

The Rave Pioneers: Catching Up With San Francisco's Wicked Sound System

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San Francisco by way of London, how four DJs helped start a West Coast rave revolution - The Wicked Crew



The Wicked Crew Today - Jenö, Garth, Thomas and Markie - Photo By Adria Avila

Article By Justin Adler-Swanberg

In 1991 the rave scene exploded in the United States, combining elements of the pre-existing American club and dance communities with the intense energy of the UK acid house and rave scenes that had taken over Britain in the few years before. Although what became the rave scene

in the US began roughly simultaneously that year in several cities, the San Francisco scene had a direct connection to the UK underground which mixed with the storied psychedelic and gay subculture roots of San Francisco to create a unique experience. Wicked Sound System - DJs, Thomas, Garth, Jenö, Markie & non-DJ members Alan and Trish - lay at the heart of that explosion of energy, & brought that authentic UK underground to San Francisco. Wicked will be holding its 25th Anniversary Party this coming July 16 at the Club Mighty in San Francisco. Now, 25 years later, three of these founding members, Alan, Garth, and Jenö, talk about how it all began.



Full Moon Party - DJ Garth x Cop 1993 Photo by Dennis Lefew

JAS: Can you tell me a bit about how Wicked started?

Alan: Wicked started in San Francisco in early 1991, as a direct offshoot of the London acid house party scene. Four of us - Jenö, Markie, Tricia & myself - had been doing a dance party together with a friend of ours Luke, in East London, called Whoosh. The other two members of the Wicked crew - Garth and Thomas - we originally met at the Tonka parties. Thomas DJed for them occasionally and Garth used to go and support them as a dancer. So we all met in London, we enjoyed acid house, getting high, going out dancing all night, & spending the weekend together, sharing being alive.



The Tour Bus

JAS: What were the roots of Wicked? What was going on before in the UK?

Jeno: Wicked has deep roots in our experiences growing up in Thatcher's Britain, in the wake of punk rock and the rich tapestry of alternative & free festival culture that existed back then. I was further inspired by the arrival of acid house as a euphoric antidote to those somewhat grim times, so my good friend Luke & I began a party called Whoosh. Based in the neon basement of an old run-down anarchist book store in East London, it soon attracted some of the characters who later went on to form Wicked - Markie, Alan, Trish, Emma & myself. Also involved were Greg (Wicked's eventual sound guy) and a bunch of other freaks and friends, some of who also later joined us in San Francisco. It was a fun, intimate & very psychedelic all night affair, where we honed not only a sound but also an approach that we brought with us to the States. A blueprint of sorts for the early Wicked jams.

Tonka was another important influence - I did my first riotous party with Rob & Phil (who ran the Tonka Sound System) & Mark Heley (later a founder of SF's Toontown events) way back in 1985. We shared a trajectory from crazy squat party beginnings through to acid house, before they went on to paint their speakers yellow and adopt the Tonka name. Their monthly after-parties on Brighton's Blackrock beach where Markie & other's spun some amazing sets out of the Tonka sound van, helped inspire our full moon parties.

At that same time Alan, myself & the others were taking the Whoosh party ethos out & about, anywhere we thought we could get away with setting up a small sound system. We'd literally hijack people's events, renegade style, & turn them into fun all night dance jams, Markie, Para,

myself & sometimes Bones, Luke (Queernation), & Ron (Raw Stylus) would rotate on the turntables, with Greg often bringing along Turbo speakers to boost the fun. We carried that approach to San Francisco in early '91, en masse, where we hooked up with Garth, who we knew from the Tonka jams, and founded Wicked. Markie split back to the UK after our 1st full moon party, but Garth, myself & local DJ Ernie Munson carried Wicked's musical torch until Markie returned & then Thomas showed up with his own unique approach that complimented Wicked perfectly, and we never looked back.



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The Early Years

Photos via Garth Wynn Jones

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JAS: What were you doing before you became part of Wicked, and how did that feed into the creation of Wicked?

