

How to make it in music

1 MIXTAPES

Like Young Jeezy, most hip-hop artists these days first get heard on mixtapes (usually CDs, but still called by their original name). These are compilations put together by a DJ, artist, producer or street-savvy entrepreneur, sold on the street and in record stores. Often they feature artists rapping over bigger stars' beats, which makes a lot of them technically illegal.

It was a mixtape featuring then-floundering New York rapper 50 Cent that got the attention of hip-hop superstar Eminem. He and his partner and producer, Dr. Dre, signed 50 Cent to a seven-figure deal, and his second album, "The Massacre," is the best-selling CD of the year.

"I still mess with the mix CDs," 50 Cent said before "Massacre's" release. "Because they're still close to the people. Still close to the street. You disrespect your roots, the whole tree dies."

In Atlanta, mixtapes' roots go back decades, to the days when record-store owner King Edward J, a young high-schooler named Jermaine Dupri and others did things like mix a ballad over a fast beat, creating a new song altogether. Now there's Big Oomp, Baylo Entertainment, the World Famous Super Friends and the Aphilliates, which produce ongoing series of contemporary R&B, more relaxed soul and hip-hop mixes.

And instead of digging in their crates of old vinyl to create new songs from old, established artists such as Ludacris and Sean "P. Diddy" Combs come into the studio and "host" mix CDs, in exchange for the opportunity to test out new artists on their label. Or to take a musical swipe at another artist. Or just do an improvisational "freestyle" rhyme for the fun of it.

"Basically, we're the unofficial A&R department for a lot of these record labels," said DJ Drama of the Aphilliates. "Before Jeezy got a deal, he and his manager were at my door like, 'Can we do business?'"

Now Drama's mixtape work has gotten him his own deal with major label Atlantic Records to do "Gangsta Grillz: The Album."

2 STRIP CLUBS

So where do the people who make mixtapes hear a lot of music for the first time?

"I'm not even gonna lie," DJ Drama of the Aphilliates snickers: "The strip club. That's the wild, strange truth. And has been for years."

Little wonder then that this week started with not one, but two listening parties for DJs and other tastemakers at the downtown adult entertainment spot, Body Tap. Antwan "Big Boi" Patton of Atlanta rap duo OutKast unveiled new music from his Purple Ribbon label. And the following evening, DJ Nabs — also an artist manager and music publisher for Artistic Control Group — previewed rapper Bone Crusher's sophomore CD.

"Let's face it, it's not hard to get DJs to come look at naked women," Nabs says, "as opposed to inviting them to a cafe or something. So you have a captive audience. Even on a regular night, you have a captive audience that isn't there, first, for the music. So the strip club DJs don't have the same kind of pressure. They don't have to keep people on the dance floor continuously. Thus, they're more willing to try out new music, and new records."

3 RINGTONES

As producer-rapper Lil Jon puts the finishing touches on his upcoming Lil Scrappy, Trillville or Whitney Houston song, he's coming up with something for me and you as well. Or whoever is interested in his original BlingTone.

Atlanta's Grammy-nominated talent signed an



Mixtapes — compilations from DJs, producers or entrepreneurs — are "close to the people... close to the street."

exclusive deal with BlingTone — which bills itself as a mobile record label — and has already created four original productions. One features Bohagon, an artist who has yet to release an album.

"That gives me one more medium to have my artist heard," Lil Jon said. "But it all has to sell. So I take it all seriously, whether it be a track for Usher's album or Average Joe's phone. It's kind of weird saying that, but that's what this business has come to."

"Ringtones work because there is one thing people have on them all the time, day or night, and it's not a radio or an iPod. It's a phone," explains BlingTone VP of A&R Jonathan Dworkin. He's enlisted some 50 producers, including Q-Tip and Rockwilder, to create original ringtones: "We're looking to bring the hottest hip-hop to your phone... From established artists or new ones."

4 SATELLITE AND INTERNET RADIO

Satellite radio, which works like cable TV for your car radio, has lots of specialty channels with the freedom to play music outside the mainstream. The two big companies are Sirius and XM, and both have programs geared toward emerging rock and hip-hop talent.

Then there's Internet radio, which is as diverse as the Internet itself. One eclectic site is Radio DavidByrne.com, programmed by the former Talking Heads frontman.

