

FOURTH ISSUE | 2021

UNDRGRND

SinCity

BUILDING A MUSIC CAREER
IN LAS VEGAS

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ALSO

IS VEGAS A
MELTING POT
OF MUSIC?



ARTIST
HAVEN



G-SKY



BEHIND
THE MIC
W/ KING
WEST\$IDE



1K
KAREEMA
L.V. PROFIT
ZELLY VIBES
LEROYCHOPS
NIDIA MARTINEZ



702



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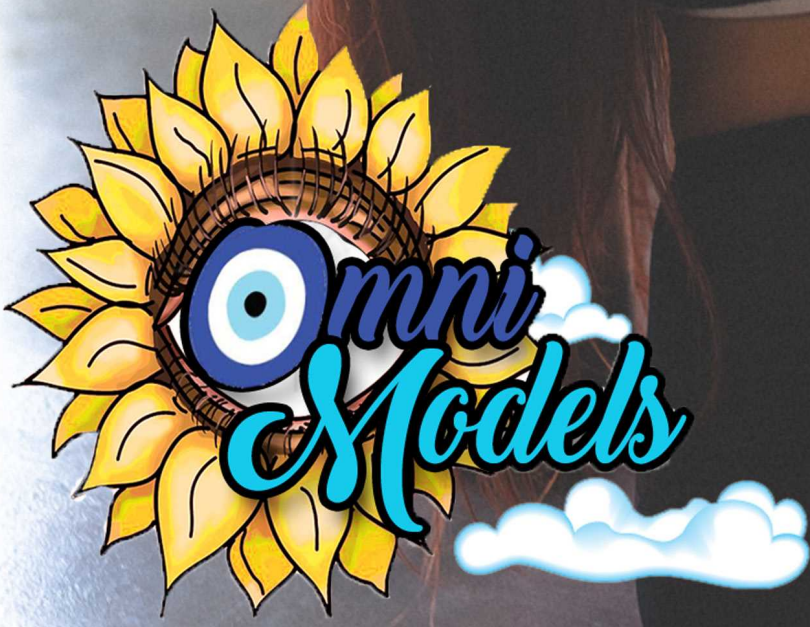


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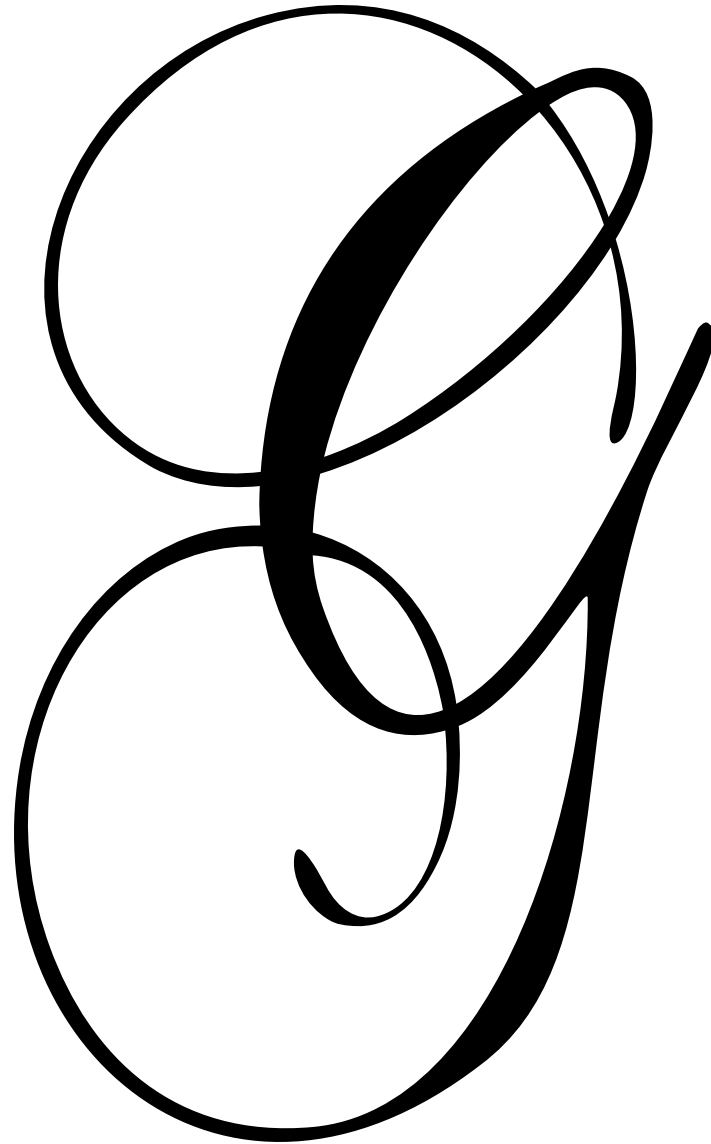
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EDITORIAL

