

BARS Awards Fill Void for Local Hip-Hop Artists

Written by Davey D ID2925

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The hip-hop community is buzzing about the second annual Bay Area Rap Scene Awards, coming this fall.

The first edition was a standing-room-only celebration July 30, 2005, at San Francisco's Masonic Auditorium. The awards filled a void and helped bring attention to the Bay Area's exploding hip-hop scene.

They came about because producers Booyowski and A-1 Sway of the popular "Hipnotik Show" (broadcast on Comcast Ch. 29 in San Francisco) and Black Cornerstone Enterprises understood that if MTV and BET weren't going to show the love for the Bay Area, we would need to do it ourselves. As preparations go forward for this year's event, the awards continue to reflect the spirit of independent hustle epitomized by Bay Area rap artists.

Currently, these awards are in the nomination process, which started Aug. 1 and runs until Sept. 1. You can vote by going to www.barsawards.com/

This year's favorites for artist of the year include E-40, Mistah FAB, San Quinn, Keak Da Sneak, Messy Marv, Too Short, Yukmouth and B-Legit.

Another heavily contested category is producer of the year. With the Bay Area "hyphy" sound influencing music around the country, all eyes are on this contest. South Bay producers Sean T and Traxamillion are among the favorites; so are EA-Ski, Droop-E, Trakademiks, Rick Rock, Amp Live and One Drop Scott.

One of my favorite categories is Bay Area song of the year. People outside our area may think E-40's megahit "Tell Me When to Go" is a shoo-in. But in our nine-county area, E-40 has stiff competition from Keak Da Sneak's anthem-like "Super Hyphy"; Nump's collaboration with the Federation, "I Got Grapes"; "Get Ya Grown Man On" by Dem Hoodstarz from East Palo Alto; "Vans" by the teen sensation Wolfpack; and the potent "Hell Yeah" from San Quinn and EA-Ski.

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One problematic category is radio personality of the year, dominated by DJs from the big commercial stations -- KMEL (106.1 FM), , Wild 94.9, etc. I think T-Kash of KPFA (94.1 FM), the former Coup hype man and now a solo artist, is the only exception. In 2005, he was named best Bay Area radio personality of the year by the East Bay Express. In my opinion, it was a huge oversight not to include DJ Kevvy Kev of Stanford's KZSU-FM (90.1), who will celebrate his 22nd year on the air Aug. 27. And the guys from KPOO-FM (89.5) have been making their presence felt, too.

I was pleased to see former KMEL DJ Franzen on the list. He's working in Las Vegas on 97.5 FM, but he keeps Bay Area artists in rotation and deserves major props for helping take the hyphy sound nationwide. DJ Backside, the woman who now heads up the Internet station www.HyphyMovement.com, is also in the running, which makes the competition more interesting.

The fun thing about award shows is that we could debate the contenders all day long. A big shout-out is in order for the organizers.

We'll keep you posted on results from the preliminary rounds of voting, as well as details about the show itself when they are announced.