

## Latin Rap Conference Receives Kudos

Written by Robert ID1934

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More than 600 participants packed Latin Quarters in New York City to attend the 3rd Annual Latin Rap Conference (LRC), the first conference of its kind to be celebrated in the Big Apple. Rich Isaacson, Fuerte Group principal and event organizer, declared the conference a total success exceeding all initial expectations as representatives from all major record labels, Clear Channel, Univision, Telemundo, MTV, Sirius, XM, and hip-hop and rap Latino artists like N.O.R.E., Lil Rob, Voltio, and Chingo Bling attended.

The LRC received kudos from Mayor Bloomberg's Latin Media and Entertainment Commission which declared Sept. 19-20 Official Latin Rap Conference Day in New York City. Elizabeth Caldas, executive director of the NYC Latin Media & Entertainment Commission attended the conference and delivered a Mayoral proclamation in front of a packed venue. An excerpt from the proclamation included, "New York City is proud to host the third edition of the Latin Rap Conference ... Such amazing turnout is testament to the great commercial and artistic potential of this music ... "

Shysti (pka) Jesse Perez, founder of the LRC, noted, "This is unbelievable and truly amazing. When we first got together in San Diego, we formed a Latin rap coalition with the hopes of beginning a dialogue. Today, this is no longer a dream. Latinos in rap [hip hop and reggaeton] officially have a voice in front of top music and radio executives who previously were in the dark about the contributions we're making to the industry as a whole."

### Conference Highlights

Al Fuentes, program director for Mega 101 KLOL Houston, one of the first radio stations to play reggaeton, participated in a heated panel discussion that extended to members of the audience. Passionate up-and-coming artists questioned radio DJs personalities like DJ Kazzanova (La Kalle/Univision radio); Khool Aid (Pocos Pero Locos/ L.A.) and Ebro (HOT 97 New York program director) regarding their on-air choices and playlists.

Many artists voiced that only a handful of hit singles are overplayed on the air while many talented singers who are trying to make it into the business are ignored. DJ Kazzanova defended his position by stating "We are in the radio business, not the music business," to which industry veteran Al Fuentes, responded: "We are all in the music business and we all play a role in not only supporting good music, but creating every opportunity for up-and- coming

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talent to have their music on-the-air to provide the exposure they need to make it."

Leila Cobo, Billboard Magazine's Latin Bureau Chief, brought a unique perspective to the Corporate Marketing panel by encouraging an important discussion on the role of the corporate sector in today's music industry. As the music sector undergoes a wild transformation, corporate executives are increasingly playing an important role by tapping into new up-and-coming artists to participate in regional and national campaigns as is the case with Pepsi, McDonald's and even Disney in incorporating rap, hip hop and reggaeton to their national campaigns and music tours.

The conference was followed by a dynamic performance from Jeannie Ortega and the showcase benefit for Katrina Victims which raised \$2,000. Fuerte's Isaacson confirmed they'll be hosting the LRC in NYC again next year.

Web site: <http://www.fuertegroup.com/>