Alan: The UK had experienced a proliferation of sound system culture through acid house parties, then the raves which were being organized in unlicensed venues, warehouses or even fields. Everyone was getting accustomed to coming out and listening to dance music played over a sound system somewhere different from a nightclub. Some of those parties - Shoom or Clink St., for example, inspired us so much that some of us started collecting records and becoming

DJs, and some of us started making it possible for the rest of us to get together & do our own parties.

Jeno: Apart from throwing dance parties in the UK, I'd been DJing for about five years, 4 of them pretty solidly. Mostly for the love, playing everything from post-punk experimentation to hip hop, disco, soul & funk, and some psychedelic oddities I'd become familiar with from days hanging out at the UK free festivals. I began focusing more on house music after my first experiences at acid house jams. I didn't have a lot of money back then, so I had to dig long & hard for records I both liked & could afford. But it paid off as many of those UK treasures I dug up later became Wicked and San Francisco anthems.

I'd also attended a bunch of the big UK raves after they morphed out of the acid house explosion, and they were fun, and often looked back on fondly, but were bedeviled by a government crackdown, and opportunistic rave promoters & crooks looking to cash in on the phenomenon. It was over in less than a year. But we learned the lessons and continued a focus on throwing smaller events, which is where Alan & I really thrived together. We wanted a safe, fun place where our friends could come & get psychedelic without having to deal with high ticket prices and a high likelihood of the party getting shut down. We loved the intimate family vibe, and it became the core of the

Whoosh & Wicked experience.

Jason at First Full Moon Party SF 1991 - Photo by Lucy Graubart

JAS: What were some of the influences that fed into the Wicked concept?

Jeno: With the ongoing UK crackdown it was perhaps inevitable we'd end up on foreign shores looking for new inspiration. In early 1991 Alan & Markie tagged along on a trip with Mark Heley to San Francisco. They were welcomed by Garth, who'd moved to San Francisco a few months previous. Mark Heley was there to check out some of the newer alternative cultures in the Bay Area. Markie got himself some gigs in the local gay clubs, and Alan went in search of psychedelic connections he'd previously made with some San Francisco-based Grateful Dead family he'd met at our Whoosh party back in London. And those three things I've just mentioned - the newer alternative culture, the gay culture & the older psychedelic culture in the Bay Area became pretty significant influences on Wicked, I'd say.



Alan: Once we got to San Francisco and we got to check out the vibrant nightclub scene we wanted to join in with the good people of the city. First, we brought Markie over with his box of records, and he played at Colossus for resident Jerry Bonham. Jerry and his crowd loved

Markie's music, so we thought wow, there's potential for us to regenerate the fantastic experiences and atmospheres that we'd been creating in London, here in San Francisco. It was a wonderful city with its rich heritage of both the psychedelic scene & the gay disco scene. It just seemed like the perfect perfect mix for us, all it needed was some of that renegade DIY British sound system attitude, & someone with the bollocks to get up and go do it.

An important distinction to make is that we hadn't come to San Francisco & just decided to get into dance music, or gotten into it because we'd come to San Francisco, we were already full-time professional party people. That was already our main focus in life, that's what we were doing, we were putting on parties full time, & going out most nights of the week, supporting and working other people's parties too. Jenó was playing records, Markie was playing records, Thomas was playing records, & although Garth was doing a regular job at that time, we soon talked him out of that. Turned up on his doorstep, and within weeks we'd got him to quit work, buy decks and go for it full gung-ho!

JAS: What is the relation between Wicked, the early Acid House scene, and the counterculture (both contemporary and earlier, i.e. the 60s)?

Alan: There was a general association between the aesthetics and the artworks adopted by the 80's Balearic ravers & those of the 60's hippie scene. They were growing their hair out, wearing baggy flared jeans and funky tops and what not. But personally, I'd always had an interest in the psychedelia scene. I'd always been following West Coast psychedelic writers, was a fan of Tim Leary, Robert Anton Wilson & John C. Lilly. Later I was introduced to Fraser Clark & Fraser was an older guy from the original 60's scene, in London, and he turned us onto lots of interesting people, artists, writers, musicians, healers, therapists, doctor's, counselors, you know people that were intelligent, articulate and experienced. They were teachers and guides for us, & I drew a lot from those relationships. So when acid house arrived there was now a scene blowing up that brought psychedelic compounds (that I'd always been a fan of) into popularity again and therefore available again. So it was very easy for us to make the connection, & when the press was screaming about "acid house means "el es dee " I guess for me personally it did. Back then I loved doing acid & listening to music with my mates; that was at one of my favorite weekend pursuits.

