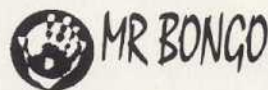


INDEPENDENTS DAY

HHC scours the hip-hop underground
and unearths its hidden gems..



Verbals ☆ DJ Greenpeace

WELCOME kiddies, like **T La Rock** I'm back to burn. Representing, maintaining, chilling hard 'cause I got nuttin' better to do. Word to mizz, Gods of the universe, 'cause I'm nice like that. So what's up? I suppose I'd better tell you that, hey?

Divine Styler has finally dropped a new single on DTX Records called 'Before Mecca', which as the title suggests breaks down his trip to Mecca and is taken from his new album 'Word Power:2:Directrix' coming later this year. Connect with *Divine Styler Magazine* also on www.interlog.com~styler for details and catalogues of Canadian hip-hop. In fact, my fave track of the month is a mad obscure B-side by Canadian **unit-e** called 'One Emcee'. It's a posse

The production on 'Nanotech Pilots' is as tight as a gnat's chuff. Peep or weep.

cut available at the above web site, but get in touch if there's anything you can't get access to.

Fresh out the Big Dada camp comes their most universally appealing release to date by **Part 2 & Juice Aleem** aka **Alpha Prhyme** (see feature, page 42). 'Nanotech Pilots' is a fantastic track and should really turn the heads of those who have slept on the potential this label has. I must also give the fellas



TY & SHORTEE BLITZ

SEVEN HEADS NYC UPDATE

Verbals ☆ Wes Jackson

props for the production on this as it's as tight as a gnat's chuff. Peep or weep.

Mind Your Recordings, who brought us **Masterminds**, have a four-song EP coming out called 'The Perk Jam'. It includes the two featured on their single 'Hip-Hop Music' produced by **Mr Man**. Check it on the down jiggy. News on ABB is the new **Dilated Peoples** single features the track 'The Platform'. **Defari's** LP is gonna be titled 'Focused Daily', so expect that around June. New shit should also be out on Stones Throw any second by **Rasco** titled 'What's It All About', produced by **Designed By Keith**. The tracks are dope and the Lootpack LP will be out in April.

A definite slammer is out now on Ronin by **Skitz** (see Hype, page 10), featuring **Tony Vegas**, **Skeleton**, **Roots Manuva** and **Phi-Life Cycle**. The main posse cut, 'Fingerprints Of The Gods', is fly as hell and Tony Vegas rips it up with mad original cuts. **DJ MK's** new mix-tape (Volume 12) is indeed 'Worth The Wait'. It's well compiled and features plenty of exclusives. Connect with him at PO Box 12597, London NW2 6WW.

The fantastic **Icepick** is making his comeback a serious one by releasing a follow-up EP to his 'Phenomenal Criminal' 12-inch. 'The Icepick EP', out on Backbone Records, again features production by former Hijack stalwart **DJ Supreme**. The stand-out for me was 'Dead And Buried', but there's plenty on there along with skits and instrumentals. As per my recent label profile, **Ty & Shortee Blitz** have released 'IAAD (I Am A Don)', a four-track EP out on Wayward Entertainment, so keep your eyes peeled fo' dat.

Outta Chicago come the **Molemen's** 'Below The Ground EP', featuring **All Natural**. This is a fine record by a fine collective of emcees and producers from Chi Town, and well worth a listen. This one's been around for a second, but check for **Spaztik MCs**

What's up to all the headz in the UK. Be on the lookout for the full length album, 'The Best Part', from **J-Live** and a new single just finished titled 'Tell It Like It Is'. There's a new 12 from **Absolute**, produced by **Shawn J Period**, and an LP tentatively titled 'You Wanna Battle?' is now completed. We got a new 12 from the **Unspoken Heard**, who are going to be working on some cuts with **Pharoahe Monche** later this month. The tracks are probably gonna be 'White Mercedes', 'The Big Easy' and 'Weird Science'. There's a dope east/west coast collaboration with **Infini-t Entertainment** featuring artists **Kombo**, **Ruckus** and others. The debut EP from **Black Star** (**Mos Def & Talib Kweli** of **Reflection Eternal**) is about to drop also. We're close to working out a deal to put out the next **Natural Elements** record. Don't want to jinx it, so it's not confirmed. They have seven tracks that they've been working on for the past couple of months. **Sir Menelik** has a new joint produced by **DJ Spinna** called 'Let's Build For A Sec'. It's HOT!!! **Reflection Eternal** also has a new joint called 'Manifesto', which is better than his last joint - if that's possible. Peace 'til next time.

'Phase 1EP'. Tracks like 'Fraudulent Foes' and 'BS Competition' won't disappoint those not scared by what quality independents may have to offer.

Lastly, but by no means leastly, is hot data on **The Creators** new label Creative Entertainments. A label profile will be right at ya soon but seek their first two releases. First up is 'Execution Expert' by **Big Kwam**, a three track EP which will be released again with DJ Spinna remixes. Equally dope is the Creators' collaboration with **Takashi Yano** on their 'Ambivalence EP'. A whole heap of instrumental cuts are on offer and it's the label's second release. Later, punks... ■

→ Remember to send stuff to *Maximum Exposure* c/o *Rap & Soul*, PO Box 12809, London NW3 4WT or e-mail me at djgreenpeace@hotmail.com if you're that way inclined.

THE 'C' FILES

#16) **Conception Records**

• **KEY HEADS** Mr Supreme, DJ Sureshot and Strath Shepard

• **CURRENT ROSTER** Third Degree, Fourfifths, Diamond Mercenaries, Selassie I Soldier, The Notables, Jake One

• **COMING SOON** Samson & Swift 12; Mr Supreme 12: 'Walkman Rotation'/'True To Life'; L Bros 12: 'Never Scared'/'Birth Of Conception'; and this list goes on and on...

• **LABEL HISTORY** Way back in 1993 hip-hop/jazz duo Mr Supreme & DJ Sureshot formed a loose organisation known as Conception Records and dropped two vinyl-only releases, the 'Buck The Saw EP' and the 'Massacre' 12. With the critical acclaim the Sharpshooters received for their records, there also came a flood of curiosity as to what else Conception might have to offer. Supreme and Sureshot brought fellow deejay and then editor of *The Flavor* magazine Strath Shepard aboard to handle the biz, and Conception Recordings was officially born. Supreme, Strath and Sureshot kept the label afloat by holding rare record auctions, deejaying almost constantly, and distributing the 'Status Breaks' LP. Eventually, though, recognising a fellow independent-with-vision, seminal Seattle 'grunge' label Sub-Pop Records offered Conception a three-year distribution deal and a hefty advance. In May 1997 the label signed with Sub-Pop. Since then, Conception has dropped a whole slew of records on the hip-hop world, with no plans for slowing down in 1998.

"Basically, our foundation is hip-hop," says Strath of the label's outlook. "We all deejay, and we all respect the roots of the culture. Consequently, we aren't afraid to branch out because it all relates back to the foundation. You can hear it in the music too. I think we're bringing a sense of history back to the beats that has been sadly lacking in hip-hop for a while. Who knows if people will buy it or not? I guess no matter what, we'll end up with some pretty incredible records to play."