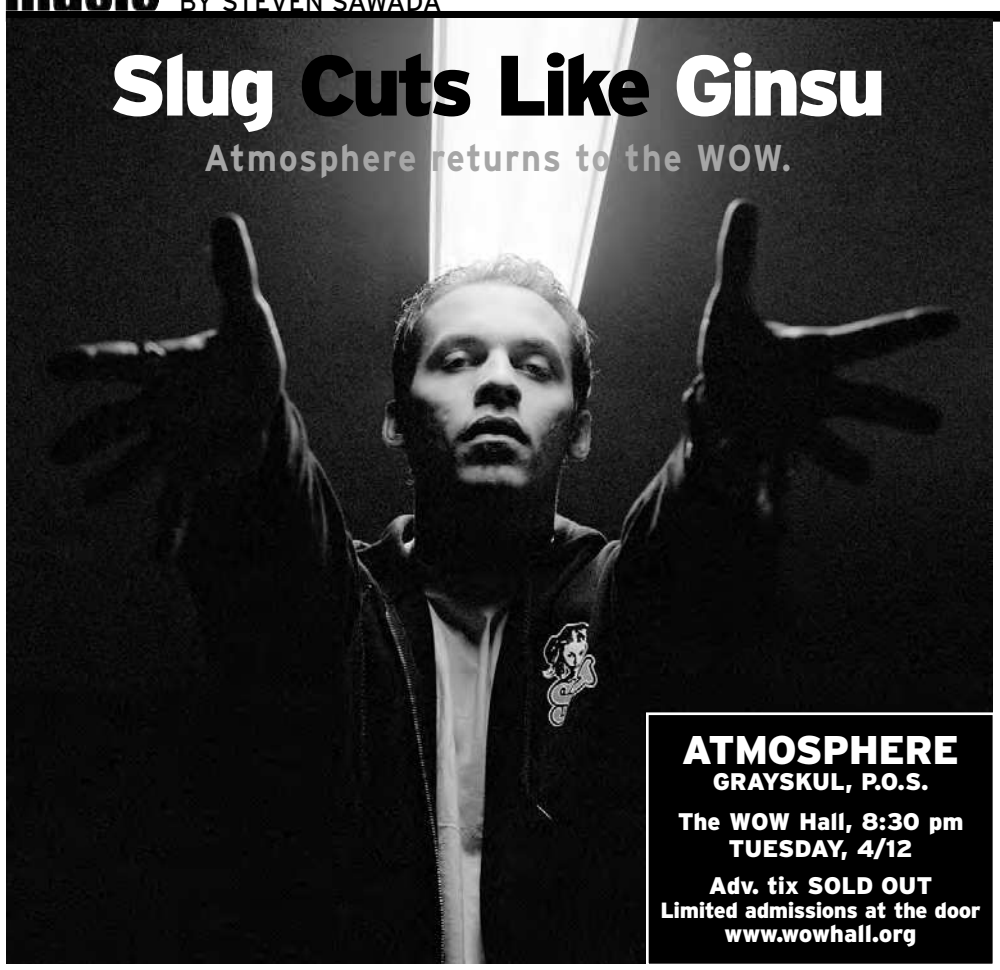
Slug Cuts Like Ginsu

Atmosphere returns to the WOW.



ATMOSPHERE
GRAYSKUL, P.O.S.
The WOW Hall, 8:30 pm
TUESDAY, 4/12
Adv. tix SOLD OUT
Limited admissions at the door
www.wowhall.org

Underground hip hop, emo-rap, indie-rap, whatever you want to call it — it is undoubtedly a colossal "subculture" for sure, valuable to the evolution of hip hop culture.