Jenó: I'd grown up with radical parents in the late 60s and 70s, some of my earliest memories are of being at protests & concerts with them. I definitely saw connections between their revolutionary outlook & the alternative punk culture I experienced later as a teen, particularly the early 80s anarcho-punk scene with its wholly DIY & activist approach. Then in the late 80s I experienced the love-fest of acid house, that felt like punk in approach but blew away it's cynical attitudes with a new optimism, some of which resonated with memories of my parents 60s values. We were now looking back at 3 or 4 decades of alternative culture, which meant many valuable lessons had been learned on how to live, work and create outside of the mainstream, lessons that some of us would now incorporate into what we were doing, whether it was Whoosh or Tonka, or Wicked. So I see Wicked as being very much a continuation of those lessons, for example, our interest in free party ethos, or our very DIY approach. I see Wicked as being just one branch on the tree of alternative culture. We contributed.

JAS: What was Wicked about from your perspective?

Garth: A psychedelic dance party in its purest form.

JAS: It's been said that there was specific "intention" behind Wicked. What is/was that from your point of view?

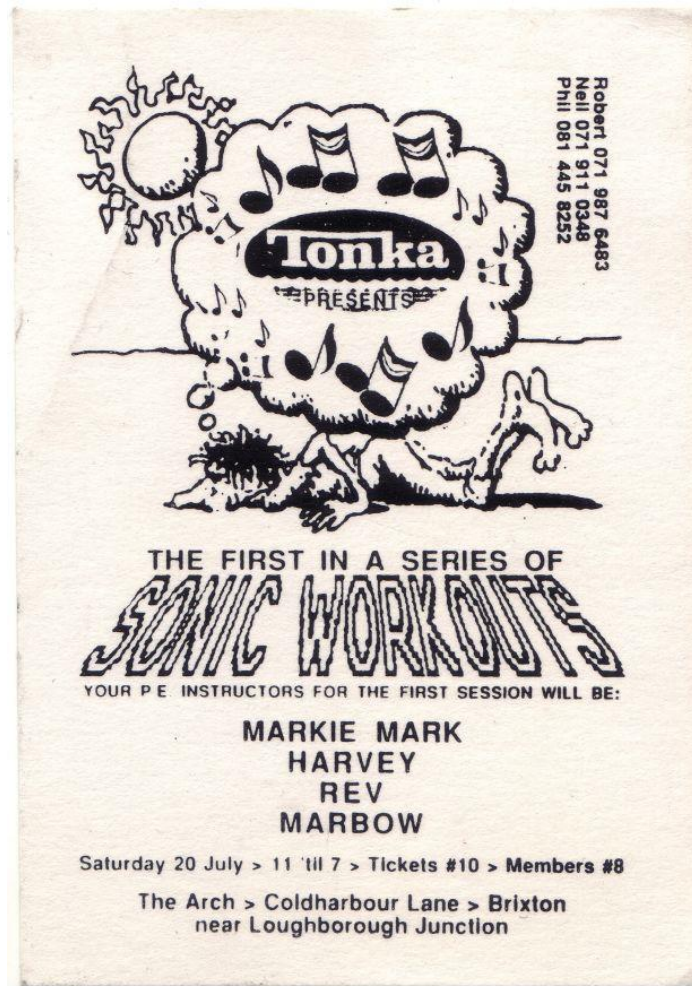
Jeno: Intention - to do something more than just throw a party. To celebrate yes, but also to do so as a way of living, rather than just as a form of entertainment. To be successful, without making it all about the money. Because it's also our art, our collective creative outlet, and a means for us to hopefully inspire & contribute a little something to the lives of those who we encounter along the way. Perhaps humbly inspiring them to go off and create their own art, their own music, their own way of celebrating. And in the early days inspiring others was certainly a part of Wicked's contribution, Alan was determined to help create a loving "scene" in San Francisco, and many credit us with catalyzing & setting a raw blueprint for the San Francisco's dance music experience that followed, influencing others up & down the West Coast, and beyond.