What Happens in Vegas...

Welcome to the first out-of-state issue of UNDRGRND Magazine! Taking the movement to a city far from “The 805” has been a goal for Pofsky and myself for over a year now. And while the soul of UNDRGRND remains in Southern California, it was time to challenge ourselves with something new, something bigger, something more extreme.

Las Vegas stood out to us as our target location for three main reasons. First, it was close enough for our Issue 4 team to drive to and from with relative ease. As anyone from “The Five” who’s spent a weekend or two in Vegas knows, it’s not too grueling of a trek.

Second, we knew a journalist out in “Sin City” who could take on the majority of the journalism legwork — interviews, transcribing, truly building the narrative of the local music community that this issue presents. Cue Sean Golonka, a 21-year-old Vegas-based reporter for *The Nevada Independent* who I first met back in 2018 in Boston University’s journalism program.

And finally, Vegas’ underground music scene has the talent and a story we couldn’t help but document. Like those in our first three magazines, these six “Sin City” artists on the rise are grinding at their music careers on a daily basis. Studio sessions, music videos, networking, social media marketing — all out of pocket and without a major team or label backing their work. Outside of the studio, they play different roles: restaurant supervisor, aspiring real estate agent, sports book manager, health care worker, and for some, parent. “The 805” and Vegas’s music scenes certainly have one thing in common — a “grind to the top” mentality.

But the environments couldn’t be more different. Vegas is a landscape built and ran on the entertainment industry. It’s a city that raised rap stars like Baby Keem, Yowda, and Dizzy Wright and has hosted residencies for music icons Drake, Céline Dion, Whitney Houston, Lady Gaga, Usher, Bruno Mars — you get the point. Figuring out a formula to stand out amongst the rest in Vegas is...rough.

However, Zelly Vibes, 1K, Kareema, Nidia Martinez, LEROYCHOPS, and the Las Vegas Profit are perfect examples — or *subjects*, in the journalism world — of those who seem to be getting the hang of it.

While all must work hard to continue growing their skills and fan bases, these six are already on their way to making impressive marks in “The 702’s” local music scene. Not easy in a place with so many other entertainment options pushed at an aggressive pace.

The strategies these artists employ to build their careers are so unique to Vegas. Singing for tips on The Strip, using engineers and recording studios located right on Las Vegas Boulevard, performing at a Fremont Street venue in Downtown. All of this and more is what awaits you as you read through this issue.


So if you live in the Las Vegas Valley area, get ready to meet some pretty dope people living in your backyard. And if you’re from “The 805” or elsewhere, prepare to visit Vegas like you never have before.

**Welcome to “Sin City”
— and yeah, it’s f*cking hot here.**

Andrew Mason


**ANDREW MASON
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**



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Photos by Luizzy G



2021 | UNDRGRND 6



IF I CAN BE THE ONE PERSON TO SOUND DIFFERENT ON EVERY VERSE,
THAT WOULD BE TIGHT. LIKE, I COULD BE A ONE MAN WU-TANG CLAN.

