargas: "[When] I learned about Detroit, New York, Canada and Germany, I found out [about them] through the internet. Those guys weren't really coming to LA."

There was a small scene—largely fronted by local legend John Tejada—but there was also an opportunity to bring together techno fans from around the city under one umbrella. Internet early adopters, Droid built an enormous newsletter database and website as a hub to engage and inform—in addition to simply announcing their latest events. They were blogging and putting out podcasts long before it became de rigeur. Often times, their parties take place in warehouses, but they're refreshingly open-minded as well: Droid has not been afraid to pair up with people that may be considered mainstream or suspect (like Insomniac or Scion)—in an effort to continually expand its reach and grow its crowd.

Their centerpiece event is Interface, a couple-times-a-year warehouse multimedia blowout. It's there that you're likely to see acts like Marcel Dettmann, Speedy J or Surgeon. More regularly, they do a Thursday night event called PRIME at **Medusa Lounge** in Silver Lake, which showcases their varied tastes: Two recent events welcomed ghetto house artist DJ Slugo and ambient techno master Donato Dozzy.

Clubbing in Los Angeles

Jonny Coleman tackles the multi-farious scene in one of America's biggest cities.

Los Angeles has always been a capital of pop culture. Outside of rave, however, it's never had much of a reputation for its dance music culture. Until recently, that is. The efforts of local promoters have given rise to enormous EDM festivals, the Low End Theory-driven beat scene and thriving techno and house crews—and have led to the city finally becoming internationally recognized. Now, it seems, a place that houses four million people inside the city limits and 18 million in the greater Southland area, is finally representing itself on the world stage.

True to its geography—a set of suburbs fronting as a megalopolis—Los Angeles doesn't have a dominant sound or theme. Instead, there are many scenes tugging for attention and battling over the few legitimate dance venues the city has to offer. It's enormously difficult to acquire a liquor license in LA, thanks in no small part to club-owning cowboys like Eddie Nash (of Wonderland murder fame), and those that do can't serve all that late anyway. Most nights last from 10 until 2 or 3 AM (a reality that often results in seeing your headlining DJ for two hours).

It doesn't help that many of the historical clubs/bars in places like Hollywood and West Hollywood are a tough sell to fans of underground music, as the price points, degree of parking difficulty and douchebaggery quotient are all high. That means that many parties of note take place downtown or in other east side neighborhoods (if not a private estate). Costs of living in the east are relatively cheap, and many of the blocks are industrial, so it's easier not to bother the neighbors. There are a few clubs on the west side, but any attempt at growing a scene there would be met with conservative resistance. (The west side, after all, is home to some of the priciest zip codes in the country.)

Most histories of how electronic music came to Los Angeles begin with DJs like Marques

Wyatt and Doc Martin. But there are plenty of names that are also integral to the story that often go unmentioned. As journalist Dennis Romero pointed out in an article on LA's early rave scene a few years ago, British ex-pats like Mark Lewis and Michael Cook were playing acid house in clubs in the late '80s. Steve and Jonathan Levy started the Moonshine parties in 1989 in a warehouse in West Los Angeles, an event Romero called "the seeds of raving in the United States."





Doc Martin, who moved to the city in 1990, says that "whereas in San Francisco most things were in clubs, at that time LA was all about warehouses, clubs and places like Park Plaza." Taking cues from the UK rave scene, anywhere that could reasonably house a party was considered. Absurd/Acid Test head Oliver Bristow reels off a collection of oft-forgotten party names that took advantage of empty spaces in the illegal warehouse heyday: "Flammable Liquid, Does Your Mama Know, Wicked, Citrusonic, Melodic, Bang The Drum, Unlock the House..."

Mainstream interest grew at the same time, and rave producers that are still hugely successful today started in this era as well. The infamous Rave America took place in 1993, while the first editions of Electric Daisy Carnival, Monster Massive, Nocturnal Wonderland and Together As One all took place throughout the mid-'90s. But as the first generation of ravers got older, Dennis Romero says that they wanted the same things that Europe and New York had transitioned toward: "superclubs like Ministry of Sound and Twilo." While "two of the biggest promoters, Insomniac and Go Ventures, began holding events at the LA Coliseum and Sports Arena in 1999...they felt like throwbacks to me," explains Romero. But "they held on and, as you know, came back strong more than ten years later."



"Strong" may be a bit of an understatement. The Electric Daisy Carnival, for example, has established itself as one of the premier big festival brands in American dance music. It's hardly the only one. The greater LA area offers a bevy of larger, legitimate festivals that operate, for all intents and purposes, like raves of the '90s—except with a much higher level of scrutiny and regulation. Crowds are still keen to dress candy rave or something equally over-the-top. Also, like parts of the first wave of rave, the commercial success of these events has made these promoters and headlining DJs the wealthiest men in West Coast dance culture.