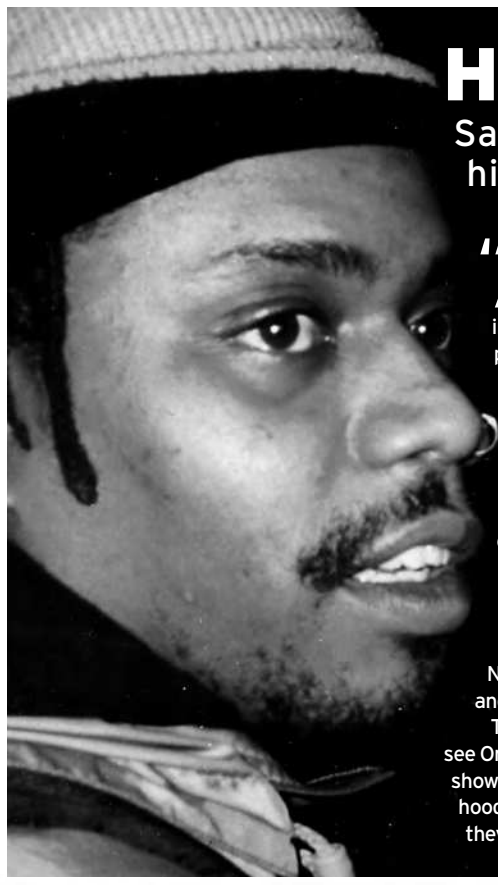
Atmosphere, one of these DIY groups, composed of DJ Mr. Dibbs, producer Ant and MC Slug, is leading the way in this underground scene. The group's newest release *SE7EN*, volume 7 in the legendary Rhymesayers Headshots series, bubbles with hot rare tracks recorded between 1997 and 1999. It's full of robust, blunted beats so thick and gooey it feels like butter churning in your eardrums. And Slug, the MC of the group, spits with such a sharp, fiery cadence, his words seem as quick and deadly as sniper rounds.

Ever since Atmosphere's 2003 release *Seven's Travels* on seminal punk label Epitaph, fans and critics have praised MC Slug for bringing "thought provoking lyrics" and a punk DIY ethic to a commercial rap world overwhelmed by a "bling 'n' bitches" mentality. But all this talk of something being groundbreaking because it's "indie" rather than "commercial" is seriously gag-worthy.

Slug still employs the same lyrical devices, the same bling 'n' bitches mentality (or at least the bitches part), as commercial artists, say Lil Jon, in order to secure his fan base. Having indie-cred for sporting a soul patch, releasing records on Epitaph and Rhymesayers and palling around with MF Doom does not morph Slug's sexist lyrics into "thought-provoking" ones.

You cannot disguise lines such as, "I got sluts that love to give head and I like to watch," from the track "The Stick Up," with euphemisms such as "heartfelt lyrics," as some reviewers like to put it. Glossing over a few songs, denying their existence in favor of the guy's affiliations or background, does not change what he says or who he is. Slug pulls no punches when it comes to saying what he wants about women. Some fans need to come to terms with that.

But this is not an attack — the guys in Atmosphere deserve the praise they've received, not because they're hip and punk, but because the group is genuinely talented. This is, however, an indictment of indie-snobs trying to masquerade as rap fans. Go and see Atmosphere based on the fact that Ant creates burly beats and Slug delivers slick rhymes. Don't see them because they're "indie" or "non-commercial." That's stupid … It's all rap. **EW**



Halfmoon Setting

Saying goodbye to one of Eugene's hip hop fathers. BY HANIF PANNI

"All I wanna do is rock mics for a living," **No Nami Halfmoon** once said. And that's one of the hardest jobs in the world. It takes persistence, focus, talent, networking skills and patience for the ups and downs that any creative path requires.

In the last 10 years, I've seen a lot of people in the local hip hop scene drop in and out of this passionate pursuit. But No Nami Halfmoon worked that job to the bone and never fell off when it came to his music. As a fellow MC, when I heard Nami on stage, on a tape, and especially in a freestyle cipher, I knew I needed to work a lot harder because he showed the hip hop generation's potential for Eugene.

Nami arrived from Nebraska in the mid-'90s with a high top fade and quickly linked up with a local crew, the **Organics**. Sage, Shortround, Mattic and Nami started doing shows together in Eugene and Portland at places like the old Icky's Teahouse, The Nexus, the Agate and the WOW Hall for crowds of younger hip hop and punk rock fans.

