

Takeover Concert

New Mexico hosts the biggest names in hip hop



By Kirsten Crocker
Staff Reporter

Sunday, September 21, marked the third annual New Mexico Takeover concert at the Journal Pavilion in Albuquerque. The annual hip hop concert series was the third for KISS 97.3 and Fusion Promotions, a promotional company founded in 2003 by Midday DJ Julio G, and well-known radio producer Damian Barth.

With over fifteen years of combined experience being involved with some of the largest names and concerts in the entertainment industry, the two childhood friends decided to utilize their skills and knowledge in an effort to bring "a lil' piece of hip hop" to New Mexico via large events that would otherwise be seen only in large cities such as New York and Los Angeles.

The concert featured performances by local artists such

as David Wade, as well as hip hop and R&B superstars including Gemini, Frankie J, Lil Flip, Paul Wall, Play-N-Skillz, Baby Bash, the Sugarhill Gang, Slick Rick and Ludacris. The event was covered by media outlets including Real TalkNY, BET.com and MTV.

When asked what he feels represents hip hop, Slick Rick replied that it is "the next level after James Brown," and offered these words of inspiration to young, up-and-coming artists: "Be true to yourself, and don't get too caught up in the one-dimensional; explore your emotional horizons."

During their explosive performance, the Sugarhill Gang made the statement that their lyrics do not contain profanity, instigate violence, or berate women. When asked what they feel is the true message of hip hop, the three artists agreed that it's about individual expression, and although violence and profanity is "not our style," they

neither condone nor condemn those who use such language in their songs.

The three band members offered the following words of wisdom to those trying to make it big in the industry: seek legal counsel. They attested that the business "doesn't really care who you are," and that there are cases where an artist with a No. 1 record or video can't pay rent. Also, stay original; express your talent, but learn the business by exploring other avenues, such as production.

On the Albuquerque hip hop scene, Baby Bash affirmed that it is still, for the most part, underground, that there is a considerable amount of talent in the region, and that it's just a question of being heard by the right person. To his Albuquerque fans, he said, "What up, friends. Stay grounded, stay fly, take care of each other."

Play-N-Skillz thanked their Albuquerque fans, saying

that New Mexico was one of the first places to show them support outside of their own Lone Star State. They gave the shout-out, "Latinos stand up!" as Albuquerque is "one of the cities that Latinos represent the hardest."

Although Hurricane Gustav delayed its completion, Lil Flip said his new album will be released this January. Flip also intends to perform at a promotional Red Cross benefit concert two weeks after the album release to provide more help for the victims of the recent hurricane. To his Albuquerque fans, Lil Flip vowed that "no matter how many records I sell, I'll keep playing in the same places, even if the promoters don't have big money. No matter how many records I sell, I'm going to be here."

Ludacris declined to be interviewed. They concluded the day's entertainment as the evening's last performance before thousands of fans.

Photos by LeVarr Quinn

Clockwise from top left:
Big Mike of The Sugarhill Gang.
An Albuquerque dance troupe performed with Sugarhill Gang.
Lil Flip mugs for the photographer during his set.
Rob G backstage.
One of David Wade's dancers.
Local artist David Wade.