5 MP3 BLOGS

MP3 blogs aim to introduce listeners to all manner of music. The things seem to specialize in oddities and obscurities, so it's a natural place for up-and-coming artists to get heard. All you need now is some blogmaster's endorsement. For a huge list of MP3 blogs, check out the cleverly named Web site www.mp3blogs.org.

6 ALTERNATIVE RETAILERS

Perhaps you've noticed that you can't get a cup of coffee, a plate of pancakes, a sofa or a greeting card these days without someone trying to sell you music. Cracker Barrel, Pottery Barn and Hallmark are all in the CD game.

Still, for new artists, the best bet is probably to hook up with Starbucks, whose music arm (Hear Music) has a history of championing up-and-coming acts. Hear's compilation CD "Playlist Volume 3," for example, features tracks from Calexico, Sufjan Stevens, Madeline Peyroux and Snow Patrol. According to Hear's Web site (www.starbucks.com/heardmusic), Hear also has a new Debut series dedicated to up-and-coming acts. The first one: Antigone Rising.

7 PITCHFORK AND MYSPEACE

The cool kids on the Net all know about the music geek Webzine site Pitchfork (www.pitchforkmedia.com), which is influential enough to transform underground artists from indie nobodies to cult heroes. This year, Pitchfork has endorsed the Sri Lankan rapper M.I.A. and the

charming rock band Clap Your Hands Say Yeah, now poised to get a major-label deal largely thanks to its rave on Pitchfork.

The online community MySpace is another Internet hotspot for scouting up-and-coming bands. MySpace is a big site, but one place to start is the Booth, a collaborative feature between MySpace and Filter magazine designed to "bring you first listens, prereleases, and special performances."

99X music director Jay Heren is a fan of MySpace, though he has yet to add a song to his radio playlist just because he heard it on the site.

"MySpace has really gotten out of hand — in a good way — in terms of how many people use it. I get e-mails now from record labels, which, instead of sending an MP3 attached to an e-mail... they just send me a link to the artist's MySpace account."

8 MOVIE AND TV SOUNDTRACKS

Sure, you can get John Williams to score your blockbuster. Or you can go the "Garden State" route and hire a bunch of lesser-known artists to give your film some element of musical quirk.

The soundtrack for the aforementioned Zach Braff flick has sold almost a million copies, according to Nielsen Soundscan, giving a boost to the tuneful indie rock band the Shins, who are prominently featured in the film and on the soundtrack.

"'Garden State' started off getting great reviews, but it was only in New York and L.A.," Shins singer James Mercer told MTV News. "Then it started opening everywhere. First in 13 theaters, then 700 theaters, and we saw our sales increase right after that."

And then there's TV. Music is so integral to "The O.C." that the show has released four CD soundtracks and boosted the profile of such artists as Jem and Death Cab for Cutie. The WB show "One Tree Hill" also has a soundtrack out, featuring upstarts Gavin DeGraw, the 22-20s and Keane.

"The reason why we use a lot of undiscovered music or brand new music is because those albums are just breaking, and the artist and the labels want that advertising," "One Tree Hill" creator Mark Schwann told The Associated Press. "These are wonderful acts, but they haven't had the exposure that Britney Spears has had or any of the other huge acts."

9 COMMERCIALS

Music in TV ads has gotten hipper and hipper ever since Volkswagen rolled out its now-famous ad featuring then-obscure folkie Nick Drake crooning "Pink Moon." Drake promptly went from cult secret to quasi-star, and the race to play cool, undiscovered music in commercials was on.

Since then, TV advertisers have used songs by semi-obscure band the Concretes, up-and-coming soul singer Joss Stone and experimental British hip-hop group Gorillaz. It's called synergy, people — the products presumably get a boost from their association with cool songs in the ads, and the artists can reach an audience of millions.

The synergy gets even deeper on the AdTunes Web site (www.adtunes.com), which tells readers which songs are in their favorite ads — conveniently, the site has a link called "store," where you can buy those tunes on the spot.

MegaFest: Big doings

► Continued from G1

Family Affair," and the black families crowding the Georgia Dome, the Georgia World Congress Center and Philips Arena seemed alive and well.