Indeed, while the music may have changed in some cases, perhaps not much else has. Promoters like Giant and Insomniac are still around and relevant, in addition to mainstream

concert promoters like Goldenvoice, AEG and LiveNation who are producing events entirely dance-driven or have been incorporating dance into their existing programming.

EDC and similar events were once open to crowds age 16 and up, which was a huge draw for the hundreds of thousands of high school, undergraduate, and graduate students in the region. However, in 2010, 15 year-old Sasha Rodriguez snuck in and died of a drug overdose at EDC, which sent the Insomniac-run circus packing for Vegas and had conservative California lawmakers trying to pass a bill that would make it illegal to host an event where prerecorded music was played for longer than three-and-a-half hours. It later passed in a much more diluted form, and EDC is now aggressively trying to return, no doubt with the hope that LA will go through with construction plans for two new enormous football stadiums in the coming three years.



DJ Harvey and Sarcastic has helped to make Los Angeles a haven for disco lovers.

The impact of the warehouse scene that led to large-scale EDM events continues to reverberate in the underground as well. Angelenos Paul T and Junior Chacon, for instance, were throwing events in the mid-'90s that hosted the likes of David Mancuso and Daniel Wang. The most common booking of their party—called Sarcastic, after Paul's clothing line—was a man named DJ Harvey. Along with Doc Martin, Marques Wyatt and John Tejada, Harvey's influence on local DJ culture has been tangible and emphatic. DJ Garth, who brought Harvey over for the first time to America, says that it "really kind of changed the musical spectrum. The

disco, laidback style...Everything got slower."

The Sarcastic parties have since become the thing of legend for many. Says Garth, "Part of Harvey's mystique was that he didn't play out much. This legend DJ who's a surfer with a harem that would pop up every couple of months—that worked very well for him." But Paul's outlook on the events has always remained the same throughout. "We're not trying to do parties to get attention or for popularity or profit. We just want to do the best to have a good party. When we have an event it's because we feel it's time to have one," he explains. "Bottom line is we do the party for everyone in our home town...that might sound corny, but that's straight up... The music, environment, sound, lighting etc. making the best that we can with what we have."

Today, many of Harvey's peers have dropped anchor in tow. Lovefingers, Garth, Nitedog, Woolfy, Travis TK Disko, and Tommy Moye are all here, joining indigenous jocks like Cole Medina, Secret Circuit and Evan Ian. And while the Sarcastic parties are now few and far between, you can still catch Harvey playing the occasional **Rhonda**, museum party or, if you're really lucky, a beach beer bust.



Around the turn of the century, longtime club owner John Lyons similarly saw an opening in the Los Angeles scene. In 2002 he established **Avalon Hollywood**, LA's only real mega-club experience that doesn't only cater to industry folks. Avalon is a rarified venue that operates in the center of Hollywood, adjacent to the Capitol Records building, and can legally stay open until 6 AM. Ryan Draso of Control, the club's premier night at the moment, explains their unique station: "[Things] usually stop at 4 or 5. Booze is cut off at 2. Sometimes a good

amount of people leave after two, but then more people come from other parties that are closing."

Because Avalon retains a very enviable license situation and because it can feel pretty Hollywood on a given night, many voices in the underground can't help but yearn for an alternative to making a living outside the fickleness of Hollywood. It's still the only reliable big club experience, though. Over the years, Control in particular has brought artists like Fred Falke, Damian Lazarus and Tiga as well as hosting showcases for labels like Trouble & Bass or Dirtybird.



Droid is the city's biggest techno promoter.

Other Hollywood clubs of note include **King King Club**, **Dim Mak Studios** and **Vanguard**, but while each has their own pluses and minuses, clubbing in Los Angeles is best understood through the promoters rather than the venues. **Droid Behavior**, for instance, are the city's most visible torchbearers for techno. (Their official motto? "eat.sleep.shit.techno"). Their origin story is a familiar one: The trio simply weren't satisfied with the city's offerings. Vidal Vargas: "[When] I learned about Detroit, New York, Canada and Germany, I found out [about them] through the internet. Those guys weren't really coming to LA."

There was a small scene—largely fronted by local legend John Tejada—but there was also an opportunity to bring together techno fans from around the city under one umbrella. Internet early adopters, Droid built an enormous newsletter database and website as a hub to engage and inform—in addition to simply announcing their latest events. They were blogging and putting out podcasts long before it became de rigueur. Often times, their parties take place in

warehouses, but they're refreshingly open-minded as well: Droid has not been afraid to pair up with people that may be considered mainstream or suspect (like Insomniac or Scion)—in an effort to continually expand its reach and grow its crowd.