They earned the respect of other local bands and we started to see Organics on more posters and flyers around town. Along with stage shows, they made a name for themselves locally by rocking neighborhood house parties and dominating freestyle ciphers every chance they got. During the next few years, they formed **The Greenhouse Effect**, a larger crew with more like-minded MCs, graffiti artists, DJs and b-boys. They headlined dozens of shows and opened up for most of the bigger acts that came into town.

There was solidarity in the scene even as it grew. And because he got along with everybody, Nami was sort of the ambassador of that era. He settled beefs between groups, got different people working together and always kept a smile on his face. When the Organics split, they all stayed busy with their own projects and later reunited with offshoot groups like the **Point Blank Rangers**, **Plan B** and the **Burn Unit**.

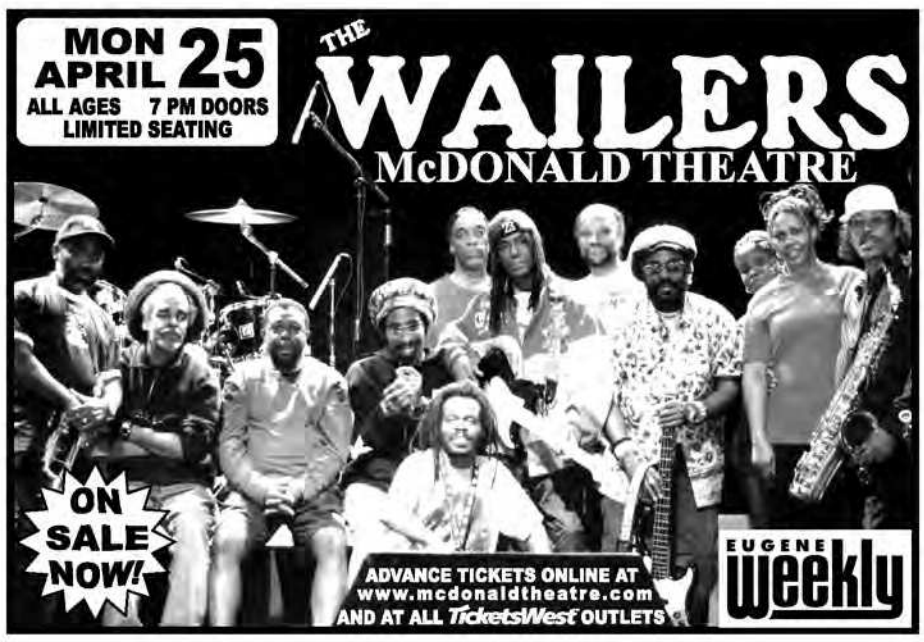
In those days Nami was still playing Mr. Miyagi to a whole generation of little *Karate Kid* MCs. There were only a few local crews doing hip hop, so the kids in the community looked up to Nami like a cool older brother. He took us under his wing and always had advice when we needed it. We were all proud of the things he had achieved in this town, and he was proud of us. When we got a little older and started performing at our own shows, Nami was always there, getting down in the front row.

During these last few years, we've all performed together as peers on the same bill or in the same crews. We've seen the scene expand from its humble beginnings and have been taken aback by the enthusiasm this community has shown toward unique Northwest hip hop.

It's a direct testimony to the influence that Nami had on all of us. Not only did he help pave the road, but he painted the lines that kept us to the right. Nami embodied all of Eugene and hung out with everybody from hip hoppers to punk rockers, hippies to D&D heads.

A few weeks ago, No Nami Halfmoon passed away. Our community has lost one of the most personable and prolific artists to ever call this place home. He greatly influenced the monumental movement that is Northwest hip hop and touched the lives of thousands through his music, personality and vibrant nature.

Nami showed us the importance of maintaining our creativity, dignity, and sense of humor throughout all of our pursuits. So I say "Thank you, No Nami Halfmoon. Your impact on all of us will never be forgotten. Rest in peace." ◑



TONIGHT, APRIL 7!
Come submit your ideas. We are changing our name & you get to rename us.

SATURDAY APRIL 9
80's Party
Come see your favorite '80s Celebrity.
Dress up in '80s attire & get in FREE!
Saturday, April 16 Featured Performer Andi Sue Irwin

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