

International DJ, diva, drag doyenne and ambassador to the gay world for London, WAYNE G recently played a high profile gig in Hong Kong. From late nights to police raids, here - in his own words - is the diary of his experience...



planet wayne

LEAVING behind the party animals on the Alternative Holiday in Turkey at the ungodly hour of 7am had left me feeling a little fragile. The shenanigans of The White Party in Turkey the previous night hadn't given me the opportunity to catch much shut eye and for once it wasn't down to my own partying. I was both excited and anxious as I headed back to London. BA staff did the norm of making me feel uncomfortable for flying with them by chucking me shade at every opportunity. It wasn't until I looked at myself in the mirror in the bathroom, I realised that my eyes resembled liquorice allsorts and I seemed to be wearing someone else's hair on my head. I had overnights in London to throw my laundry in the washing machine, catch up on emails and pack for a ten week tour that had me taking in four continents. Hong Kong was to be my first stop, a place I had never visited before.

The reason for this HK Virgin touching down in the big city was something that had caused friends to look at me in utter disbelief or horror. I, on the other hand, had barely blinked an eye when I was told I was headlining 'China Pride'. I guess that I either didn't absorb the enormity of it or the more likely - I simply wasn't listening to my Manager. It still hadn't dawned on me the week before the party until QX Editor Cliff came up to me and mentioned how big something like that was... that's when the nerves kicked in. Gay rights are a relatively new concept to the people of China and a Pride event there was a major step towards recognition for the world's biggest gay population!

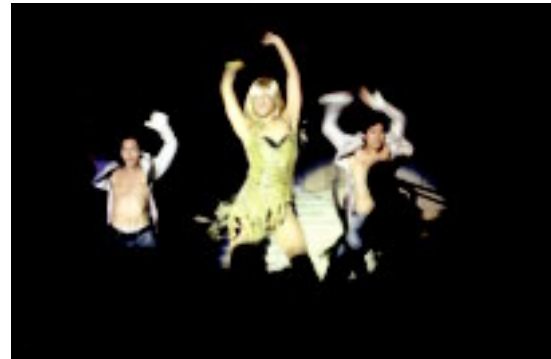
I arrived Saturday lunchtime and slightly on edge, cursing Heathrow and all those that work in her. I was meet by Sunday night's closing party DJ Luke Johnstone from San Francisco and

his travelling buddy. There had already been a change in plan, Luke was now opening for me as well as playing Sunday. I didn't moan. The thought of a 7 hour set after a 15hr flight via Bangkok was the furthest thing from my mind. Luke had played the Main Event last year and was bombarded with questions about what I should expect. What music do they like? Is the crowd all Asian? Can I find drugs? Can I find cock?

I was happily making mental notes about where to go and what to do when he dropped the bombshell that I should expect the police to raid the party. Eh? What did you say? It seems despite HK still being under certain English jurisdiction that the police take a little more interest than necessary with the larger gay parties, in particular, this one. Last year, the party was stopped for just over an hour. Total silence ensued while the police made everyone stand in orderly lines and searched them for drugs. Nothing was found and no arrests were made. It would seem it is illegal for possession of drugs in any quantity in this part of China but not illegal for consumption. The party was allowed to resume. Imagine if they did that in London?

I was staying with friends of Luke's in a very plush part of town in a VERY plush apartment. Now it has to be said I am not very reliable when it comes to leaving me in other people homes, especially posh homes. We are happy with our clutter at home. Our piles of CDs and records strewn everywhere bring the look of disgust from some friends that have minimalist apartments and even worse my mother has refused to sit down until she has rearranged said clutter.

We [Stewart Who? and Wayne G were married in May this year] proudly call ourselves Mr &



Mrs Tramp at home whilst opening bottles of expensive wine and eating M&S luxuries. Minimalist just isn't us. Put me in an expensive minimalist home and I go to pieces. If people are around who I don't know and who I am nervous around (Fire Island is always fun to see me on this one) then I literally go to pieces, as do glasses, plates, ornaments... in fact I am best left alone in a motel somewhere on a motorway. We had to head to the venue early so I could do some interviews with local press, gay internet sites and a radio station. The party was held at Cyberport, which was a cavernous circular atrium that was 4 stories tall; the lighting rig was out of this world as were the projections. I stepped outside with some journalists and took in the full view of HK in all its glory. We were harbour-side and there were yachts, fishing boats and the occasional rowing boat, just feet from us. I grabbed a vodka and ginger ale and started to relax a little.

