

The Roots plant seeds and branch out in the new harvest of hip-hop music

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FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Like The Roots fourth titled project, yes, sometimes, things fall apart, but by no means are the brothas from The city of Brotherly Love, about to fall, fall off, or apart. Philly Phill-lay is certainly off da' hook these days. Correction... these decades.

Whether it be Portland Trailblazer Rasheed Wallace's birth place or Allen Iverson's ghetto-fabulous style with the Philadelphia 76ers...Philly is hoopin' it up. Or is it the infamous New York City slice of cheese pizza or the landmark Geno's Philly cheese steak hoagies that salivates you?

The Fresh Prince and DJ Jazzy Jeff or LL Cool J and Cut Creator? Eve and Charli Baltimore or Lil Kim and Foxy Brown....

But as the old cliché asks, but still remains to be proven, It's not where ya from...it's where ya at? True or untrue...you be the judge.

But just to be safe, we're going to go with both; the born and bred. With the exception of The Roots Godfather of Noyze and beat-box battle-star, Rahzel; who hails from KRS-One territory, the boogie down Bronx (NY that is...), this Philly-based hip-hop potpourri has and continue to collectively come together in representing hip-hop on a higher level.

After all...home is where the heart is...or should I say...your roots. But in this case, it's the musical and multitalented Roots; the Philadelphia-based brothers who bring freestyle lyrical philosophy into a whole new realm of live hip-hop. All the way live!

Philadelphia definitely is one of America's cities that knows how to serve entertainment at its best., or, as rap the Philly native rapstress Eve would say givin' the crowd..."What Ya Want."

And that's exactly what The Roots gave Portland fans during their November 22nd performance at Portland's Roseland Theatre. They gave us what we wanted and needed. In all the meaning of: all-the-way-live music.

The success of The Roots fourth album titled "Things Fall Apart" comes from a brigade of talented Philadelphia-based musicians and lovers of hip hop. And the Portland-based Direct Production promoters made sure NW fans received just that.

They blended bold lyrics into a live bowl full of bodacious beats. All of this while still, educating listeners to the art of live music and hip-hop. As lead emcee Black Thought (aka Tariq Trotter) stated during a recent press release "as we approach the millennium, there are a lot of things in the world that are about to drastically change... things fall apart is dealing with that change..."

So, as far as hip-hop is concerned; if CD's suddenly go through a Y2K meltdown; or if mixing boards and dats suddenly go through a digital overload or techno warfare, it's the five brothers who have been giving life back to art of the "live band" again...who will take the essence of live hip-hop into the Y2K or G and beyond. Thus, making sure that whatever parts do fall apart, The Roots will get things in order and on the right track.

And on the right track is where The Roots were at Monday night's sold-

out performance.

Black Thought (aka Tariq Trotter) and drummer/bandleader questlove (aka Ahmir Thompson) must have been geniuses back in 80's when they first met while attending Philadelphia's High School for the Performing Arts. Who but they, along with their bandmate beat-box Scratch, emcee Malik B., bassist Leonard (HUB) Hubbard, keyboardist Kamal and "Godfather of Noyze" human beat-box entertainer Rahzel, knew that hip-hop could and would go from recorded dats to live hand-claps.

In performing a melody of the group's hits, The Roots "Redemption Tour" was and is one performance not to miss headin into the millennium. If you weren't able to catch this true definition of a band, then you've got to peep their newest project "Come Alive." Not only is this performed-live project a lyrical-gumbo of some of their greatest hits, but for those who missed this or any of the other NW shows The Roots have been blessin' us with, then this project will at least give you a foot in the door comparison of the live rendition that was served.

Hopefully you were able to catch last year's out the box Roots and Goodie Mob visit to the Crystal Ballroom. In a time where hip-hop is highly looped over songs from yesteryear and sampled from basement crates, The Roots continue to give their audiences back-in-day-day real emceeing, but at the same time, merging a live band for live sounds.

Touring is something that The Roots call, states drummer "questlove", "our bread and butter... we've been doing it so much; about 250 nights a year..." And with their recent stop in Portland, all ears in attendance gave a no contest and much overdue Source Award, Grammy, etc., in recognizing that they deserve every bread and butter, dime and Benjamin they earn.

While peeping The Roots official web site okayplayer.com, it's easy to see that fans as close as Sea-Tac and Portland all the way to Amsterdam and beyond know The Roots can rock a show. Rock until you can barely stand anymore. No matter where they're at...no matter how large or small the venue...they bring the hits until they bring the house down.

And with a grandstand finale to die for, audience members can't help but to ask for more.

For more on the underground artist go to: <http://www.okayplayer.com>



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