LEROYCHOPS

STAGE NAME: LEROYCHOPS
HOMETOWN: North Las Vegas
HEIGHT: 5-foot-4-inches
HIGH SCHOOL: Cheyenne High School
COLLEGE: College of Southern Nevada
MUSIC INFLUENCES: Wu-Tang Clan, A Tribe Called Quest,
J Dilla, Outkast
NOTABLE RELEASES: *KARAOKE, THE SOUNDTRACK, Tell
Em Eat A Dick EP*
DREAM FEATURE: Cam ron, Redman, Busta Rhymes,
Murphy Lee
DREAM 702 FEATURE: S-U-PREME, SeDrew Price
FAVORITE 702 VENUE: CMXX DTLV, Sunday Riots by
CIVILIAN Clothing
FAVORITE 702 PRODUCER: Trade Vorhees, T.R@bb

FAVORITE 702 ENGINEER: Too Tone
FAVORITE 702 STUDIO: Junxion Səund
FAVORITE 702 RESTAURANT: Hamburger Hut
FAVORITE 702 PROJECT: *Saturday the 14th* series by
Trade Voorhees
WORST VEGAS ROAD: Martin Luther King Blvd.
OTHER HOBBIES: Skating, video games, being a father
is my main thing that I do that has nothing to do with
musical work

LEROYCHOPS AS A STAGE NAME:

It started off as Bruce Leroy. I realized if you Google that name when I started putting music out, you wouldn't find me until the seventh, eighth page. So, it was a cypher, and one of our boys from our group KILLOFF his name s Jacob he actually was just telling somebody like, ay yo, Leroy chops, like as a statement. I heard him say that out loud, and that sounds tight.

GETTING INTO HIP-HOP:

I just used to watch my brothers and his homeboys do their shit. They showed me how one person can really love the poetry and live the culture of hip-hop, meaning all the points of it — music, breakdancing, graffiti art."

LEARNING TO MAKE MUSIC:

I never could get my hands on instrumentals. I would be listening to albums that were around the house and shit. Of course, they d be like old 90s joints and shit like that. I was fucking listening to em and just writing my own lyrics over the records, trying to make my own songs.

WHAT FANS CAN NEXT EXPECT:

My self-titled album *LEROYCHOPS*. The idea of this album is like, if somebody was to meet me for the first time and we're kicking it. Every record on the album was one conversation we had. And by the end of the album, we just parted from each other. What would you take from that? So it s more so the general perception of who I am.

AVOIDING MAINSTREAM TRENDS:

In the moments where I m working on my shit, I tend to zone myself out to not hear other people. So that when I make my music it doesn t end up having a roll-off of another new artist or new record I just heard.

MAKING MUSIC FOR PERFORMING:

A lot of my performance shit came from rock bands and how they used to perform combined with like 90s artists, definitely Redman and Method Man. Being crowd-oriented, that s what I grew up on a lot, so that s why in my album I want to incorporate that on a lot of records.

BREAKOUT SOLO PERFORMANCE:

At a show, they made me wait, and I had a full set ready. Then they knocked it down to, you only get one song. That was the first time I ever performed the song, and it got everybody to know who I was. It was the first LEROYCHOPS record, the CHOPthys record. Everybody was like, that s your song.

BUILDING A UNIQUE SOUND:

If I can be the one person to sound different on every verse, that would be tight. Like, I could be a one man Wu-Tang Clan.

MUSICAL INFLUENCES OUTSIDE OF HIP-HOP:

Understanding that you can make a short dope-ass record, I learned that from Korn s *Life Is Peachy* and shit like that. Like you can make an ill-ass record, and that shit could be like a minute and 49 seconds, or like two minutes and 10 seconds. It would be like, oh shit, they were able to do all of that in this much time.



ArtHaven

By Sean Golonka

From helping one friend to uplifting the entire Las Vegas art community

Go to any local art event in Las Vegas, and there's a good chance you'll run into Dax Miller. The 41 year old from Santa Rosa, California runs ArtHaven, a support group of creatives who help Vegas artists by attending their events and offering free services such as photography, videography, and social media exposure.