Alan: Wicked was a renegade hippie punk sound system, playing acid house & psychedelic disco. That's what Wicked was about. The atmospheres that we'd learned how to generate in London we were replicating in San Francisco, and we had core aesthetic values that we tried to adhere to – the music, the four DJs playing the music, a quality sound system, the venue, and of course most importantly the people, the party people we invited to come and share dancing all night with, and to share sunrise with in the morning. But it was all about love essentially, it was about propagation of unconditional love as the medium for sharing the experience of being here, now, alive, conscious and aware. Essentially it was a modern replication of the ancient magical arts. A shamanistic application of music and dance used to create a physically tangible psychedelic experience. Using the music to focus your physical energy in such a way that you could channel together collectively, jacking & rocking simultaneously to transform local energy into something positive loving & uplifting, that goes out into the universe and hopefully affects everything positively and lovingly.

JAS What were the early days of Wicked and the San Francisco scene like?

Garth: Heady. Everyone seemed to be high all the time. Love was everywhere. It was everywhere.

Alan: It was just full on gay disco. It was great. It was brilliant. Loved it. Classic. Honestly, I got to San Francisco, & as soon as I got on that dance floor at Colossus, I thought yeah, I've found it, at last, that lovely energy. Just being around other people who are sexually comfortable with their identity, being around human beings who are comfortable with who they are. I guess that was one of the underlying important things that I stumbled across, being around a lot of other people who are comfortable with their own sexual identity is a wonderful thing.



Jeno: That first year in San Francisco, I clearly recall the feeling that we could do anything we wanted, that anything was possible. Even when it was still only a core of several dozens of us, rocking all the parties with our unique musical approach and our cant-stop-wont-stop attitude. I think we all felt very drawn to what we were doing, that we'd found a calling perhaps. And I met a lot of wonderful like-minded people back then. It was amazing while it lasted. Over time things started to feel less spontaneous, less innovative, more formulated, especially once the rave promoters moved in, repackaging the good vibes into superficial slogans for large warehouses full of impressionable kids. Promoters were preaching love & peace, with dollar sign eyes. Which I care to mention only because the Wicked full moon parties became a great foil to that kind of influence. They provided a much-needed heart to the Bay Area's exploding dance music phenomenon. They were not only free but happening in some of the rawest & beautiful nature I'd experienced up to that point. What better place to go dance, celebrate and connect with each other, away from urban life & it's relentless distractions.

JAS: How did you get into DJing?

Garth: Well I had a nice stereo system and boom boxes as far back as 1980. I was always the kid with the latest tunes recorded off the radio. Until I could afford to buy records. When I was at University in London, my friends pressured me into playing a set down at the Student Union bar which was always hopping on the weekend. I remember being bloody terrified but somehow managed to play a few Hip Hop and Rare Groove records without clearing the place out. It was '87. I didn't go near a DJ booth until moving to San Francisco when the same thing happened again. My friends demanded that I play my House and Disco records for them over a proper club system so they could get their groove on. The year was '91 and the first party I played at lasted ten years. It was called Come Unity. At its peak, 1000 kids would pack 1015 Folsom on a Wednesday night until 4 am. Wicked and our Full Moon Beach Parties started the same year. We just turned 24. Time flies.

JAS: How would you describe the style(s) of music you spin? Has it changed?

Garth: I like to think it's timeless dance music. I tend to avoid the bells and whistles and over produced stuff in favor of a solid groove. I mix all my influences together. A typical set might include Acid House, Deep Techno, Psyche Rock, Cosmic Disco but I've been known to play Funk, Dub Reggae, Balearic oddities and even the odd country record when the mood takes me. Music is music.

JAS: How do you feel that spinning vinyl vs. using current technology to DJ affects the experience either for yourself as a DJ and/or for the listener or event participant?

