

7-17-2007

# In Their Own Words

Rick Massimo

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## Recommended Citation

Massimo, Rick, "In Their Own Words" (2007). *Broad Street Studio*. 48.  
<https://digitalcommons.ric.edu/bss/48>

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Rhode Show includes, from left: Front row, Imani Walters, David Gonzalez and Khyree Brown; back row, Amber Newmann, Anjel Newmann, Day Arkins, Josh Boseman, Josh Vega and Michelle Mancone.

# IN THEIR OWN WORDS

**BY RICK MASSIMO**  
JOURNAL POP MUSIC WRITER

PROVIDENCE

When David Gonzalez leads lyric-writing workshops at the Broad Street Studio at AS220, he says he's got an ethic that he reinforces constantly to young students:

"Tell somebody something."

The self-titled debut CD of The Rhode Show, the youth hip-hop group that's an outgrowth of the Broad Street Studio, does just that.

While much of the hip-hop you can hear on the radio is, at best, intriguing pop, the music of the Rhode Show inherits the genre's best traditions — personal perspectives on life as it's lived here and now.

The disc opens with "Rewind," a group dialogue about the laziness

and lack of contact that's the flip side of the high-technology lifestyle. "I seen people pass on life with a chance to exist/ Dodge human contact; barely understand what it is. . . . You pass on life to count your friends on MySpace," goes one verse. Khyree Brown's

"Blackman" reacts against the stereotypes that African-American youths face. Singing high and clear over a rhythm track that combines R&B and dancehall reggae, "I've been working so long/ to be more than a token face in a crowd/ This 'black kid' stuff really got me down/ . . . Blackman,

you're probably not smart enough/ Blackman, you're proud but your heart is rough/ Time says you're bound to end up/ Another Channel

6 type," a reference to getting on the local news for committing a crime.

But the full impact of the album

comes on "I Don't Know," written and performed by four youths from the Rhode Island Training School (who go only by their first names on the record's credits). It's the flip side of gangster life, with the indignities of incarceration laid bare.

"We don't use many utensils;

they're plastic ones/ And when you want extra food, you got to ask for some . . .

"I sit back in this box, wonder why I chose to face this/ Used to drive around the block; now I'm a number, now I'm faceless/ I got holes in my socks, state food's a little sour/ Windows dirty and black — five-minute cold-type shower. . . .

"Try to remain patient, try to remain calm/ that way I don't be abrasive, flip through the pages of Psalms/ To find the error of my ways, find some insight and wisdom/ Physically I'm held at bay, mentally can't lock me in prison. . . .

"I want my life back, so I can be the kid that God knows."

"[Rhode Show] is great to see. They inspire thought and change."

**LINDA REMICK,**

a teacher at Cranston East High School