"Show up. Love. Support," is the mantra," Miller says.

But the man behind ArtHaven (also known as "The Artist Haven") hasn't always had such deep ties to the Vegas art scene. He moved to Southern Nevada in 2012 to take a job at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, where he still works in the research division.

A couple years after that, Miller offered his best friend, Jordan, who lived in Maryland, a place to stay at his home in Vegas. It was here when Miller started a business to help his friend kickstart his art career.

"That's sort of like the seed of what it was," Miller says. "I was trying to help my best friend out."

Miller believed in Jordan as an artist, and he didn't want his friend to have to worry about the business side of the come up. So he stepped in to fill that role.

"I personally believe that if you find success in your artwork, you'll find success in life," Miller says. "In the very beginning, I didn't know any artists. I was just helping my friend. I paid the business license fee, and now I have this business. But how am I actually going to help artists?"

Miller started attending more conventions and shows throughout the city, asking artists what they wanted and how he could help them. For many, that was simply taking pictures and videos and promoting them on social media.

Over time, his photography improved and Miller found more ways to produce content to show off people's art. He connected with more creators and inevitably ingrained himself into the Vegas art community.

"The ArtHaven Instagram is a progression. It is the story," he says of the account's impressive documentation.

Miller's ArtHaven has foundations beyond a desire to help one friend, though. Miller says he grew up surrounded by oil paintings made by his grandmother, something that gave him a soft spot for art and that he now considers a privilege looking back as an adult. He also has a unique set of views on art that are reflected in his passion and love for the local community of creators.


"It's this weird paradox as an artist because that's a piece of you, like you created this thing, it's uniquely yours," Miller says. "It's very personal, but then when you let it go, that's when it becomes art. And you're vulnerable because you're letting a piece of yourself go, but also immortal because nobody can ever take that away from you."

That's part of the reason he remains so vigilant and focused on the original goal of ArtHaven as a volunteer outlet to aid artists on the rise. Miller spends hours of his week immersed in the city's art community, but he's not alone on that front. He notes others that also push the 702 community forward: Tuesday Blend, the CMXX crew, Industry Supporting Industry, DJ Crykit, and more.

"Show up. Love. Support," he says. "The mission, it's never really changed."



**“SHOW UP.
LOVE.
SUPPORT.”**



“I needed to pay my bills so I just went to The Strip and Fremont and I would just sing for tips.”

ZELLY

LEGAL NAME: Itzel Rodriguez

STAGE NAME: Zelly Vibes

AGE: “I’m old enough”

ZODIAC SIGN: Libra (“I’m just so creative”)

HOMETOWN: Las Vegas (born in CA)

HEIGHT: 5-feet

HIGH SCHOOL: “I was so bad I went to like four different schools”

COLLEGE: College of Southern Nevada

OTHER JOB: Self-employed (runs Fina 11)

MUSIC INFLUENCES: Selena

NOTABLE RELEASES: “Rompiendo,”
“Money Dance,” “OMG”

DREAM FEATURE: Drake

DREAM 702 FEATURE: The Killers

FAVORITE 702 VENUE: House of Blues

FAVORITE 702 PRODUCER:

Zach Black Diamonds

FAVORITE 702 ENGINEER: Kenechi

FAVORITE 702 STUDIO:

Workflow Productions

FAVORITE 702 RESTAURANT: Osaka

NEXT UP OUT OF VEGAS: Lurk Franklin,
Ninety6Miles, papichuloteej

WORST VEGAS ROAD: Charleston

WORST JOB: Call center

OTHER HOBBIES: Fashion, reading,
photography

VIBES



MAKING A LIVING AS AN ARTIST:

"I needed to pay my bills so I just went to The Strip and Fremont and I would just sing for tips. I ended up making more money than I was making — I was making like \$40 to \$50 an hour just singing."

