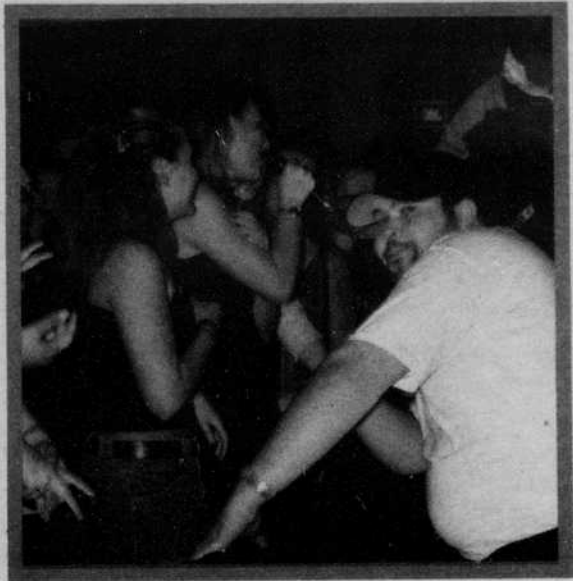


# HIP-HOP CULTURE ON THE UP AND HERE TO STAY

Everywhere you turn it seems hip-hop is in your face; local artists hope to keep up the pressure with more Eugene exposure



All hip-hop photos by Azle Malinao-Alvarez Emerald

Approximately 400 people turned out last Friday night at Top of the World to hear 14 hip-hop artists deliver their messages. The Hip-Hop Student Union at Lane Community College sponsored the event.

By Jack Clifford  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Like just about every other fad and fashion, when it comes to hip-hop, Eugene has been a bit slow on the uptake. Local artists involved in the musical genre say you better get used to this thought, however: The hip-hop world isn't just a "craze" and if you're not a b-boy or b-girl, then you're literally and figuratively just standing still.

"You cannot live in the United States from the year 2000 on without hip-hop in your life," local hip-hop artist Jay Roberts says. "It will be in a burger commercial, it will be playing in a clothing store

or you'll hear it in elevators."

Well, the day Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five's "The Message" cranks up in Muzak style shouldn't be wished for by anyone, but Robert's point is right on the money. In fact, nine of the top 30 albums in the most recent Billboard 200 chart are injected with hip-hop flavor.

Several students at Lane Community College and the University are so immersed in the hip-hop culture that they formed the Hip-Hop Student Union in December 1998. Based on LCC's campus, the group's founder, Lorenzo Fourmet, says that after surveying the local scene, he realized opportunities to perform

were slim and available venues were practically non-existent.

Fill-in spots — maybe 10 minutes between an opening act and a headliner — came about at places like Agate Hall, the WOW Hall and the Wild Duck. Other times, a local artist might get some exposure on the KLCC or KWVA radio stations.

"I think anything that has ever become popular started at a small base," says University and LCC business administration student Gabriel Sechrist, a member of the hip-hop group Logic. "Reggae [in Eugene] is a big scene. You've got the Grateful Dead type thing, and you've got the big Seattle crowd

with its thrasher music. They all took root somewhere, they all had ideas and they started out the same way."

Last Friday night, however, 14 acts snagged the spotlight at Top of the World, located off I-5 eight miles north of Eugene. Although technical glitches irked a few of the artists, the 400 or so people in attendance didn't seem to notice much. But unlike most all-ages shows that are populated mostly with 14 to 18-year-olds, this venue attracted everyone from toddlers to gray-hairs to, yes, even doting mothers.

"That's my boy," said Cher Major, while watching her son Jacob

Bustamante strut on stage under the name Evil. "He was scared during his first live show. Now he makes love to the mic."

Bustamante began hip-hopping with a Christian bent while at North Eugene High School, but now he's rhyming swear words with the best of them, a talent that no longer receives his mom's scorn.

Even so, the genre's lyrics are most likely the one factor that will always attract detractors. Some call the tone too misogynistic, while others decry the violent overtures.

"Hip-hop catches a lot of flak for the lyrical content, but a lot of

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