Some, including Louis Sweatt, 38, a sheriff's deputy from Antioch, Calif., made significant sacrifices to spend time with the nuclear unit. Sweatt, for example, came with his wife and two children but left his golf clubs home. God comes first, and family comes second, he said. Golf comes third.

MegaFest is music, and Thursday's Women of Purpose concert, featuring Chaka Khan and Gladys Knight, was dedicated to Coretta Scott King, who was praised as a warrior who helped make such events possible.

Yes, MegaFest is also Christian praise. It is one of the biggest religious gatherings in the country, and Pastor Bill Upton was making sure his "ninjas" were sharp and ready for spiritual battle. "OK," said the drill master, testing his flock on their Scripture. "John 15:7: Hit it!"

His field commander, "Col." Terrence Campbell, responded without pause: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

MegaFest is also an African-American touchstone, one of the biggest gatherings of black people in the country. And yet the participants see race as a secondary element, if not irrelevant.

"It's cross-cultural," said

Elvis J. Rose. "It's not a black thing."

Movie actor and born-again Christian Stephen Baldwin, dressed in camo slacks and a ball cap, was the master of ceremonies at the Livin' It skating performance, a gnarly mixture of loud music, dangerous half-pipe tricks and Christian ministry that will tour perhaps 150 cities this year.

"It's common sense that there will be more African-Americans here than anybody else," said Baldwin. "But the appeal of Jesus Christ, more than anything else, is what MegaFest is about."

MegaFest is also money. Rose, 49, of Baltimore said he probably will have spent \$5,000 on his trip to Atlanta, by the time all the receipts are totaled.

Multiply those kinds of expenses by the numbers present and you have a \$125 million economic impact for the city of Atlanta, said Lauren Kenworthy of the Atlanta Convention & Visitors Bureau. That's in a league with the International Gift and Home Furnishings Market, which in January brought \$148 million into the local economy, she said.

In a different sense, MegaFest is also about prosperity, and not just the spiritual kind. Jakes preaches that God wants his followers to flourish, a message that has been criticized as prosperity theology by some and praised as good sense by others.

Jakes takes steps to make sure it happens, with financial-advice seminars from the likes of television

guru Suze Orman, whose "Young, Fabulous and Broke" address on Thursday afternoon was well-attended.

Does God bless his followers with better jobs? "I think he blesses you whether you believe in him or not," said Orman earlier in a telephone interview.

But, she added, "if you don't understand the power of God within yourself, you will never have what you should have, and even if you have it, you're not going to keep it."

Eugene Lindsey listened Thursday as Orman offered ways to raise your credit rating and reasons to buy your own home. "I'm working on it," said the Columbus, Ohio, resident.

MegaFest is about emotional growth as well as spiritual and financial growth. Cassandra Francis, 35, a new transplant to Lawrenceville, felt desperate and needed help. The mother of six is newly separated from her husband of 10 years and needed to find a job and some counseling.

MegaFest helped with both. Francis attended a workshop for couples led by Judge Mablean Ephriam (of television's "Divorce Court") and was able to share a private word with T.D. Jakes' wife, Serita Jakes, the "first lady" of MegaFest, who advised her how long it will take to find a job in Atlanta.

"She put her hands on me and told me it would take five weeks," said Francis, who brought five of her children to the festival.

"I feel much better."

Food drive: Cooked veggies wanted

► Continued from G1

So far, the fourth annual campaign, sponsored by the Atlanta Community Food Bank and The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, has collected 3,679 pounds of produce for distributing to area nonprofits, such as the shelter. But that's about 10,000 pounds shy of the collection at this time last year, because of this summer's weather, program coordinator Fred Conrad says.

Since its second fire July 21, Clifton has been temporarily housed at Epworth United Methodist Church on McLendon Avenue.

The first fire started in the Connecticut Avenue building's basement and was quickly extinguished, but electrical, water and sewer lines were damaged.

Three days later, someone again entered the same area in the middle of the night and started a fire.

This time, the church sustained structural damage, heavy smoke damage and the loss of most of its office and kitchen equipment.

No injuries were reported, and the Atlanta Fire Department has ruled both fires arson.