GROWING UP A PERFORMER:

"I was like 11, and I was already making money. Like I used to sing with mariachi bands, I used to sing at restaurants. I've performed in every single casino you can think of, private parties, schools. I would miss school to go sing at schools. I've sang for so many events and stuff since I was little, so that's really what got me in the scene."

TRANSITION FROM SPANISH TO ENGLISH MUSIC:

"I took a whole year, 2015 to 2016, to find myself, find my sound, and it was so depressing. Like, I was really high-key going through it, you know, I was really going through it, and then I stumbled across this beat. My first song that I released for English music was "Heavy Submarine." I remember just listening to the song, I was like, 'this is it, like this is, I like this.' It was a proud moment."

DEALING WITH HATE ONLINE:

"Instead of focusing on the people who are not supporting you, focus on those people who are. Even if it's one person commenting on your music, there's gonna be another one and another one. You know what I mean, like, it's not easy. I'm a human being. Bro, like I just had to read a lot, find answers within myself. I read a lot of self help books and that really helped me to become stronger mentally."

MAKING ENERGETIC MUSIC:

"The style of music that I go towards is, 'yeah, I talk my shit but it's not because I'm arrogant,' you know, which is still hip-hop. It's like more for me, it's empowering music, you know, for men and women, and myself. So I wanted to perform and feel people's energy and feel happy and let go and jump around and shit like that. That's how I started making turn-up music."

MUSIC VIDEOS:

"I have a lot of fun just coming up with the ideas. I'm very open to working with directors. I do like to push boundaries with the videos. I love putting the storyline together. I also have a passion for film and photography."

FEELING COMFORTABLE ON STAGE:

"I think I'm a performer, that's why I love studying Michael Jackson. I love Beyoncé, Selena — they're like my top three performers, and I study them. Like I literally watch Michael Jackson videos every night. I'm so passionate about performing. I get to be face to face with my supporters. I love sharing that energy because at that one moment, you're there with them, like it's present, nothing else matters."

BUILDING A PLATFORM OUTSIDE OF MUSIC:

"You're an artist, you're always trying to create something. So I created this blog where I would just share makeup tips, I would share quotes, like it was a whole bunch of stuff. Right now, I'm focusing on my music, and I'm selling clothes, so I have an online shop. It's called Fina 11, it's clothing for women."

FAVORITE THING ABOUT VEGAS:

"There's always opportunity to make money."



FASHION

"Kareema's fit makes you wanna get your act together. With the red top tucked in the leather skirt and rockin' the black heels, she means business! Take note of how the accessories (the shades, hoop earrings, bracelets) aren't too little or too much, but just right to give you the full effect. The definition of a boss look."



"Reppin' hard for the city of sin! LEROYCHOPS steppin' up to the plate sporting the Las Vegas 51s throwback baseball jersey. From one father to another, you gotta put some respect on the Lefty's Lounge dad hat. I really fuck with the digital gold watch — anything that looks vintage is a go for me."



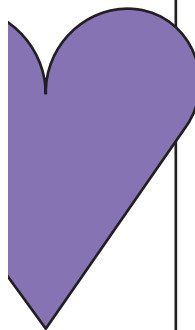
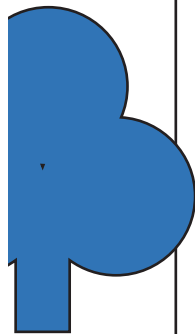
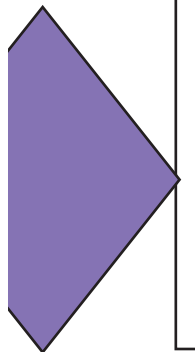
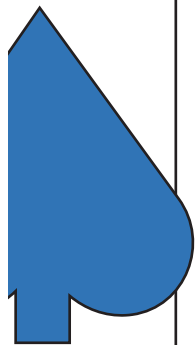
"You've heard of the phrase, 'less is more?' Well, my man Profit is making it look simple with this black "murdered out" look. He had the sense to tie it together with the classic Air Force 1's and white Nationals logo on the fitted. Even the details on the jewelry — from the silver belt buckle, watch, chain, and diamond earrings — just sings 'so fresh and so clean, clean!'"



