

the Vinyl Exchange

a newsletter for deejays and vinyl junkies

MARCH 1995

Head Knods of the Month

Top Ten Hip-Hop
By Mr. Grinch & Theory,
Houston, Texas



Pete Rock & CL Smooth are "In the Flesh."

1. How Nice I Am - World Renown (Warner Bros.)
2. Next Level - Showbiz feat. AG (Payday)
3. Rock On (Buckwild Remix) - Funkdoobiest (Immortal Records)
4. That Be Boostin' - Boostin' Kev (Parker Records)
5. Brooklyn Kids - Gemini the Chosen One (Mercury)
6. Mad Props (Remix #1) - Da Youngstas (EastWest)
7. Get Funky (Remix) - The Beatnuts (Relativity)
8. What Goes On? - Artifacts (Big Beat/Warner Bros.)
9. In the Flesh - Pete Rock & C.L. Smooth (Elektra Entertainment)
10. Pull Ya Card - Saafir (Qwest/Warner Brothers)

CORRECTIONS

Please note the following changes to information in the January 1995 issue of VE:

Funkrags' telephone number is 415.708.9414.

Styles Magazine's new address is Serious Ink, 1136 East March Lane, Stockton, CA 95210-3545. You can still reach Mario Villalpando at 209.547.1056.

DJ Tim is no longer at the Douglass Street address. You can still reach Tim at 510.548.3203 for info on mix tapes.

Downstairs and to the left...

"Downstairs and to the left" is *the Vinyl Exchange's* newest column focusing on underground hip-hop, but concentrating on those few who have taken the "underground" a step deeper. Articles will especially be concerned with unsigned and independent artists, starving but committed in the west coast. Everything featured will be available on vinyl.

Back in the days when I was a teenager there used to be this thing called hip-hop. For those too young to have experienced it, hip-hop was progressive poetry said over a collage of musical styles. Born out of oppression it thrived on creativity, spontaneity, competition and the understanding of the English language. Many people were addicted. We took this shit serious. But when violence broke out within its own community and the thirst for money overcame the need for progression, hip-hop grew boring and later died.

I remember myself back in 1995, young but tired with the dull, repetitious rap music too easily found on the airwaves. It was in early January when I wandered into a hole in the wall vinyl shop, Zebra Records on Haight and Fillmore in San Francisco, hypnotized by the music being played. I heard styles never done, lyrics never said, beats never used. This shit was fresh and it couldn't have been done by none other than the L.A. underground, including **Freestyle Fellowship**, **Abstract Rude** and the **Heavyweights**. Entitled **PROJECT BLOWED**, this groundbreaking classic compilation album focused on the lyrical agility of **Aceyalone**, the vocal strength of **Abstract Rude** and the narcotic beats of **Fat Jack** and **Digiak**. Also showcased on Project Blowed are **the Nonce** on "Them Tapes," **Freestyle Fellowship** on "Hot Figures of Speech," on "Don't Get It Twisted" and "P.E.A.C.E." **Nefrititi**, **Jupiter**, **Ganja K**, **SIN**, **Micah 9** and **Volume 10** on the mind blowing "Heavyweights Round 2." First released on cassette in July of '94, Project Blowed leaked out nationwide but remained underneath the underground. Keeping its distance from commercialism; I remember selling tapes straight out of my backpack. But once the vinyl was finally released in April of '95...Project Blowed then blew up. Heads never took it out of their cassette decks, DJs never took it off their tables. Three fingers were in the air and the west coast got its due respect.

Another Freestyle Fellowship classic "To Whom It May Concern" was re-released on cassette in early March and on vinyl later that month. Originally released in '91, the Fellowship's first album established the grounds for progression in hip-hop and influenced some of the best MCs. The fact that

it blew up four years later proved that classics never die.

Another movement that took hip-hop one step deeper was the Solesides, an independent label and a family of artists. With Gift of Gab's relentless lyrics and Chief Xcel's mesmerizing music, **Blackalicious** dropped **MELODICA THE EP** domestically on cassette, CD and vinyl in late March of '95. You couldn't go one night without hearing it on underground radio as Lateef, Asia Born and DJ Shadow followed with jewels of their own.

1995 also saw Bay Area artists coming out of nowhere, putting out music from their own labels, their own pockets. It was in April of that year when San Francisco's **Bored Stiff** put out **EXPLAININ' THE EP** on cassette and vinyl off their personal label, Hella Records. The 30 minute collage of songs with its raw

continued on page 3

FREE!

