

As one of Canada's most slept on emcees, Moka Only prepares to perform alongside some of Vancouver's tightest lyrical talents. Through a handful of underground tapes, a couple of singles and countless shows Moka has been busy carving his way in the North American hip-hop scene. Like a handful of other Canadian emcees and groups Moka has had to gain the respect of hip-hop heads one by one, and steadily it is working. With various projects on the go Moka is working harder than ever to get his name known in this hip-hop game.

DS: The question that tons of people want to know is when are you due for a new single?

M: We've already started working on it, we've got most of the beats together. It's going to be a four song single; one with Swollen Members, one song with Del and two I just do on my own, and the beats are done by a variety of different producers. As for the date we're trying to get it out by January, so as soon as possible.

DS: Victoria claims that you're theirs and so does Vancouver, so let's clarify for all those heads, where are you from?

M: I'm originally from Victoria, but I'm over in Vancouver now, so I'm reppin' both. I'm reppin' Up Coast, which is the general area. See it's West Coast, but it's Up Coast, that's the terminology we came up with. We also call it Cascadia, but only a few people know what that means.



by Sayz One

photos: Megan Saxton

"To the motherfucker that robbed my house,
I'm a shoot you up real good."



DS: It seems that there is a fine line being drawn between such groups as the Rascalz vs. such people as yourself and Swollen Members, what's your opinion on that?

M: Ain't no beef, for a while it just seemed like an "us" and "them" situation. I'm pleased with their success 'cause it reflects back on the city which is good for all of us. They had a good opportunity, they went with it, we had some opportunities we didn't go with, we could have came out earlier. I ain't mad at them and they ain't mad at me, when I see them it's cool.

DS: What do you think about the Up Coast scene?

M: Oh it's gonna blow up! I don't like to take credit for a lot of things, but I started puttin' out tapes in like '95, and I saw a lot of other kids following suit. I'd like to think that me and Prev (Swollen Members) opened doors for a lot of underground cats. Just puttin' out tapes is the greatest thing; you don't gotta sign with anybody, you just do what you want to do with the music. And then

you go out and do your own shows and sell your tapes. It's like an old thing, but it's like a new revolution here.

DS: For all those heads out there, from your insight who do you think are the strong up and comers in the local scene?

M: Yo, number one I gotta big-up my man Ishcan, 'cause he got some superior skill with a whole different steez. Yo and my man's Conspiracy from Supreme Being Unit, Birdapres, my people Swollen Members, Intellect, yo the list goes on. Yo all the DJ's, my man Take 5, all the graf artist's, the whole BM Crew, big shouts out to Insight, and the whole Vic Vandals. Yo I hope I didn't forget anybody.

DS: It's starting to look like lots of Canadian artists are blowing up in the states, but still struggling up here. An example would be Swollen Members, they're huge in California, even making a mark in Japan, but up here not too many people have hear of them.

M: You know what, my last single "Ow/Taking You Places" did better in the states than it did in Canada. I don't want to generalize, but Canadians seem to be afraid to support their own. I mean maybe it's a complex or something, I don't know. It's all hip-hop, we're so close to the states, all of our major cities are on the border, same mind states, the music's just as good up here.

DS: Where you're at now, what do you want to say to all those heads out there?

M: Yo, a round of applause and thanks for supporting my tapes. There's tons of shit to look forward to, not only the commercial releases, but I'm gonna keep crankin' out tapes and that. Yo look for different alliance names, combinations with other artists, it's gonna be good. I'm gonna keep this healthy and work with a lot of different people.

We told Moka he could only be on the cover if he was naked. So he painted himself silver and took these photos. What a star.