Garth: I'm not sure anyone else gives a damn any more, but I still play 100% records because for me that's the original art form. DJing has become so laughably artless with the rise of the over-hyped stadium guys. At this point, the digital realm is just not for me.

Jeno: I love to mix it up. Love my record collection, love my turntables even more, but not afraid of technology, it's opened doors to spontaneous sonic experimentation, particularly with my Void radio shows, that vinyl alone hasn't been able to elicit.

JAS: What do you feel is the role of the DJ and has it changed between the early days and now? In what way?

Garth: The DJ's job is to rock the jam. It's that simple. Everything else just gets in the way. I like to set up my parties with the decks in the middle of the crowd on the dance floor. For maximum energy, there should be no separation between dancer and conductor.

Jeno: There's room in there still to tell a story. One that lingers for more than a few minutes in this age of instant gratification and entertainment overload. It's more of a challenge than it used to be, in my experience, but I do love a challenge. DJs come & go, & DJing will fade one day no

doubt, but I wouldn't underestimate music's innate ability to not just entertain, but also to transform and transcend.

JAS: What made San Francisco into a special place to be?

Alan: It was a special mix. My long-standing interest in psychedelic culture & San Francisco being steeped in that history from the 60's Haight scene. Then musically I love disco, I love dance music & San Francisco is such a big, vibrant gay community & it was the gay community that ran nightlife in the San Francisco when we arrived. The biggest clubs in San Francisco were the gay clubs, the gay discos were always the biggest nights in town, so for me it was all the potentially it offered, you know. I felt like part of our generation's evolution was to open up and release our inhibitions, people being comfortable with discovering their sexual identity. Being comfortable with whoever they were was a big part of that too, so it offered the ideal opportunity for bridging the cultures, and it just so happened that we were that bridge.

Garth: It's a gorgeous city with a long and fascinating history of artistic and psychedelic movements. It was very cheap a quarter century ago. Lots of cool, interesting arty types. And the beaches and parks didn't hurt. Now that the city seems to be changing at a faster rate than ever, its contrasting past comes into focus quite noticeably. I loved the openness when I arrived here.

Jeno: Lots of things, it's left-coast legacy absolutely, but perhaps what sticks in my mind most is the people I encountered. Friendly. Loving. Open. Creative. Less competitive, cliquy & snooty than I'd gotten used to back in London. But the majority I met seemed to want to help, learn from & support each other, and valued collaboration and innovation often simply for its own sake. Quite altruistic, utopian even. As much as it was in some ways a culture shock coming here, I felt very much at home. And our collective passion for music & celebration and our screw-the-rules attitude really resonated with a lot of folks here. They got it, right away.

I'd only been here one day, and we were down on Baker Beach dancing all night under the full moon, celebrating with new friends to a mix of American & European dance music, watching the Golden Gate Bridge suddenly appear through the fog in the morning - a wonderful welcoming to the city. Obviously, San Francisco has changed a lot since, many of those more artistic folk have left or been pushed out by the insane spiraling cost of living, but I still take trips down to Baker Beach regularly, as I did yesterday, and seeing the bridge sometimes enveloped in fog both reminds & renews.

JAS: What were some memorable events and what made them memorable for you?

Garth: The full moons were always unpredictable. Complete mayhem but under the ever watchful eye of the moon we felt truly protected in our lunacy.

Alan: The first night at Colossus, hearing Jerry Bonham play records, which was quickly surpassed by watching Markie play records to the Colossus crowd. That was a major event. Jeno and Tricia arriving and the first full moon party at Baker Beach the next night, because it was really about celebrating them arriving, and also because that was the closest thing to what we were about, it was the first time we were getting to assert our identity really. Even though it was

only a small intimate thing, it was the core thing. The people that were at that party went on to become key players and faces in the scene. And the Golden Gate Bridge appearing in the morning was just such a trip, the iconic landmark, we didn't know it was there, we were on the beach at nighttime, and you can't see the bridge 'til after the sun comes up, and it just rolled out of the fog.

