

'Rep Yo Set' Brings Gangs Together Thru Hip-Hop

Written by Robert ID2513

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With 'Rep Yo Set', 27 hip-hop careers are about to be launched and that's just the very tip of this musical revolution.

Visualize going into 27 of L.A.'s toughest neighborhoods and recruiting gang members to turn their dreams of hip-hop stardom into rap reality.

That's the idea behind 'Rep Yo Set', a two-CD compilation produced by Reputable Records' Robert W. Lewis III and veteran music executive Charles "Big Chuck" Stanton, who was the VP and "ear to the street" for Dr. Dre's production company for eight years and worked with such hip-hop and rap superstars as Eminem, 50 Cent, Jay-Z and The Game.

The album will be distributed through Universal Records via Lewis' Reputable Records and Big Chuck's Drama Family Entertainment, and will be followed by a documentary that captures the entire project.

"We wanted to give back to the communities," explains L.A. native Lewis. "To give these guys the opportunity to redirect their energy in a positive manner. These same neighborhoods have produced some of the best and most talented rappers out there."

Big Chuck, who has worked with everyone from Michael Jackson, New Edition, Boyz II Men, Luther Vandross and Anita Baker to old-school hip-hop and rap icons like Eric B and Rakim, Kool G. Rap and Nas, offers the candidates someone with impeccable credentials and connections in the world of rap music. His 24-year-old nephew prodigy, Ron Feemster, was also involved in the production work.

"You have to find those focused enough to go forward," Big Chuck explains. "You have to show them gangbanging doesn't save lives, but brings pain to our families."

"If you want to put down your Smith & Wesson, your Glock, your AK47 and pick up a microphone, get in the booth and spit out some lyrics, who knows what can happen?" adds

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Lewis. "These kids have lived these stories they tell. They know the streets, they know the life, so they have plenty to write about."

Among the hip-hop and rap artists they've discovered are such potential stars as G-Cell (Avalon Gangsta Crips), Tyson (Kelly Park Compton Crips), Squeak RU (Neighborhood Pirus), Red Rum (Avenue Pirus) and the Holmes Street Watts, named after their gang.

In fact, think of Rep Yo Set as a kind of American Idol for the hood, with future stops planned in N.Y. and a sequel in L.A.

"Guess that makes me Simon Cowell," laughs Big Chuck. "But I'm fair.

That's the difference. I actually know talent and music. I'm not just criticizing. I'm looking for artists that can have careers, not just one hot record."

Rep Yo Set, the brainchild of Reputable Records' Robert W. Lewis III and noted veteran music executive Charles "Big Chuck" Stanton, set for an August 8th release with documentary to follow.