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF/ART DIRECTOR
DJ Stef

CONTRIBUTORS

Mark Austria, Jim Haskett,
Akanni K. Jones, Jumaane Mills,
Josh Rattner

PHOTOS

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Gee Street

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e-mail VinylExchg@aol.com

Stephanie Aguilar Gardner, Owner

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InterVIEW: Greg Cuoco, NYC

This month's interview is with Greg Cuoco, a New York City DJ who spins at a party called AQUA-BOOTY! along with Tony Humphries and other great DJs such as Danny Tenaglia and Tedd Patterson.



GREG CUOCO digs in the crates at AQUA-BOOTY!

Tell us about AQUA-BOOTY! and any other clubs you're doing. AQUA-BOOTY! is now a once a month with special nights in other cities such as in Miami at the Warsaw Ballroom with Tony Humphries, Louie Vega, Dave Padilla and myself (**March 23**). We have also done one in London where DJs Alan Russell, Victor Simonelli, Norris Windross and Jay Johnson played. The music is deep house, with a great vibe and a crowd that is into the music.

I also spin at various other places in NYC; Sapphire, where there is an intimate vibe and I spin classics, funk, soul and various stuff, but mainly new house. Sound Factory Bar, downstairs and that's where the deep disco classics get the dancers movin' like you have never seen. I have also played over in Europe in London (Ministry of Sound and other places) and in Italy.

How did you hook up with Tony Humphries? You would be hard pressed to find someone who is more supportive of dance music and who has made more of a difference than Tony Humphries. Tony first started to DJ at AQUA-BOOTY! back in April of 1994 and has been a key element in creating that special vibe at the party. He breaks new records and is able to keep you entranced while you can't help but move to the rhythm of his set.

How long have you been DJing and how did you start? I have been DJing for almost 10 years, but when I started it was in college radio at WRHO, Hartwick College's station in Oneonta, NY. DJing in a college radio setting was totally different from four years later when I returned to New

York City and started to get into spinning out in front of crowds. Eventually I got the grip of working a crowd and taking them on my musical journey.

Why do you use only vinyl? I only use vinyl and I can't think of saying it any better than Louie Vega who said something about nothing beats the "dirty feeling" of vinyl. It has a special grit to it that allows you to feel the music, making it more real.

What other projects (production) besides club DJing are you working on now? Right now I am working on my first production, a track that is very different titled "The AQUA-BOOTY! Theme." In the future there will be more stuff, but in the meanwhile my company, Monarch Management, keeps me busy. Monarch Management is a company that does independent record promotion as well as represents the finest producers and artists such as 95 North, Splice of Life, Victor Simonelli, Jazz-N-Groove and vocalists Phillip Ramirez and Sabrynaah Pope.

What would you like to be doing 10 years from now? Ten years from now is far ahead to think in an industry where a record lasts less than six months. I hope to have produced some good records and to have Monarch grow and produce some great talent.

What's the WORST gig you've ever done? The worst gig I have ever done was probably when I opened for some rock band in some space here in NYC, and the crowd was not diggin' the soul and house stuff I was playing. They kept standing there totally unresponsive.

What equipment do you use? I use two Technics 1200s of course and a Rene mixer, I also love using a Urei mixer especially for house.

Who's YOUR favorite DJ? There are too many favorite DJs to name just one, I have been influenced by Tony Humphries, Louie Vega, Frankie Knuckles, Danny Tenaglia, Tedd Patterson, Camacho, Hippy Torrales and Jonny Sender.

- DJ STEF

GREG CUOCO'S TOP 5

These are just five ("too many records to pick a top five") of Greg's all-time favorite records:

"Hit and Run"

- Loleatta Holloway

"Over and Over" - Sylvester

"Spank" - Jimmy Bo Horne

"Melting Pot"

- Booker T & the MGs

"Sex Machine" - James Brown

RECORD reVIEWS

GRAVEDIGGAZ • 1-800-SUICIDE/Mommy What's A Gravedigger? (Gee Street/Island)



The art of the double 12" single is usually left to dance/club artists, but the Gravediggaz aren't your ordinary group, so they decided to go all out and release one for themselves. The songs should be very familiar for those who have bought the 6 FEET DEEP album, the exception here being that both songs have totally different lyrics from the originals making this a very worthy purchase. The "New Vocal Version" is exactly that, a new set of vocals laid over the same music as that on the album. The Flip Squad remix by Supreme Bigga Nigga Big Kap deserves a lot of recognition, almost bringing back that classic NY hip-hop sound from 1986-1988 with the kind of groove that will be enjoyed by those who have been into rap for years. The "Poisonous" and "Guillotine" mixes (boosted with the "Impeach The President" beat) contain yet another different vocal track and lyrics, offering another perspective on a great song. Both mixes feature the vocals of Blue Raspberry, heard extensively throughout Method Man's TICAL album.