Our welcome to San Francisco. And then the Big Heart City basement, the first Wicked we did down there. That was the first time we felt like we had control of somewhere, of a space. They literally gave us the keys and let us get on with it. We'd only just arrived, but literally we already had our own space, and we were running it, we put our own sound in, put our own lights in, ran the door ourselves. It was still small, basement parties, but obviously a lot of the people that came to those became the core bread and butter of the scene, went on to do literally what we were hoping - got inspired and went on to do parties & organize gigs themselves, or got into playing records, becoming DJs or promoters or artists. Wicked at King Street was also memorable, getting in there, it was literally a warehouse, it was a big party space that felt really close to the warehouses we were used to back home. Then when the Wicked purple turbo sound system arrived, picking it up from the airport, & the first time switching it on down at King Street, getting to hear it for the first time.

Jeno: Those early Wicked jams. In the dark womb-like basements of Big Heart City & 1015 Folsom. A 2 am start - while most of San Francisco was sleeping, we'd just be getting going. Strobe, smoke, and our humble record collections were enough. Also, of course, those pagan nights out under the full moon. Chaotic at times, what with changing locations, staying a step ahead of the cops, no flyers just a voicemail for directions, sometimes not getting the music started 'till 3 or 4 am. But really it was a sense of freedom, being out under the stars, in nature, doing what we loved, very much on our own terms.

Of course, it was work, dragging heavy speakers up sand dunes after a long, exhausting party was hell, but whoever was left would help out, and we'd all pick up after ourselves, do our best to leave the locations as we found them. I still can't believe no one had bothered to bring a sound system and dance music out to those spots before. And no one has done it the same way since.

It remains a big part of Wicked's legacy. One that I don't think would exist if not for the many friends who helped us back then. Folks like Gina P, Cosmic Jason, Craig Valentine, Malachy, Simon, & Andie. Also Ernie Munson - a long time local DJ whose generosity contributed to Wicked not only musically, but by opening door for us with local venues/DJs, etc. And Pete Avila who threw a fun weekly club called Osmosis, which was one of the few house music focused clubs in San Francisco back then with it's mixed & diverse crowd of club kids & drag queens. Pete supported all of us, offered me a residency & helped make it possible for me to stay here.

JAS: What, if any, social message do you feel that Wicked and related underground parties convey?

Garth: Unity. I've played many countries where I can't understand a word of the local language but as soon as the beats kick in everyone's on the same vibe. It's just a feeling, and that feeling is universal.

Alan: I don't know there was a social message, apart from the underlying collective agreement that we were all there to do whatever we were going to with a loving intent, be nice to each other, and encourage each of us to have a good time together. Just the tacit acknowledgment of that was, I guess, the most understood message. There is no real social thing other than just trying to generate that most exciting of all experiences. I was always turned on by engaging human experiences. When I was a kid, it was either at the football, playing it, or when my old man took me to the game and onto the terraces, feeling the surge, the singing, the frenzy of the crowd dynamic. Then later going onto the disco dance floor and dancing myself into an ecstatic frenzy. Or going to a gig and in the mosh pit rocking out into an ecstatic frenzy.

So that's what excites me, going to a place or space or venue or club when it's happening, when there's really good music that you connect with, and it inspires you to get up and dance. You can't help yourself; you just got to get up and dance to that record. I love it, it totally turns me on, and when you're with other people who are also affected like that, when you start interacting together you can create some special atmosphere, it's energizing, it's nourishing, it's healing, it's good for you, it's really good for you, so that's where I get my healing, where I get my [meditation](#). Whether I'm at home on my own listening to tunes or out dancing, it's medicine; it's healing. I also find it incredibly sexy and attractive seeing other people who are really good at dancing getting into great tunes, it's uplifted and inspires you to wanna get up and be part of it.

So yes there was no real social message apart from trying to generate that, trying to generate the energy that inspires people to feel good, & make other people feel good around them too, & hopefully have a positive influence on our local community, larger society and by extension the planet.

Jeno: We've been through some intense experiences together - forging a way of life for ourselves in a new country; building Wicked into a dominant musical force; the overwhelming insanity of being with 3000 people losing their minds on Bonny Doon beach under the full moon; the heartbreak of our close friend Malachy getting paralyzed in a Wicked van crash, & then losing Alan & Trish's key roles in the crew as a direct consequence of that. But then bouncing back with our purple hand built Turbo sound system, several amazing Wicked bus tours & the Wicked/Greyhound labels amongst other things.