"Not many people can pull off the all white fit, but Nidia makes it look effortless. This matching top and pants is the kind of wardrobe you wear to make your presence felt, and do it elegantly. The pink electric guitar compliments this fit well and completes the look. We rockin' with you, Nidia!"



SENSE



"1K dons a dope all black fit, a style that's known to never let down. The "Friends" shirt, the ripped jeans, and the carbon Yeezy 350s suit him well. And you can't ignore the subtle addition of the gold chain that completes an already clean look. A friendly aesthetic that remains professional. Cliche to say, but 1K looking like a million bucks."



"Straight from the jump, no one can rock this fit better than Zelly! Starting with the throwback FILA shoes and the unbuttoned high waist jeans, complemented with the patch of The Virgin of Guadalupe. Tying that into the Mexico dad hat and the sexy fur top, this outfit goes hand in hand with her Latin music sound. Now this is what you call future vintage!"



Photos by Luizzy G



Building an image in "Sin City" takes time and effort. In a town known for its confident flashiness and bold personalities, your look needs to hit as much as the songs you release. Luckily, the six artists featured in this issue dress the part, boasting strong visual appearances that appropriately stack up to their goals in the local music scene.

To break down Issue 4's eye-catching wardrobes, we called upon two gentlemen who have proved to the UNDRGRND world that they know a thing or two about style. Here's what Issue 3's Rimi (Woodland Hills) and Trey Anthony (Santa Maria) had to say about the fashion sense the Las Vegas roster showed off on photoshoot day.



BEHIND THE MIC WITH KING WEST\$IDE

By Sean Golonka

At the north end of the Las Vegas Strip, where Las Vegas Blvd. intersects Sahara Ave., Tyler Tate works at one of the city's newest dispensaries, Cookies On The Strip. But away from the neon blue lights that cover Berner's new marijuana shop, Tate is building a music career under the name KING WEST\$IDE.

In 2021, the 27-year-old rapper from Antelope Valley, California has released a series of singles – “WEST\$IDE,” “Sumthin 2 Say,” and “Neva Change” – blending his poetry expertise and West Coast influences with an assertive delivery and laid back beats.

But Tate holds dreams beyond weed and music. He sees them both as stepping stones to fulfill his lofty expectations.

“Music is just the gatekeeper,” Tate tells UNDRGRND. We're walking along Fremont St. in Downtown Las Vegas. “I want to try acting. I want to have my own modeling agency. I want to do my own clothing line. It's so many different doors I want to open up, but I feel like music is where I'm more talented. And that will generate the revenue, the network, and everything that I'll need to build those other things.”

