

The Trail Band



Friday, October 21, 8 p.m.
LCC Performing Arts Theatre

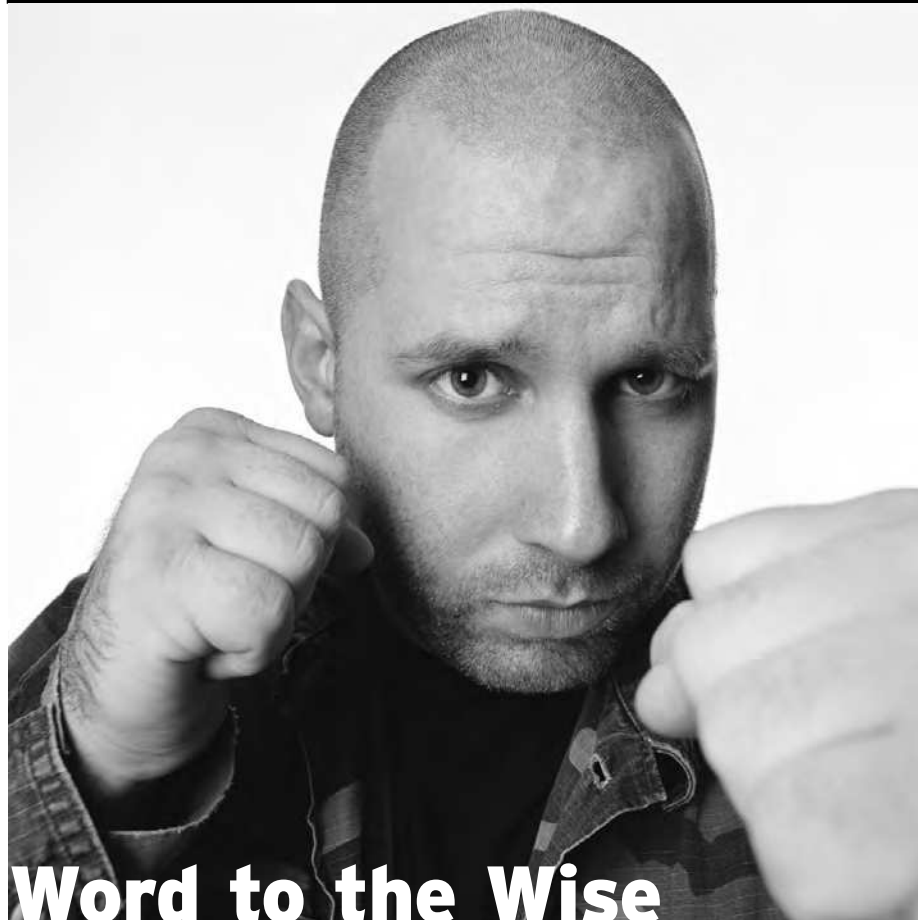
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Word to the Wise

Sage Francis deals with success by staying true.

Sage Francis is a guy who makes people a little uncomfortable. The 27-year-old, college educated, straight-edge vegetarian has some shit to say about almost everyone. He says the very nature of hip hop is to challenge the status quo and reject the façade of the world. He also believes that there's a lack of creativity and risk in hip hop today.

"It just doesn't seem like people feel the need to dig very deep," he says. "They bore me."

Sage's music isn't like any other hip hop out there. His battle-rap style emanates through well researched metaphors and complex rhyming patterns. His newest album, *A Healthy Distrust*, adds an improved sound quality and uses cleaner backup vocals and effects than his older releases. "The success grants me more resources," says Sage, who now records on Epitaph Records. "I'm still trying to figure out how to utilize them well. It's probably easy to get overwhelmed with all that is suddenly made available to you and lose focus."

If there's a lack of focus on *Distrust*, it's that Sage can't seem to figure out who to chastise the most. In "The Buzz Kill" he takes on popular rap artists — "Poorly de-

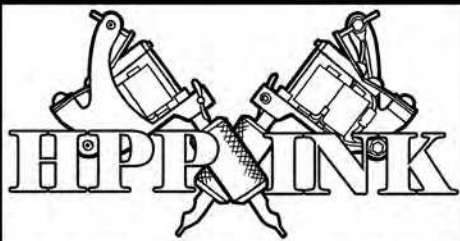
veloped yet highly advanced/ Black music intertwined with the white man's line dance" he rhymes. "Sun vs. Moon" is a mockery of Christians and religion — "God's not a woman/ He's a big white guy in the sky." And in "Slow Down Gandhi" he even mocks fellow activists — "Trustafundian rebel without a cause for alarm/ Because when push turns to shove you jump into your forefather's arms."

His own toughest critic, Sage holds others to the same high standards he sets (and keeps) for himself. If his sarcasm or satire affects you, just remember that his hypocrisy-catching sights are set on everyone. During his rise from a rap-fascinated Rhode Island kid to one of hip hop's most adored poets, he's always been protective of his ideals. He resists, for instance, the overabundance of responsibilities that come with the straight edge label. "I don't need people looking over my shoulder and warning me of breaking 'rules,'" he says. "That's disgusting. I really appreciate people who can operate in daily life without needing to 'escape' through use of foreign substances. On the other hand, I really don't care if they want to escape because so do I."

EW

Sage Francis, Sol iL Loquists of Sound, Sole, Sleep

8 pm, Mon, 10/24
McDonald Theatre,
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