On the album, "Mommy What's A Gravedigger?" is no more than a two minute link in between songs, but for the single they extended the ideals of the song into a full track. The mixes produced by The RZA feature the same Patrice Rushen samples heard on the album version. The "Uptight Gratedigger" mix by Rodney Hunter and Demon Flowers is more on a smoother vibe and is (dare I say it?) danceable in an odd sort of way.

A lot of creative mixes can be done with the versions on these 12" singles, and rather than go the typical route of just doing a straight remix of the original versions, the Gravediggaz started basically from scratch creating what are essentially brand new songs. This one proves that the Gravediggaz don't deserve to be pigeonholed within the non-existent "horrorcore" genre, and also that within the realm of the Wu-Tang empire you'll never know what to expect.

TOO SHORT • Paystyle (Jive)

Production: Rampage/Bosco & Banks

This 12" is the bomb! Not only is the LP version on point but the Boy Scout remix is Short like you have never heard him before. You might remember Rampage "the last boy scout" from the "Flava in ya Ear - remix." On the Boy Scout remix, Rampage had Short re-cut his vocals and laid them over butter uptempo beat. You won't find the Synth loops typical on any given Short cut on this one, this is strictly east coast flava at its best. To give you an idea of how it sounds, it is kind of like a Beatnuts cut mixed with a little Ali Shaheed flava.

On the flip side there's the Bosco & Banks mix. It adds a little snare to the LP version and other noticeable improvements, but basically isn't much different. All versions are radio playable, and have their own instrumental, so they're ready for all the DJ's out there.

- JIM HASKETT

CLASSIFIED ADS

EQUIPMENT: MTX and Numark

This article is an Internet post by Charles Stevens at Upstairs Records in Brooklyn, dated January 25, 1995.
Subject: Confusion Between MTX and Numark

...About 3-4 years ago Numark got into trouble with their product, mainly the 5020/6020 CD Players and the 1975 Samplers. They were getting a lot of pieces back as defects. It cost them money to fix each piece and...almost one entire shipment arrived defective. Retailers...went crazy.

Soon Numark was tight with their cash flow and couldn't pay off their bank loan on time and the bank pulled their line of credit from under them...Numark was out of business in 2-3 days. The news spread quick, and their Japanese manufacturer was looking for work. As Numark sat in bankruptcy court, MTX arranged a deal with the manufacturer in Japan to import the same mixers as Numark under the MTX name. Prices were slightly higher than Numark. MTX promised to introduce new models (which they did).

Finally the courts sold Numark Industries over to Numark Electronics (it might be vice versa). They brought up all the junk from the basement and sold it. They found a new manufacturer overseas to make them mixers under the Numark name, a name you can trust. The first models were weak and also had many defects, finally they introduced new models like the 2075, and the 2175 samplers. Although Numark is short on filling the demand for product. They are working out product allocations for new merchandise as we speak. As a matter of fact, at the NAMM show in Anaheim I spoke with Numark's President and he assured me that product will be available and they are making every effort to fill the huge demand.

I just hope the "new" Numark can maintain the high quality of goods as we learned to expect from the previous Numark (who by the way is MTX). If the original Numark is what you seek, keep in mind that the manufacturer is now working for MTX, and you can be assured that their mixers are high quality and are built like the previous Numarks were. Wow even I am confused.

Upstairs Records Inc., 2968 Avenue X, Dept. Int., Brooklyn, NY 11235, 718.332.3322, Fax 718.332.6232. E-Mail: UpstRec@ix.netcom.com or UpstRec@aol.com.

Downstairs and to the left... (cont'd.)

beats and bottomless lyrics was rushed at Bay Area independent stores while college radio spun in heavily. Members Equip, Pablo, Kwanz, TD, Myint, Big, Priz, Liel and others never once tried to appeal to anyone but themselves and "let people know that you could make a difference without a major label acting like you're gifted." 1995 was a good year.

For any questions on anything, more information on artists or if you want your copy of whatever if featured, call Mark at 408.286.3256. Peace.

Solesides, P.O. Box 590, Davis, CA 95617. 916.759.1304 voice mail.

Point Blank Media (Project Blowed), 909.466.2669 ext. 3 voice mail.

Bored Stiff, 415.764.0223 voice mail.

