

“Welcome to the Future” of Hip Hop

Firehouse 13 has recently begun a hip hop installment for local, far from famous acts called, “Welcome to the Future.” This could easily turn into a rant about why hip hop gets a bad name and why people aren’t noticing the poets of the scene. The first draft actually did. But as Immortal Technique said, “I’ll rip the electrons out your body and make you positive.” Thanks for the reminder, Tech.

Top two of the night to keep on your radar (cough-StrangeFamousRecords-cough):



Lunch Bagg

AKA John Phelps, age 20

Influenced by SSD, Minor Threat, MDC, Lupe Fiasco, MF Doom, Wu-tang Clan, and Kanye West along with “Skateboarding, drugs, alcohol, women, poverty, anger, happiness, sadness, my family.”

Its tough to be the first act. Especially when half of the room is only interested in one MC and the other half is skeptical. Regardless, Bagg kept the energy up throughout. Artists feed off of a crowd’s energy the same way that a crowd responds to whoever is on stage. The kids at Firehouse were less nourishing than the Atkins Diet. Regardless, he came on full blast from the launch, starting the set a cappella when his track wouldn’t start and finishing on the floor in front of the stage eye to eye with the crowd.

Lunch Bagg (still not even sure where that name comes from) is basically a prototype of one of Providence’s children of the arts. Born and bred in the West End of the city, he explains, “I was introduced to music by listening to Punk, attended a lot of basement shows and even played in a band for a little bit. I drew a lot of inspiration for my hip hop from the punk culture.” This transition came

while participating a program centered around making music and writing lyrics at The Met High School. He still produces all of his beats which can be found on six of his recorded full length project, the latest being "*The Morning After*", Bagg's first physical album.

On being white:

"A lot of the time when I get on stage I can tell people in the crowd are already skeptical. Which is good. I like them to be. I like the skepticism because when I start rapping it becomes evident to whoever is watching that I really take this seriously. Everything from my lyrics to my stage presence. I think being white in the rap scene makes a lot of people second guess you, but whether or not they were right to do so is completely up to [the performer]."



Shamar Talley

AKA Shamar Talley, age 19

Influenced by John Lennon, Jimi Hendrix, Kurt Cobain, Tupac, Bradley from Sublime, Biggie, Tribe Called Quest. "Helping people understand that we are what makes this world and oppression influences me. Peace love and Happiness is basically my drive."

If there were a breakthrough act of the night award, it would go to Shamar Talley. Timid and excited as hell at the same time, Talley's modest stage presence draws attention to his poetic lyrical style. By his final song however, an unpredicted passion sliced through the crowd like an axe. Explaining the shift in energy, Talley elaborated, "My best friend Colin ascended at the age of 19 on February 7th, 2013. That was a month before the show. That last song was called 'living for you' I wrote it the day of the funeral so it was pain honestly, that's why it came out so real."

Though he spent his childhood shifting from place to place with his three brothers, Shamar is a self-proclaimed Cranston, RI boy at heart. Its here that he started messing around with his friends on the mic, recording raps into a beat up lap top for fun, eventually launching him to his current status in the local hip hop scene. This however was preceded by years of passion for the craft. "My mother showed me Biggie back in the early '90s; when I was three I already knew lyrics to Juicy," he laughs, "I was 12 writing rhymes with my boy Edinson, around that time I started working on my writing 'seriously'...I

really figured out I wanted to do this around that time- the 7th grade.”

When he’s not in the lab:

“[I like to] play guitar and try to get my singing on point too. I want to be a well rounded musician, first things first, as far as my ‘dream’.”