

LA Loses Its Third Hip Hop Legend in a Month

Written by Davey D ID2612
Monday, 15 May 2006 00:25 -

LA Loses Its Third Hip Hop Legend in a Month-Skeeter Rabbit by Davey D

It's hard to say what exactly is going on as of late, but Hip Hop has been hit with some devastating losses as of late. From J-Dilla to Proof to Professor X, the losses have come quick, without warning and have left very little time for folks to grieve before being impacted with another unexpected demise.

Here on the West Coast, we have been hit extremely hard. The loss of DJ Dusk to a drunk driver still has LA and much of the West Coast's Hip Hop scene reeling. This past weekend, Hip Hop pioneers Afrika Bambaataa and Kool Herc made a rare appearance on the same bill to raise money for Dusk's family. They performed in LA on Friday and then in the Bay Area on Saturday. Also on the bill was Jazzy Jay. On Friday's show DJ Z-Trip and Cut Chemist came through and also represented.

The night before the LA appearance Herc, Bam and Jazzy Jay spun at Tabel 50 in New York, where Dusk had a strong following.

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In an eerie sense of Deja Vu, while these Hip Hop pioneers and icons were paying tribute to DJ Dusk and others were still trying to make sense of the passing of DJ Michael Mixxing Moore who passed on the same day as Dusk, unbeknowst to many of us in attendance, another Hip Hop legend-Skeeter Rabbit of the pioneering dance group the Electric Boogaloos passed away earlier that morning...

The word is just now getting out beyond the dance community and needless to say people are besides themselves... Everyone is asking what is going on? Why is so much death hitting us... The details surrounding his death are still unclear and sketchy. We'll await an official announcement from the Electric Boogaloos and Skeeter's family

In the meantime here's some biographical information about a man who greatly impacted Hip Hop...

"Skeet started dancing as a young kid growing up in the streets of Los Angeles. Skeet started out locking and soon after started popping with his cousins Boogaloo Sam and Poppin Pete around 1978. In 1979 Skeet became an official member of the EB's and has gone on to become a pioneer and innovator of the dance styles popping and boogaloo.

Skeet is currently helping spread funk styles knowledge through shows, appearances and classes around the world.

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Skeet has appeared in videos by such artists as Thomas Dolby, The Talking Heads, and Michael Jackson. His movie credits include: Michael Jackson's "Ghost," "DC Cab," "Body Rock" and "Fast Forward." He was also a featured dancer on David Bowie's "Glass Spider" tour. "

You can click here to see a couple of clips of Skeeter Rabbit dancing..

www.youtube.com/watch?v=rrC2PsGfXLI

www.electricboogaloos.com...abbit.html

You can also check the message boards of fellow EB member Mr Wiggle's for more info

<http://p076.ezboard.com/fmrwiggleshiphopfrm1.showMessageRange> ?

or you can check the Electric Boogaloo's website

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www.electricboogaloos.com/

Here's a eulogy that was written for Skeeter Rabbit.

A Eulogy to Skeeter Rabbit: The Man Who Saw Too Much

By Brit Wolfson

blog.myspace.com/index.cf...06517984f1

Ive just been sitting here looking at pictures of Skeet. For such a loud person, its interesting how he is so often in the back, off to the side. His face looks different now than I remember it--its like another side of him has revealed itself. Its like I can see it now when I look in his eyes--how he was haunted by the things he saw.

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If you dont know me, lets just say that at first glance Skeeter Rabbit, even someone with the name Skeeter Rabbit, is a pretty unlikely person for someone like me to have crossed paths with. He is an even more unlikely one for me to have considered such a close friend. The last time I saw him, only about two weeks ago, we both had tears in our eyes (in a choked-up manly sort of way of course) after one of Skeets patented hugs and a year without seeing each other. How did two people from such vastly different backgrounds come together like that? In my opinion, its about who Skeet (Stephen Nicholas) is as a soul and who he was as a human being.

My relationship with Skeet is a pretty strange one. Its strange because Skeet's a Crip (and I'm sure that wherever he is, he's throwing up signs as we speak) from the black part of Dallas who was relocated to Compton, Watts, South Gate--places I've only heard about in rap songs even though I now live in Los Angeles. And me, I'm a young white guy from Maine, a place where gangs live only on MTV, black people are usually African refugees, and popping is called breakdancing.

I found this popping thing about five years ago and instantly fell in love. I started watching videos and practicing in my bedroom and I of course idolized my favorite dancers, like Skeet. When I finally met him, I was SCURRRRRRRRRRED as the kids say. I was so shy and he was such an intimidating presence, but I was immediately struck with how warm he was. He made me feel ok, like I was welcome, like I was the star of the show.

