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rappers

SAMPLING THE SCENE IN PROVIDENCE
rappers

PROVIDENCE RAP

MUSICIANS HAVE
A LOT TO SAY.
BUT IF THEY
CAN'T GET AIR
TIME OR CLUB
DATES, WHO'S
GOING TO HEAR
THEIR MESSAGE?

BY V. DION HAYNES

A GREEN '76 Seville makes a skid stop, parking backwards in front of a clapboard cottage on Sum­
ter Street, in Providence’s Elmwood, and out pops Eric Xavier Winters. Winters is hyped. Even though he had to clean out his bank account to­
day, Winters has bought a classic auto for just $700.

The Cadillac — with its pasen­ger-side quarter-panel window patched with cardboard, its right cornering light hanging down, and its right brake light burned out — has seen better days. But no matter, Winters sprints into his parents’ house to get buckets and rags, with which to wash his prize.

His mom, sitting in front of an electric fan, trying to beat the damp summer heat, razzes him about his sagging Bermuda shorts and his penchant for buying junk on wheels.

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D.J. Buck (Tim Collins), Providence’s main rap­music producer, works on a song in his studio.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY RUBEN W. PEREZ

SUNDAY JOURNAL MAGAZINE/NOVEMBER 21, 1990 7
RAPPERS

A moment later Winters is dragging a rag off the Caterham’s footwell roof and remarking that the car is quite a contrast to the kind of ride he was driving just two years ago.

Noting the children all over the neighborhood — pedal bikes, jumping rope, tossing baseballs — Whites also remembers that just two years ago the block was overrun with people yelling and selling all kinds of dope to a traffic that he helped bring.

Winters has begun appearing at shows in which anti-drug rap was performed.

"In a very fast-talking people, Don’t use this," he says. But in the same token, the new life was an escape.

While he was hanging out in New York City, Winters witnessed the assassination of his brother. "Everyone was so upset, it took me years to get over it."

When the compositions failed to garner a response from record companies, Winters began writing his own rap songs. "I was transfixed by his attention to street life and the way it was perceived by people who lived in the ghettos — especially African-American and Latino-Americans." He says he began urging them to study, to learn about their culture, and to fight superstition.

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RAPPERS
It means the blood, the land, you, yes, the color.
So, no, no shooting, ripping, and shit up.
And listen to my DJ Buck croon:

DJ BUCK, 26, whose real name is Tim Collins, produces Rick Wilson - better known as the Rhinestone Jock - as well as those of three other Rhode Island rap music artists.

Tonight, he is sitting in the studio of his record company on Cranston Street, in the North End, where he devotes himself to working on a recording with some of his artists, young guys, as he puts it, going by Brook-B.

"It's been a trip to Buck-B's studio," says Brook-B. "We've got a lot of talent here, and we're trying to bring it all together to make music that can be heard.

Although a small city, Providence has its own social life in a big way. Because of this and because there are some talented rappers who make use of this subject matter, Brook-B says that Providence has the potential to become a great rap city. "I'm trying to let everyone know that Providence isn't just something to push around. We have our own sounds and messages, are heavily influenced by the New York rap scene. Their styles and lyrics contrast sharply with those of the so-called street rappers, from California, like M.C. Hammer, and New York City, like Rakim.

The West Coast rappers "don't really say anything meaningful in their songs," says DJ Buck. "They're just saying a bunch of rhymes and talking about stuff that isn't real."

Even the Southern rap music - led in MTS by T.Live Crew, whose use of obscenity has caused a three-year (in even in Wesley who) - pays in comparison with the more social commentary contained in the rap songs done in Providence.

Brook-B is also producing "Providence versus Providence," Brook-B's composition that will appear on the flip side of "It Ain't Whatcha You're From. It's Where You're At." The song depicts shootings, among gangs on Broadmead Avenue, Rhode Street, and Westerly Village, off Cranston Street.

Rhode Street, the 8th, in parts of P-town, 39, addictions, there's a sound.

The fire of a gunshot.

March 13, the silence causes one echo.

Providence 911 Providence is the plot.

Jounn says another deal that's so.

Another brother's another redneck's dream.

But everyone has to like how they're doing.

Jones has been arranged for representatives from each faction to rap a verse of his song in his street work and get a point of view from each faction.

Butentan's "Providence versus Providence" also touches on a way for a fight to have a friendship.

He talks about Willie Davis and Joe Doctor, both 18, who were buddies. But one was from Cranston Street, the other, from Saffron Street, and so they found themselves on opposite sides in a drug-trade turf war. Last August 12, Doctor, according to Brook's account (corroborated by police reports), walked up to a car in which Davis was sitting, parked at Eddy and Globe Streets, and began firing at his friend.

"I don't know exactly what's going through these guy's minds when they shoot at each other like that," Benttan says. "It's hard to go up to someone that just killed a friend of his and say, 'Why did you kill your friend?' I'm trying to put the song on the radio, and that way maybe I can get a response.

I think they don't have any idea of what they're doing.

Benttan has been arranged for representatives from each faction to rap a verse of the song in his

The way, in rehearsal or whatever, they could talk to each other and then maybe each side can't get to know each other. I'm trying to bring them back together so that Providence can be safe.

RAP RECORDS are no good unless someone hears them. That means getting air time on the radio. But no black-oriented radio station exists in this state, and the stations that play rap music tend to feature such commercial artists as M.C. Hammer.

Butentan's plan is to get his record on WRIH, at the University of Rhode Island.

Last Wednesday, the first day of the college year, Benttan, a.k.a. T. Miller, went to URI in Kingston. The campus is blank with the sound of sneakers.

Benttan, who has taken the day off from his college job, arrived at the radio station shortly before 3 p.m. With a record contract under his arm, Benttan is here to press a button at WRIH to play his song on the radio.

Wearing black sweat pants and a blue T-shirt, Benttanspent the california, the game room, the Tri-Heal Hair Salon, and the bookstore, and assembles three black and white albums.

He has no appointment but in no doubt that he will be heard.

The song depicts...
There's not really any Hispanic rappers out back and audience, won't have rap."

You can't control your sexual acts. You've got to stay afloat and stay in school. I guarantee you will get what you strive for.