

An Open letter to Northwest Hip Hop

Written by Julie C ID3400

Tuesday, 06 March 2007 23:56 -

Seattle Hip Hop It's Time to Ride on KUBE 93: by Julie C

An Open letter to Northwest Hip Hop,

Let's get our heads right. It's time to put aside all our petty differences and historical beefs, regionalized dramas, paranoia, jealousy, and whatever else keeps folks divided in this community. The fact is none of us are getting major radio play, the bullsh*t on mainstream radio is hurting all of us in terms of public interest in Hip Hop, and we can either stay clamoring at the bottom of the barrel, OR learn how to work together, create our own distribution networks, empower the media alternatives that do play our music, and demand something better from KUBE 93. There's no reason why Northwest artists can't sell 20,000 units regularly, except the fact that our lack of unity allows the very sharp, very organized corporations to bop us over and over, creating all this in-fighting and nonsense. Let's get over that for a second and look at what we're up against:

Today, four radio companies agreed to payola settlement with FCC. Clear Channel, CBS Radio, Entercom, and Citadel have tentatively agreed to pay the government \$12.5 million and provide 8,400 half-hour segments of free airtime for independent record labels and local artists as part of a consent decree with the FCC.

Looks like the FCC is making these media conglomerates play our music! Sounds good right? Don't be fooled.

Industry watchdogs like Davey D from Hard knock Radio have been tracking this mess develop from the gate and they say the major labels have been ready for months to counteract this settlement. "The industry already has a bunch of former major label people who set up a quote unquote independent record consortium," says Davey D, "and that's the people they are gonna pull from. They ain't gonna pull from the local guy on the corner who needs a shot. You could play Lil Jon, Justin Timberlake, E-40, all of whom are now considered independent artists. It ain't gonna be dRED.i or Blue Scholars, it's gonna be key people connected to the industry and maybe they'll toss one person in there to look like they're doing something."

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Paul Porter from Industry Ears scoffed at the settlement in an interview from earlier today with FreeMix Radio (you can peep it at www.voxunion.com) . "The public, we have nobody representing us and that's how deals like this get cut, plain and simple." Porter goes on to explain how corporate interests and the RIAA's involvement got the FCC to walk away from making a formal agreement for independent airplay as a part of the consent decree. "Basically," Porter explains, "they are leaving it up to the broadcasters to police themselves, nobody is investigated, and this is another whitewash."

So what should we do?

-Instead of everyone jumping up at once to be the one or two local artists that MIGHT get their song played once or twice outside of Future Flavors on KUBE 93, we gotta organize local artists, record labels, promoters, and advocates to collectively put the pressure on folks like Eric Powers through petitions, organized protests, marches, rallies, or boycotts. The experience of folks like Gordon Curvey and influence of people like Jonathan Moore, regardless of anyone's opinions of them, are critical in ensuring sustainable success.

-We may have to organize media monitoring of KUBE 93 to make sure the music they are playing is representative of the Hip Hop they claim to be. Of course we know it is not. But, Hip Hop is a culture recognized by United Nations, and it is on the people of this culture and community to set the standards. No one will do it for us, certainly not the FCC.

-We need a systemized means to increase support and cross promotions of independent media outlets that DO provide opportunities to local artists. Shows like Zulu Radio on KBCS, the Download on KHIM, the Twomp, Street Sounds, Afragenesis Network, TV like Coolout, Music Inner City, and Hip Hop 101. Websites like 206zulu.com, seaspot.com, etc. The more powerful these independent outlets are, the more capacity they have to help artists. I propose the establishment of a Urban Arts Independent Media Coalition.

-Start collectively utilizing our networks and set up exchanges with artists, indy media outlets, and activists in other cities. We can bypass all this BS. We got Universal Zulu Nation, National Hip Hop Political Convention, Hip Hop Congress, Temple of Hip Hop, and numerous other international networks that have never been systemized for music distribution on a grassroots level!! We are at a place in Hip Hop's short history where the circles are becoming smaller, national organizers from different regions are in regular communication with each other, and this is very very possible. But it will take a great deal of coordination and organization to make this

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work.

-Utilize the international Media reform movement to our advantage. Our interests as independent artists and activists are the same as theirs. Local groups like Reclaim the Media who are piloting the Northwest Community Radio Network are one example.

Let's utilize some of this phenomenal creativity and genius we see manifested in NW Hip Hop and apply that to the structures we are operating in. It's time to change the game for real.

Please email me back if your interested in organizing around this.

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