As I got to know him better, this pattern continued and ultimately, more than any other single person I have met in my life (and this is not just after-death hyperbole), Skeet taught me that I am ok--just as I am. Skeet didn't intend to teach me this--he was more intent on me getting the mechanics of the Toyman down, learning variations on the Egyptian Twist, and of knowing how to do the ORIGINAL walkout. See, he taught me that I am ok simply by being him. I wrote an autobiographical play about six months ago and while I didn't mention Skeet by name, a key

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passage was written directly about this experience. It goes like this:

so I put on this act again and it was just another one of these acts and it got harder as I got closer to these dancers as people....cuz there were all these things I wanted to say to them.. ask them about their lives and their experiences and who they were and what they thought about..

and I couldnt because of that damn voice.. all I could say was like wassup dawg.. yo, word?? ill homie yaaah fresh... and my vocabulary was like 20 words and I couldn't get anything out.. it just kept building until there was like one of those moments where something just finally comes to a head.. I just had to open up.. I couldnt stand it anymore so I just went out on a ledge and I tried.. I just said it.. and.. I was talking just like Im talking now.. cuz I couldnt do anything else.. the only way I could get these feelings out was to talk like this.. and the weirdest thing happened.. he was this big black guy ya know.. and he's just listening like... uh huh word.. yup.. and he.. he took it in.. and he started opening up to me.. telling me things he didn't tell other people..

and at that moment, something popped and I was just like.....

woah..

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black people are just.....

they"re just.....

people..

wait a minute... maybe.... maybe people are just people... and I didn"t know what to say because

I just got accepted by a black guy

from the hood

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as ME

And that's when it really started.. this part of me started moving to the forefront.. this part inside.. something that I wasn't really familiar with started asserting itself more.. and.. it was really scary for me because I was coming from this if you cant touch it it doesn't exist background right.. and this other thing wants to keep coming out.. Id get these urges... to cry... to pray... to just let go.. Sometimes... I'd just feel this indescribable longing.... like this remembrance... and before I knew it I started feeling the presence of God...

Now, Skeet loved telling gang stories and he told them so nonchalantly that it was hard for me sometimes to really comprehend how it must have affected him. He told me casually that his first experience with gang violence was when he was 11 and how all he wanted to be when he grew up was a G. He was fond of showing his scar from being stabbed and he was always proud of his collection.

But every so often I saw a different side of Steve. It was like the anger and the pain could only be hidden or laughed off or run from for so long, and when he finally lost his breath and couldn't keep up the act, there was a different person. A deeply wounded, deeply regretful person who couldn't help but ask why the things in his life happened as they did and why he couldn't escape them.

When I got the call I was surprised, but somehow not. I'm sure everyone can relate to that

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numbness that sets in. As it started to sink in, I tried to get into his head--tried to get a peek inside and figure out how that happens and why. And I kept picturing him reliving his past, haunted by memories he couldn't make go away, regretting the things he'd done... I'll never know if this is true, but its as close as Ill probably ever get to understanding.

And so I started to think that maybe there is a big lie that is sold to us about happiness and fulfillment and enlightenment. It says that the more you open up to life, the more you let the grace of God into your heart, the easier/better/lighter your life becomes. To me, Skeet proves that it isn't true. This is a man who as much as any I have encountered in my life strove for and stood for the truth. And I know because of this, he saw an enormous amount of truth and light. But he also saw a whole lot of dark. He saw a lot of the ugliness of life, too much of the gritty reality that most of America and many of the people reading or hearing this are sheltered from. And when you are open and honest and courageous enough to see the bad as well as the good, I think it is sometimes more than a human being can take.

I have to say, on a far deeper level than I think words can express, I'm not sad at all--I'm not worried at all. For I know Skeet and you and me and everyone has done this many times before and will do it many times again. In Skeet's eyes, I see an African warrior, a British philosopher, a Buddhist monk, an ancient martial artist, an Egyptian pharaoh. But in this life, I see a deeply wounded man, an incredibly sensitive man who simply wasn't able to harden or numb himself to the extent that his life experiences required him to do.

And last, as my duty to Stephen Nicholas, I would like to expand our scope. As a child, this man was forced to grow up and see things that one should never see, let alone at the age that he did. And in this regard, Skeet is just a number--another of the billions of people whose suffering and welfare are ignored and who are psychologically scarred for life by the things they experience in their childhood. So, to those of you who mourn for Skeet, I hope you find it in you to extend that mourning to all children who grow up surrounded by war, by violence, by drugs,

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and by a system that tells them from day one that they don't matter--whether the child lives in Maine, Dallas, Compton, Africa, Iraq, or Mexico. And I hope we can use the life of someone who shined so brightly as a source of energy in our daily attempts to bring love and warmth to everyone we are fortunate enough to meet in this all-too-short little trip we call life.

For the dancers, Skeet always said to me that you have to find a teacher who teaches you how to teach yourself. I've always seen myself as Skeet's student and so I guess for me, its about that time now. But I've been wondering about a final class, about what he might want to leave me with. It makes me think of the story Stretch told me, about how whenever they're in Japan, Skeet is always the one going to the clubs to just get down--he just loves to dance. And I think that's what he'd say--that its as simple as that--just love to dance.

Skeet was a man of God. His license plate read (in seven characters) I live for Him. May we all be strong enough, courageous enough, and truthful enough--about who we really are, about what we are really going through--to do the same. Thank you.