

Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

Education and Music is Life for this Yung'n

Def Jam contest winner stays schooled

BY CARI HACHMANN
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Portland rapper Yung Mil pays attention in class and the lyrics of his winning music video, Leaders of the New School, proves just how serious he is about academics and his hip hop career.

As the winner of the Def Jam Rapstar Get Schooled Video Competition, Yung Mil whose real name is Ezekial "Zeke" Jones, has earned a trip to New York City where he will meet Def Jam execs Russell Simmons and Kevin Liles and perform on BET's 106th and Park.

In his submission to Def Jam's Leaders of the New School contest, Jones impressed viewers with visionary lyrics that empower young people to dream big, stay positive, motivated, and most of all, graduate:

"When I was young I was told to dream big and never big enough, life is what you make it so I'm only trying to live it up./Diligence should thrive throughout every single new soul, displaying positivity when others fail to do so / We should be going to school, not just blogging on youtube, cause it's up to us to be the leaders of the new school."

With a face reminiscent of icon Pharrell Williams, the 17-year-old Parkrose high school student first arose on the Portland hip hop scene as a member of the former hip hop, jerk dance crew, Rip City Jerks, where he and fellow students began building a buzz on Youtube.

Now the skinny-jean-wearing rapper performs solo and juggles a busy life comparable to some of today's rich and famous rap stars.

When he's not expanding his vocabulary in English class, thinking up lyrics on the bus ride home, or performing live at the Parkrose prom, Jones is writing, rapping, dancing, networking, skating, singing "a little" and producing his own music.

"You can compare me to other artists, but I feel like the music that I make is personal, and it's all come from me, inside," said Jones who writes songs about growing up as a teen, having fun, and making money. "I feel like I grow with each song I make as an artist," he said.

His official website, yungmil.com, along with every other social networking outlet on the web is where



Portland rapper Yung Mil is creating noise as a top talent in the music world.

Jones likes to get in touch with his thousands of fans and followers. He is a member of the LA based production team, "Project Mayhem," and works with sponsors like the Youth Vintage Movement, Vlado Footwear, and Adidas.

Of course, the young artist couldn't manage all the upkeep without the help and inspiration of his parents, including his delightful mother and manager, Elle Jones, once a performing artist herself.

"My parents have always encouraged me to do and be whatever I want to be in life without limitations," the young rapper said in an

interview with Get Schooled.

Since entering the double-digits, Jones has been absorbing lyrical wisdom and hip hop beats from his older brothers' rap music and old school rap artists like Bone Thugs, Tupac, NWA, as well as more recent chart toppers like Kanye West, Lupe Fiasco, Lil Wayne, Chris Brown, and Usher.

Just a few years later in 2011, Jones performed as the youngest rap artist at Portland's largest Hip Hop festival Poh-Hop. He has shared the stage with artists like E-4-, Mistah Fab, Freeway, Jake-One, Audio Push, and Mac Miller.

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