Eventually, we ended up taking a few years off from each other & to get on with the rest of our lives, but here we are 25 years on, doing this Wicked thing as friends, with a run of 4 successful reunion parties and a tour under our belts. And throughout it, all Wicked has kept a certain integrity, and a family-like love for what we do that's allowed us to bounce back and survive. That's not a social message, but it's our message and an inspiring one perhaps.

JAS: What would you say is the difference between the more “underground” scene that Wicked was/is part of and the commercialized version of “raves” and “EDM” festivals?

Garth: I never liked the commercial end of the spectrum. I probably could have made a ton of cash if I'd been willing to compromise my sound or stage dive a path to glory. But you have to live with yourself at the end of the day, and I'm not sure I could look myself in the mirror with a straight face.

Alan: I don't go to the big festivals, I just end up feeling lost in it all. But with Wicked we just concentrated on our core aesthetic, what was important to us - the music, the sound system, the purple speaker cabinets, the green camouflage netting, the black lights and the smoke & strobes. It wasn't over complicated, it was simple, only one dance floor, no multiple rooms to distract, we always kept everybody in the same room to try and keep the energy up, rather than have it dissipated.

There was never an extravagant production as far as Wicked and the underground scene was concerned, our thing was getting the energy focused, getting the decks down on the floor, so the DJ was part of the party, and so the energy in the middle of the dance floor in front of the decks was where the focus was. That was the whole point of being at the party was to be in around that, to get what was going on. So you better come for that, or there's no point coming.

Jeno: It's about valuing not only our intentions and our musical approach but also the importance of intimacy at our events. At bigger parties, it seems hard to sustain and nurture something special. By the very nature of the beast, things easily become overwhelming - higher entry fees, large vibe-less venues, heavy security, too many rooms/stages, too many DJs. Too much novelty.

Things start feeling superficial and the large amounts of money going in and out becomes the driving force. Not to take away anything from those folks trying it, but if the recent trend of huge corporate EDM festivals is a result of the original big party rave approach, then I feel we made the right decision, avoiding the trapping of large-scale commercialism and instead focusing on something more integral.



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Wicked Crew Photos

By Gina Paoli

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JAS: Do you feel that “authenticity” is an issue in some way? How? What does it mean to you?

Alan: I’m an old school soul boy, and I love dancing. I’ve always been blessed with enough brothers and sisters around me who are good at playing music, so I’ve never had to worry about playing records myself. So anywhere that I can get that experience of just being able to have a good groove, have a dance, whether it’s a full-on rave out or whether it’s just a smoochy little shuffle, just somewhere that I can do that and enjoy myself and have a laugh with good friends that I feel close to, close enough to open up to and share the ultimate thrill and joy of being alive, here and now.

I love the way people act and interact when they are out socializing, always fascinated me and always been drawn to the night life is as a consequence, so anything authentic to me is anywhere there’s a quality appreciation of what makes good music - as far as my taste in music goes – and people that are articulate and able to enjoy that music through how they dance to it.



Wicked 1st Full Moon March 1991 - Photo Jason Walker



Outside Garth's Apartment San Francisco 1991 - Photo by Lucy Graubart

JAS: How do you feel about how the dance music scene and community have changed since the early days?

Alan: For me, it's constantly changing, it's never stopped, that's the whole thing. You notice personally with your own style of dancing the way you enjoy, and channel music are constantly changing as you pick up new mannerisms and come across new ways of hearing a sound and the way it affects you. The music is being constantly recycled too, the same riffs, the same vocals, the same beats get reused, resampled, re-edited, and mixed in different ways to create an authentic experience but it's still the same basic constituents that have been used time and time again. It's the same with the dancing, the same, recycling different experiences in different ways, over the years of going out dancing with other people, and the impression that leaves on you the next time you out and go dancing.