"They did this to us twice and could have killed everyone here," Davies-Venn says. "It's been really sad."

Repairs and renovations, which could take six months, are pending the outcome of the investigation and insurance claims, he says.

In the meantime, shelter managers are grateful for their temporary housing but,

DROP-OFF SITES

The following organizations accept donations of fresh produce. Call ahead for directions and hours of operation.

► **Bartow:** Hickory Log Vocational School. Greg Flowers, 770-382-6655

► **Clayton:** Alzheimer's Support Center. Ann Jenkins, 770-603-4090

► **Cherokee:** Must Ministries. Dale Cooper, 770-479-5397

► **Cobb:** Cobb Family Resource Center. Laura Mauldin, 770-428-2601

► **Coweta:** Salvation Army Service Center. Newnan. Carlus Phillips, 770-251-8181

► **DeKalb:** United Methodist Children's Home. Angela Bra- dlee, 404-327-5856

► **Douglas:** Racham Foundation. Jennifer Seymour, 770-489-1819, Ext. 46

► **Fayette:** Fayette Samaritans, 126 Hickory Road, Fayetteville. Lena Slaughter, 770-719-2707

► **Fayette:** Fayette Youth Protection Home. June Collins, 770-460-6652

► **Forsyth:** The Place of Forsyth County. Sandy Beaver, 770-887-1098

► **Fulton:** Atlanta Community Food Bank. Fred Conrad, 404-892-3333

► **Fulton:** North Fulton Community Charities. Susan Lenio, 770-640-0399

► **Gwinnett:** Annandale Village at Suwanee. Brenda Young, 770-932-4882

► **Hall:** Good News at Noon. David or Anita White, 770-503-1366

► **Henry:** A Friend's House. Christi Martin- eze, 678-432-1518

► **Newton:** Rainbow Community Center. Clara Lett, 770-787-8519

► **Paulding:** Helping Hands of Paulding. Margarette Thompson, 770-443-1230

► **Rockdale:** Elks Aidmore. Vicki Hale, 770-483-3535, Ext. 27

► **Spalding:** 5 Loaves & 2 Fishes. Eddie Whitlock, 770-412-7479

SHARING THE HARVEST

GOAL
20,000 lbs.

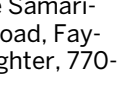
15,000 lbs.

10,000 lbs.

5,000 lbs.

3,679 lbs.

0



with limited facilities, need cooked food. Currently, donations are warmed in a small kitchen for serving lunch to the mostly disabled or down-and-out men who frequent the shelter by day.

"The vegetables were just so helpful," Davies-Venn says. "We were able to use

them every day when they were coming in and relied on them heavily for giving the men good nutritional food. But with no storage, we can't do that."

Anyone wanting to donate cooked vegetables should call the shelter at 404-664-6294.

ASO: Attendance dips for classical concerts

► Continued from G1

The most expensive seats (in the Symphony Hall loge) have nudged upward in price by a few dollars per season, while the lower-priced seats (in the rear balcony) have remained steady. On average, ASO ticket prices have increased 1 percent to 2 percent over the past seven years, he says.

Wade analyzes the decline as a dip rather than a trend. He points out that subscription renewals for this coming season — one predictor of overall attendance — are higher than they've been in the past eight years.

The ASO had more than 8,900 subscribers for its main season of classical concerts in 2004-05. The 2005-06 season opens Sept. 15.

Julia Kirchhausen, a spokeswoman for American Symphony Orchestra League, a trade group in New York, says the Atlanta Symphony's drop might be part of a national audience decline that started about five years ago.

"We're not sure if it's something above and beyond the recessionary economy, or if larger factors are at work," she says.

"Orchestras make commitments far in advance, so the elements of artistic vision, planning, marketing and fund-raising affect each other

over many years. It's tough to untangle any one element."

Atlanta's drop in attendance comes as a surprise, given that since 2001, when Robert Spano took over as ASO music director, the orchestra has seen a rapid rise in artistic quality, progressive programming and national prestige.

Its fund-raising drive to build the \$300 million Symphony Center — an origami-styled piece of sculpture designed by Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava, with a deluxe concert hall inside — has added long-range creative focus.

In February, the ASO announced it had raised a third of the new hall's cost.