Their centerpiece event is Interface, a couple-times-a-year warehouse multimedia blowout. It's there that you're likely to see acts like Marcel Dettmann, Speedy J or Surgeon. More regularly, they do a Thursday night event called PRIME at **Medusa Lounge** in Silver Lake, which showcases their varied tastes: Two recent events welcomed ghetto house artist DJ Slugo and ambient techno master Donato Dozzy.



Droog's Standard Rooftop Hotel parties have helped shape the sound of Jamie Jones and Lee Foss.

Droog is the foremost tech house-centric promoter in Los Angeles. Co-founder Andrei Osyaka, a Ukrainian expat, moved to LA after making some money in the finance game in the first half of the '00s, and eventually linked up with Brett Griffin (attorney by day) and Justin Sloe (ex-IT manager). Together, they release records on their Culprit label. They're perhaps best known, however, for their summer daytime pool series at the downtown **Standard Hotel**. Jamie Jones, Matt Tolfrey and the like are frequent guests to the potentially stuffy environs of The Standard's rooftop, and they often transform it into something far more feral.

Like Droid, Droog's members make some of their rent on out-of-town gigs, so promoting locally is a part-time job. That's just the nature of the LA party scene in Osyaka's eyes. "There are

more obstacles than in most places [but that] makes for a stronger scene, even if it's smaller. We complain a lot—we look at lineups in London and go 'Damn, look at that,' but most of us are happy now. It's the best it's been for small-to-medium sized parties for non-mainstream, what-we-consider-cool-music. Now these bigger forces who wouldn't have given a shit about us a couple years ago are now tuning in."

Things came together when Chicago native Lee Foss came to LA around 2007. Osyaka elaborates: "It was an epiphany for him because Chicago had gotten stale in his estimation. He felt like something new was being born here. He was one of the few people to give us the push to go beyond the parties—let's start making music. He said, 'Fuck it. Let's do it.' We had a house in Hollywood that was called the Bunker. It was one of the most prominent factors of why we took off—that house. We'd go after our Avalon parties and have parties for days."

Not coincidentally the upcoming album from Hot Creations—Foss' duo with Jamie Jones—was largely conceived in Los Angeles, and Damian Lazarus has also lived in the city for the past few years. So it's no secret that Hot Natured and Crosstown Rebels' neon house sound has drawn a great deal of inspiration from the city. (Listen to the pop and soundtrack work coming out of LA in the '80s and compare the two.) While Droog hasn't reached quite the same heights with Culprit, their label project, they've managed to establish a strong foothold in the international scene with releases from Tolfrey, Subb-an and Jozif.

A Club Called Rhonda represents a similarly serious ethos but also delivers with personality in droves. Rhonda began as a twice monthly party in Guada Linda, "some type of Guatemalan [place that was] super shady...[there was] illegal money coming through there," explains co-founder GODDOLLARS. Their self-described "polysexual hard partying" event has hosted acts like Dimitri from Paris, DJ Harvey, Oliver \$ and Tensnake in its four years, and drawn in a diverse crowd as a result. While they have a keen eye for talent—booking in Todd Edwards for a gig in 2009, a few years before his current DJ revival; asking MK to produce a single for their label in 2010—Rhonda parties are all about the crowd. At any given event, you'll encounter all strands of gay, straight, in-between, trannies, gangsta cholas, frat guys, lesbians, indie rockers, techno nerds, 50 year old bears, blue collar kids and music industry folk.

Like many of the promoters in Los Angeles, Rhonda's Alexis Rivera perseveres in the face of "a lot of limitations...I think we do a good job of pushing the extreme of the limitations. The limitations are having to close at 2:00 AM or 1:30, being in a city where almost everyone has to drive, being in a city where you compete with Avalon, being where there's a lot of just straight parties or just gay parties." Following in the footsteps of Droid and Droog, Rhonda aims to make their record label a more consistent concern and hopes to one day own a venue in the city. For now, though, they often take over **Los Globos**, a former Mexican dive bar and one of the better new club spaces in the city.



While the 4/4 triumvirate of techno, house and disco have come a long way in the last decade, LA's relationship with hip-hop has always remained steadfast. One of the most respected producers in the city is Madlib, the resident weirdo stoner godfather of the **Stones Throw** label. Label head Peanut Butter Wolf, an accomplished DJ in his own right, started releasing Madlib's records around the turn of the century and has given the gifted beatmaker the space to create some of the most vital projects in underground hip-hop over the past decade. Stones Throw's success, however, is down to Wolf's hugely eclectic approach. Few imprints could take on Dam-Funk, James Pants, Gary Wilson and Mayer Hawthorne and have it make sense. Stones Throw does it with ease.