So this scene was a part of my personal musical journey, my personal musical trip you know from the disco and the northern soul as a kid, on to psychedelic and rock music, into the electronic dance music, electro, hip-hop, house music, acid house, and up to now. I'm loving the edit scene at the moment; I'm loving the whole Soundcloud phenomena, and I'm loving the internet for making it possible to get all these connections to all this new music and these new ways of hearing the music reworked. The culture also goes through cycles and waves - it goes into the clubs, and everyone gets all clubby and gets all dressed up and enjoys drinking and socializing, and then it goes underground and goes psychedelic, goes all warehouse party, goes outside into the festival scene and then goes back into the clubs again, goes all clubby again, etc. These days with such a broad palette of ways to access music and enjoy music and dance, I find it's really healthy.

I don't know what it's like in the States at the moment, in California, but in the UK and Europe, it still feels as great as ever, still as vibrant and as healthy and as happening as ever. I'm constantly nourished by the little bit I interact with but if I wanted to work it full-time, if I had the time and energy to do so, there is plenty to go support and work. There's loads of really good club nights, loads of really good DJs and there's loads of really good music. The summers are great, there's a festival every weekend in the UK, all over Europe, there's the whole traditional Balearic scene and the new Balearic scene on the Adriatic in Croatia, there're loads of quality events.

People's standards are very high these days, and that's a direct consequence and part of our legacy. People take it for granted as the music permeated all forms of culture and is used in everything, in your TV soundtrack, your films, your adverts - all media now uses dance music, so we don't notice the effects because we take it for granted. Youngsters these days are born into it, it's all surrounding, all-permeating but I guess we were lucky enough to witness the change, so we've got something to compare it to.



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Classic Wicked Photos From The Archives

Photos by Ron Ciron, Rick Webb, Rebekah Kortokraks, Mark Rowley and Lucy Graubart
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JAS: Is there an “authentic” experience available today? If so, what is it, and if not, why not?

Alan: I think I answered that already. There is so much opportunity for engaging with music these days, and the quality of music is actually very high and because of the quality of the equipment these days used to produce and process music with the digital capabilities that we have now, more people are into than ever and more people are having the opportunities to practice and hone the skills and are getting really good at it. So it is better than ever, and the internet is the most amazing tool/facility.

I still buy music, tracks that I like, and I want, that I can afford and help support the artist. I might not have much money, but a 320 MP3 or a WAV file I don't mind paying for. So I get a decent file to play with, that sounds good on a big system and whoever made the track will eventually get a few pennies for it.



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Wicked Crew Photos

By Jen0 Void

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JAS: Where do you see things going in the future for you personally and for the dance music community?

Garth: I've developed a love for film and TV acting since moving to LA a few years ago. It's a completely different world, incredibly refreshing creatively. I've been busy developing my craft and learning. I spend my days auditioning which keeps me humble I assure you. But the determination is starting to pay off. I've been in four feature films, thirty-odd shorts, commercials, industrials, voice over projects. It's just begun. I just want to stay inspired, and LA has been doing a very good job of keeping me on my toes.

Jeno: The future? It goes where it wants; I'm just along for the ride. But I'm still having a torrid affair with the music - I DJ often, mostly smaller West Coast based gigs. I also do an internet radio show every full & new moon called [Noise From The Void](#) which is highly spontaneous & features anything at all I find interesting, unrestricted by tempo, genre or format. I also enjoy inviting other DJs I respect, into the Void and encourage them to take a different approach if they so desire, like throwing on music they never normally get to play in a club. I've also found

myself attracted to the art of visual storytelling, having been on a 12-year mission to make a documentary based around Wicked's exploits, It's a story dying to be told, and despite getting sidetracked by some other less than fulfilling projects I'm back on track to make it happen.

Alan: I'm always going to have a relationship with dance music and the scene because it's still a big love, it's still my main past time. I still use it as my [meditation](#) and yoga, and I still use it as the source for entertainment. I still get thrills through music and dance and still love going out. I still love getting my freak on, on a good quality dance floor, to good music, on a great system, with good people. I still love it.



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Classic Wicked Flyers

Circa 1990s

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JAS: Is there anything else you'd like to share or communicate?

Garth: One love. Don't stop.

Alan: Respect your mind but trust your heart.

Jeno: Be wicked...

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