

Urban Visionaries on the Uprise

A brief description of the Sydney 10-day Hip Hop festival, 'Urban Xpressions'

by: Lady Muse

Will 1998 be the year for uprising and merging within Sydney's Hip Hop community?

Seeing as the year is not quite over it wouldn't be fair us such to state, but from the few rumbles noted midyear on the scene, it does seem more ideas are mating with action to birth realities for everyone to become involved with. Quite a few events reared their heads in the early months....

'MOTIVATED MINDS' held at the Waterloo Oval was a day devoted to the practicing of the elements (big up to the writer's for transforming the Oval's grandstand into a totem of pure visual energy). There were DJ sessions at Newtown's Globe venue such as 'BATTLESTAAR TECHNICA', Electro night 'B-BOY NOIZE' at the Palladium and of course, the MC's representin' at the 'Iron Duke' for 'SUBURBAN LINES', which by the way was reviewed by local rock press 'Drum Media' as the 'Hip Hop Massive Rave' (?)

And then there was 'Urban Expressions' - a full 10-day festival devoted to the celebration of Australian Hip Hop culture. Though conceptualised by Trent Roden of Slingshot Artist Management, the idea itself was brought to fruition by a solid unit of heads intent on seeing it manifest, among those being local emcees Baba from Metabass 'n' Breath and Trey, to name a few. When asked on the intention behind the festival, Trent explained to Crouton that is was "to bring a focus of Hip Hop to Sydney over a 10-day period - to have places where people could come hang out, communicate and experience Hip Hop together - not necessarily people that get along, but just have people that have a common love and interest in Hip Hop as a culture". Australia, no doubt is a country shrouded in mystery to the eyes of the world especially to the to the International Hip Hop community curious about us, and though the festival's focus is on Australia's culture, 'Urban Expressions' is also aware of the potential the festival could hold for some global interaction with fellow family overseas. As Trent also stated, "when people overseas want to go to New York they say okay, let's go in July 'cause there's heaps of shit happening in the middle of Summer, Rocksteady and all that, so that was another idea. Not to be like Rocksteady but just maybe having a focus for heads overseas wanting to come to Australia, and even for people interstate. There's people (all over Australia) into Hip Hop, who often think of coming to Sydney, so now they can say, 'Well, let's go to Sydney in March for the festival'.

Running from March 20-29, the ten days held something for everyone to enjoy. Workshops, ciphers, breaking ciphers in Hyde Park and many a jam (the closing ceremony featured international guests, the Mystik Journeymen) but also events were held which many heads did not previously feel could have a relationship with Hip Hop. One of those nights happened to be REFLEX POETICS. Held at the Goodbar, it was a night showcasing PERFORMANCE POETRY AND SPOKEN WORD in a Hip Hop environment amongst other things, and was definitely

revolutionary for Sydney, in my eyes. Not to forget the DISCUSSION PANELS held at UTS, where topics such as RACE AND GENDER WITHIN HIP HOP and AUSTRALIA'S PLACE WITHIN THE INTERNATIONAL HIP HOP circuit were discussed and debated amongst us, the practitioners, instead of us being discussed by the suits.

Radio shows both community and national, Art exhibitions, a fashion show - there was so much to do and see but the highlight for many (myself included) was definitely the club night 'STORY OF HIP HOP' held at the Globe on Elizabeth Street. DJ Sheep started off '94 til present which personally got me in a lip-syncing frenzy (LM: 'Acey! 'Fortitude!' Sheep: 'shut up! Go away!')...Analysis sound mighty phat in a club by the way...by the time Nic Toth came on to spin HIP HOP'S GOLDEN YEARS ('88-'93) the crowd was hyped and ready. And we got all the favourites; Milk, Rakim, Stetsasonic, Native Tongues and of course, Souls Of Mischief. When Pharcyde's 'Ya Mama' was dropped the whole club was screaming lyrics word for word. Aw shit! 'Represent! Represent!' Crazy kids...Mark Walton took over Nic's set to spin OLD SCHOOL and ELECTRO which got the B-Boys from Rapid Fire and Cyber Force flippin', whilst downstairs the 'Children of Hip Hop' (Drum 'n' bass, Jungle etc) flowed on with the swirls of sound...

No doubt an A-grade Organic chuppachup week. Big up to everyone for sharing the good vibes and let's get together to make 'Urban Xpressions '99' also a week to remember.

