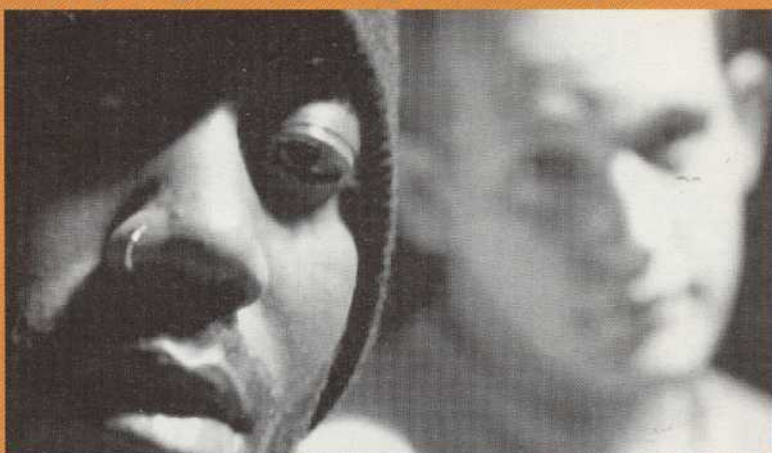


I'M TELLING MOM THE DILLY ON YOU GOING OUT LIKE THAT

Divine Styler's Little Brother is Taking Over with Styles of Beyond



SEVERE CASE OF NO DELIVERY/ EVERY MAN INSIDE MY RADIUS IS RIPPED TO SMITHEREENS/ JUMP ROPE WITH GUILLOTINES...

—TAKBIR

So goes the introductory diagnosis and recovery recommendation for hip hop's ailments, courtesy of the inadvertently self-appointed head-shrinker Takbir Bashir, of Styles of Beyond. They were first brought to my attention two years ago by mutual affiliate Panda of L.A.'s The Animal Pharm "y'know" he said, "Divine Styler's little brother has a group, they're dope," or something to that effect being spilled into my eardrum from a million miles away. Although not really the D-I-V-Ine's biological sharer of DNA, but carrying water from the same gene-pool as Styler's partner in crhyme the Pioneer Bilal Bashir, the family ties run deeper than Michael Fox's pockets.

When Takbir was ten years old, and wishing he had a bike to ride, he would often find himself gravitating towards his family's backyard shack, where an industry-wounded Divine, and an equally taken-advantage-of Everlast would hang out on psychedelics, freestyle rhyming and dancing with the likes of the Scheme Team, Def Jef, and members of the infamous Rhyme Syndicate. "I didn't want to get in the way, so it wasn't like I always asking my brother if I could hang out, but I definitely picked everything up from

It was about 48 moons ago when Tak was studying psychology and musical production at Pearce College in L.A., when he first formed Styles of Beyond with DJ Cheapshot, and began working on demos and rocking local open mics and talent shows. Through a mutual friend he met Ryu, and shortly thereafter ended up skipping school one day to grab a couple of mickeys and hang out in the parking lot, forsaking a day of indoctrination for a day of freestyle rhyme creation. "I was like, damn, he can flow, and he's a white dude," Tak says with a non-visually-confirmed, yet easily detectable smile. Ryu was invited into the group, a demo was recorded with producer Vin Skully (also met during this time, through another friend), and the legacy began. Brother Bilal heard the demo, and was immediately taken with how the two MCs voices and flow complimented each other, soon thereafter deciding to release their music on his independent label Bilawn Records, co-owned with friend and studio engineer Shawn Berman.

The first single, "Killer Instinct" b/w "Survival Tactics" was released to the world last fall, quickly gaining them critical recognition, and charting on top 10 college radio

enough to catch them last summer when they were in London and Toronto with Divine Styler, for two shows, you know what I mean. For those that missed it, you're bad, and hopefully you'll have another chance to catch them again soon. The Styles of Beyond sound and show is unquestionably different than what's been used and gotten used to, with more than 108% of their energy being put into everything they do, and a primal need to create and innovate shining through the haze of people who still use phrases like "keep it real" and "player hater." "Ryu is a huge Jim Morrison fan, the Doors. I am too. I grew up listening to everything, not just hip-hop. Human League, the Clash, I was a huge Michael Jackson fan, just everything really." With a mix of everything from hard rock, punk, '80s synthesizer music, soul, pop, and a strong musical family base courtesy of his older brother Bilal's DJing and production expertise and experience (Bilal has worked with many well and not-so-well-known people, including members of Rhyme Syndicate, Divine Styler, Everlast, etc. and in some circles is credited with being the inventor of the "trip-hop" style of production), it appears pre-destined that these S.O.B.'s would grab

I'M GONNA HIT 'EM WITH DEADLY VENOM/PHENOMENAL FANGS OF FORKED TONGUE/THE SHOGUN WITH THE IRRATIONAL SLANG...

—RYU

them. I never wanted to be a rapper, but one day I just started writing rhymes, it was just natural." In an environment that other MCs would kill to have been able to come up in, it seems inevitable that Tak would quickly progress to his current abilities to write intricate lyrics, deliver them in a voice and style all his own, with just the right amount of charisma to magnetize you to the mix.

across the USA. Last May brought on the third and fourth bullets, in the form of "Spies Like Us" b/w "Styles of Beyond [Style Warz]," which also reached up into the top ten, and created an impatient longing for the album, felt by all fans of lyrics and an uptempo rebellion against the current slow flowing habits of hip-hop inhabitants. For those who were insightful and intuitive

the baton and continue blazing the trail first explored by Divine and Bilal, settled in by Freestyle Fellowship, Project Blowed, the Pharcyde and Hieroglyphics, and now populated with the likes of Living Legends, Dilated Peoples, and the Likwid crew. No surprise then that their debut album, 2000.

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