- MARK THE USUAL

VINYL for sale or trade

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STACKS OF WAX. Jazz, soul, funk, rap, etc...call or fax want list to 415.252.7817.

SOUL, R&B & jazz LPs, buy, sell trade. Dane C. LaBarr, P.O. Box 260834, Tampa, FL 33685, USA. Tel/fax 813.882.3929. E-mail dcLabarr@gate.net.

VINYL wanted

LOOKING for these first LPs: Brand Nubian, Ultramagnetic MC's, Organized Konfusion, Lord Finesse, Ice Cube and Big Joe Crash 12". Offering these first LPs for trade: Das EFX, KMD, Chill Rob G., Tribe Called Quest (+ Low End Theory), Biz Markie + various EPMD 12"s. Call Frank (Jr.) at 415.349.3963.

LOOKING FOR De la Soul's promo album "Clear Lake Auditorium" on vinyl. Akanni K. Jones 713.933.4681 or Jay Mills 713.575.0521.

WU-TANG CLAN WANTED: I am looking for a few 12" singles related to the monks from the slums of Shaolin. #1) Prince Rakeem's "Ooh, I Love You Rakeem," released by Tommy Boy in 1991. #2) Wu-Tang's "Tiger Style," said to have been released on Wu-Tang Records before "Protect Ya Neck." And #3) Wu-Tang's "Protect Ya Neck." Any help

would be appreciated. Send info to: John Book, 2502 W. Opal St., Pasco, WA 99301-3352.

LOOKING FOR any Ultramagnetic MC's vinyl on the Next Plateau label (12"s and the LP). Also any promo items from Ultra or Organized Konfusion (hats, shirts, hoodies, etc). Live videos, radio freestyles, live tapes, pretty much anything from these two groups. I will buy or trade. Dan Ladd, 61 Esker Ln., No. Kingstown, RI 02852, 410.294.4873.

EVENTS seminars, battles, etc.

**SPRING '95
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KALX 90.7 FM Berkeley
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now Flava Fa That Ass...Part I. For more information contact The Wizard via e-mail at mduckwor@acad.bryant.edu or write to: The Wizard, 1150 Douglas Pike, P.O. Box 1515, Smithfield, RI 02917.

GIGS job opportunities

I AM LOOKIN' for DJ's in the NY/Westchester/

LI/Bronx market who are interested in **mobile DJ work** throughout the tri-state area. Experience **ONLY** please. IMMEDIATE WORK is available to those who qualify. Mail tape to: ACE, 15 N. Mill Street, Nyak, NY 10960.

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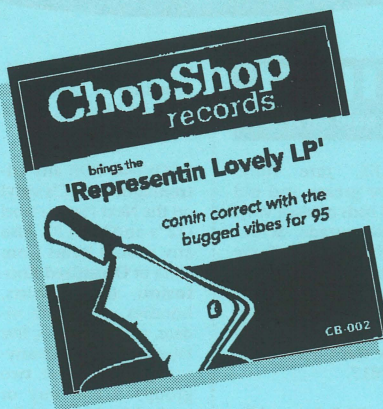
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Flava Chart

Submitted by DJ Sloppy J, Soul Food DJ Family, San Francisco, California

1. One Luv - E-40 (Jive)
2. Boriquas On Da Set - FRANKIE CUTLASS (Relativity)
3. All About My Fetti - YOUNG LAY feat. Mac Mall & Ray Luv (Tommy Boy)
4. Blase Blase - A BROTHA NAMED QUICK (Basement Flavor)
5. Trick Ass Hoes - BOOGIE (Relativity)
6. Elevation (Free My Mind) - THE B.U.M.S. (Priority)
7. Paystyle - TOO SHORT (Jive)
8. Break It Down - KAOS (Spontaneous)
9. Cocktales - TOO SHORT (Jive)
10. Silent Treatment - THE ROOTS (Geffen)
11. Think of You - USHER (La Face)
12. Can't You See - TOTAL/Notorious B.I.G. (Tommy Boy/Bad Boy)
13. Bring the Pain - METHOD MAN (RAL/Def Jam)
14. Thank You - BOYZ II MEN (Motown)
15. I Like What You're Doing... - JOYA (Atlas)

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Inside:

- 1 • Top Ten Hip-Hop Chart
 - Downstairs and to the left... underground hip-hop
 - 2 News and Reviews
 - Greg Cuoco, AQUA-BOOTY!
 - Gravediggaz, Too Short
 - 3 • MTX and Numark
- Classified Ads**
- 4 Etcetera
 - New & Upcoming Releases
 - Soul Food DJ Family Chart



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