On the techier, more machine-driven underbelly of hip-hop stands Low End Theory. The night emerged from Sketchbook, an early '00s weekly where local producers would test drive new productions. Low End founder Daddy Kev invited friends like Gaslamp Killer, Flying Lotus and dibia\$e to be involved in his Wednesday night weekly in 2006, and it has seen an almost unbelievable cast of guests stop by over the years—Thom Yorke and Erykah Badu among them. What's unique about Low End Theory is the vibe: friendly but competitive. "This is a city of entertainers, and you have to be a performer," Kev explains. "You have to make this not just an engaging but enthralling thing to watch. Having this forum, knowing that the presentation and sound system will be correct. It's pushed everybody. That comes from hip-hop, sure."

The most obvious success to emerge from the night is Flying Lotus, who now records for Warp and is a European festival veteran. But this is a party that doesn't put on airs: the weekly features many artists recording on Daddy Kev's Alpha Pup and FlyLo's Brainfeeder,

and it's the most centralized, regular and cheap way to hear these voices in the city. They've received a considerable amount of press both locally and internationally as well as corporate offers, but the brand has remained as independent as possible. Most interestingly, though, it's still a place that sees a huge melting point of influences come together. Whether you're into hip-hop, house, techno, rock, punk or whatever, Low End Theory likely has something for you.



Dig below the surface of the big underground house, techno, disco and hip-hop parties that Los Angeles has to offer, and you'll find even more. The Do-Over, a free Sunday weekly in Hollywood, has hip-hop and partyrocking as its backbone but is ultimately one of the most eclectic games in town. The hook is that the DJs are never announced beforehand. You're just as likely to get Theo Parrish or King Britt as you are Diplo or Flying Lotus. The crowd, as with most of the aforementioned parties, is extremely mixed in ethnicity, fashion, age and musical background. It's one of the few regular open airs that captures the best aspects of house parties.

Downtown's Voodoo delivers equally on a familiar, eclectic house party style. It's a (roughly) 100 person event that usually has a strict pre-sale and entry policy but rewards its devotees with an all-night house party with proper sound. Founder Eduardo Castillo makes a living through owning and operating Pattern Bar, a young downtown bar with solid programming, which allows him to throw parties whenever he pleases, rather than relying on it to pay his bills.

And there are even more that deserve mention: **Dâm-Funk's** free Monday night

Funkmosphere event specializes in funk, boogie and proto-house. If you venture east, Mustache Mondays offers a bold array of Monday night, queer-centric entertainment (Lady Miss Kier, Zebra Katz). Add to that Futra, **Incognito**, Doc Martin's **Sublevel**, MFD, Making Shapes, Sunny Side Up, Fade to Mind, The Lift, Full Frontal Disco, Spank!, Cub Scout, Hott City, Booby Trap!, Animal Club, Nox Illusio, We Own the Night, 2 True and events from DJs and acts from 100% Silk, the 6Bit Collective, Smog, American Standard, Friends of Friends, IAMSOUND, CYP 2, FYF and dublab and many more and the calendar fills up pretty quickly.

Despite the relative optimism about things in Los Angeles at the moment, it's far from a clubber's paradise. Nothing seems to come easy. Unlike in London where you might get five different types of house music heads all looking for something slightly different, Los Angeles promoters are often drawing from the same group of clubbers. There also continues to be waves of crackdowns on warehouses and lofts when things get just a bit too big for the police to ignore. And, like anywhere else, the sound at certain loft and warehouse parties usually leaves a lot to be desired.

The circumstances for partying in Los Angeles are also far from ideal and may stay that way indefinitely. There are no indications that liquor laws or restrictions on obtaining the proper licenses will change anytime soon. Likewise, acquiring work visas for foreign artists is an enormous hassle—and can sometimes result in a last-minute cancellation. Factor in the general difficulty in making a living from solely promoting events, especially in the underground, and you can see why it's taken Los Angeles such a long time to build a solid scene that can accommodate underground and overground parties on a regular basis.

"The thing that conflicted LA so long was our willingness to let everything be an import," Daddy Kev told me. "That has changed recently." And he's right: Whereas Low End Theory, Droid, Droog, Rhonda and others had their beginnings in bringing exotic things into the city, each of them now have their sights set outward as well. Parties are touring nationally and internationally, and many promoters are looking to make moves towards establishing more clubs in the city.

The people behind those aforementioned parties seem to be Los Angeles lifers, and they understand the scene better than anyone. They prefer the struggle, choosing to stay put rather than moving to more liberal, dance-friendly cultures. There's a variety of reasons why: There's all the beautiful people, the semi-decriminalization of marijuana and the macrobiotic burritos. There's also the local values of experimentation and eclecticism.

It could be the whole Manifest Destiny thing too—everyone living out a prospector's dream. Like Joan Didion once wrote, "The future always looks good in the Golden land, because no one remembers the past." Or, as Andrei Osyaka puts it, maybe it all boils down to one simple reason: "Maybe the reason I'm so positive about the future in Los Angeles is because the weather is so fucking good."

Words / **Jonny Coleman**

Published / Friday, 24 August 2012