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▷ The first thing that struck me looking at the crowd is how different it was to what I had expected. It was a mainly male event. Yes, it was mainly Asian but there was a high percentage of Caucasians too... there were even a few Black queens thrown into the equation. Another thing was that everyone was so friendly. It seemed most of them knew each other or if they didn't recognise you, they said 'Hello'. That threw this jaded London queen who was like Mandy the Mute into the corner. On speaking to people, most were local but I met boys that had travelled from Australia, Thailand, the Philippines and the U.S. I have been told several times over the last 12 months that Asia is going to be the new party destination and having experienced it first hand now, I am fairly confident those people are right.

The crowd knew their music and when they liked a track they showed it. A big choreographed dance number with 2 local drag queens was an added pleasure and then I was on. About an hour into my set, I was happily doing my thang when the volume dropped to almost a third of what it had been. I thought I had knocked something with my arse whilst throwing shapes behind the booth. I freaked. I looked up and saw about 12 police standing in front of me. They had come to check on the party. The crowd didn't miss a step nor bat an eyelid, they looked bored by the 'police' thing. I on the other hand, shit myself.

I was told through gritted teeth to "keep playing". When quizzed, the promoter said "They have an issue with the amount of people dancing, they just want to turn the music down and let some of them disperse outside". He looked stressed. I was baffled. I changed tack a little with the music, slightly panicking that people would just leave.

Not these boys. They were used to it and they weren't moving for no one, not even the police. Some meandered outside for a cigarette and a drink. Most stayed.

Another fifteen minutes passed by, we could see the police arguing amongst themselves. They came back into the venue and had decided that the noise of people chattering outside would be carried across the harbour and the rich local residents might be disturbed. They wanted the promoters to open the upper levels so people can disperse up there instead. The lights come up and the clubbers gave a look of evil to the police and rolled their eyes at me as if to say "yawn".

A message is made over the music, people get excited and start to head upstairs, the police look happy and leave. Just like that. As quick as they came in they are gone. And as quick as the queens went upstairs, they were coming back down the escalators in droves, there was nothing up there but some unopened shops, a cinema and an empty bowling alley.

They jumped straight back on the floor and carried on like nothing had happened. The music went back up, the lights back down and no one, not one person I spoke to afterwards complained about it. They just shrugged their shoulders and said "They're not going to ruin our night."

It was this attitude that struck me in bed



later that morning. I hadn't gone to the after-hours, I (yes, me) was too tired. I was restless though and I started to think about how complacent as a scene we had become. Whilst it was obvious some boys had taken party favours, most were drinking or simply just having fun in groups of friends.

In London and the U.S., the party scene is split. There is so much choice for us now, we can be choosy. The muscle crowd tends to hang out with its own, as do the twinks, as does the indie crowd and it pains me to say this but so do the lesbians. We don't party like a community. We don't even party together anymore. I am not talking about our so-called 'Pride' events but in general clubs as a whole, we have become more and more segregated. It has been a while since I have seen a real mixed community crowd. We take things for granted, maybe just a little too much?

I skipped the Sunday Tea Dance in favour of a late lunch and headed for the Recovery, the final party of the weekend. Luke Johnston was on fine form in a great space called Club Red at New World Center. Big U.S. circuit tracks boomed through the sound system and the crowd gave it their all. At 6am when the lights came on people were asking me if I was going to the afterhours? Hell, it would be rude not too.

So, is Asia a great place to be 'Free, Gay and Happy'? Well, I guess it depends on where you are. It would seem the homo residents of Hong Kong are all of the above, despite a large number of Asian men and woman still unable to come out for fear of society rejecting them, the scene there looked like it was fairly large-ish (Sunday night's party was all locals as the overseas visitors had left I was informed). They may be back in the hands of a communist state but you could tell they were not going to let anything back them into a corner. Did they support the event? Hell, yes, numbers were up this year on last.

Whilst we are at home watching Will & Grace re-runs and clapping with delight when George Michael is caught out again whilst flicking through QX trying to work out which of the numerous clubs and bars we can go to on any night of the week, think of our brothers and sisters around the globe. Think



of the battles that we as a community still haven't won. Think about perhaps making a donation to Peter Tatchell and his group Stonewall or your local gay organisation and please remember those of a generation lost that fought to make things easy for us here today. Those that fought for what is simply called Gay Pride. Remember that? Gay Pride.

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