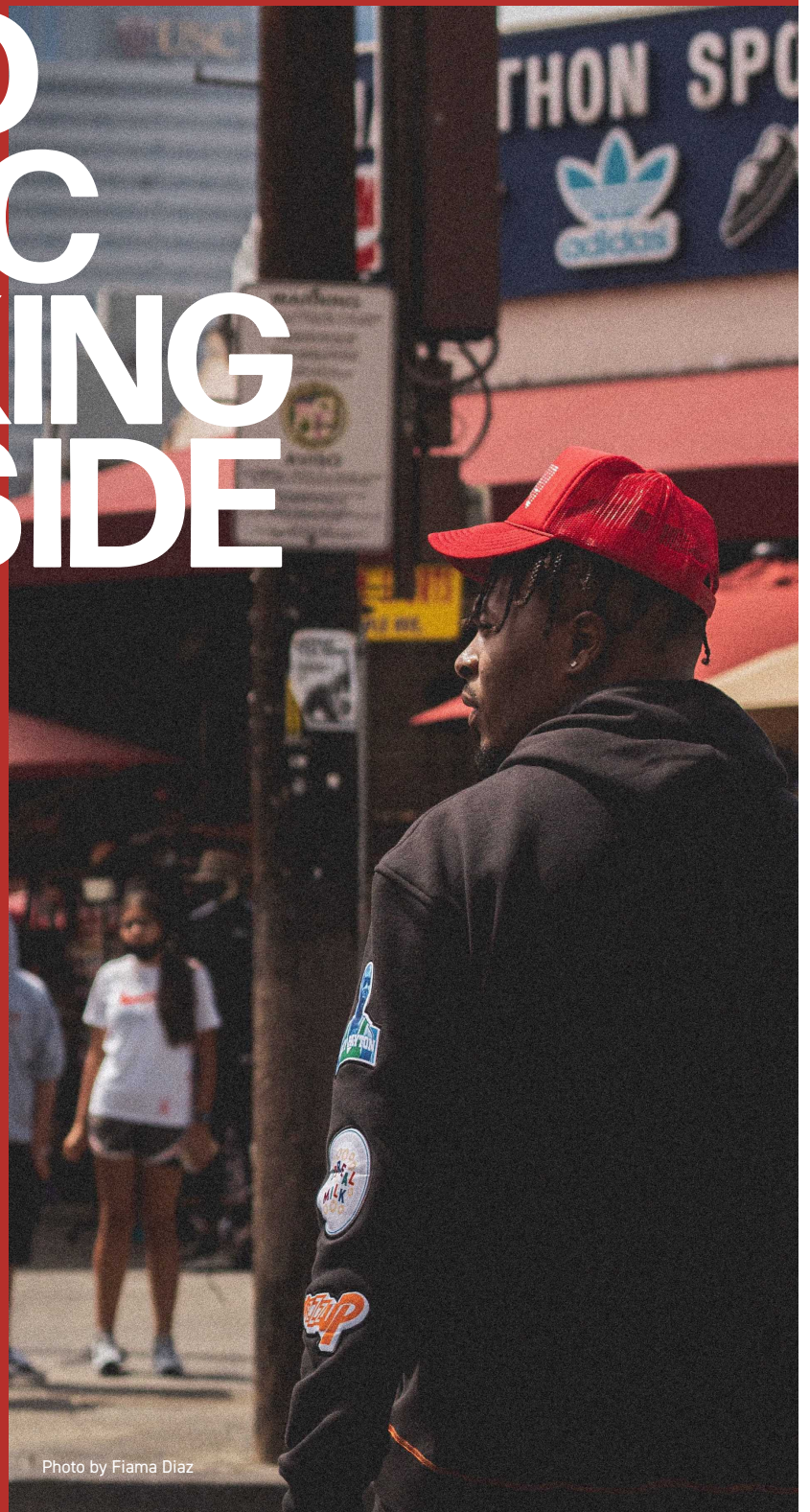


Photo by Fiana Diaz



He sees weed in a similar way. Tate says that he may want to also open a dispensary himself – he has the “cannabis background” to do so.

As Tate works towards a career that spans industries, his focus currently remains on music. He traces his passion for art back to his interest in poetry and English he had in high school. In 2017, Tate performed for the first time, and discovered the possibility for him to pursue a career in music. But in the following years, he struggled to find his footing in the scene.

“I did a whole bunch of shows between 2017 and 2019. And after 2019, I kind of, like, lost my job – lost a whole bunch of shit,” he says. “I had my kids, so I couldn’t really focus on music too much. So then I got into this crazy depression, bro. I felt like I wasn’t gonna do music no more.”

Tate said through listening to Nipsey Hussle – his favorite artist – and other poetic hip-hop artists, he was encouraged to get out of a mindset that was plagued by turmoil. Since, Tate has reignited his career. In February, he dropped “WEST\$IDE,” his first single of this new chapter in his life. “I know it’s been a minute, ni**a / but I’m back to talk my shit,” he raps on the opening lines.

As Tate looks ahead to his future ventures that involve movies and modeling and fashion, he promises to drop more new music in 2021. Music, he says, that is undoubtedly his own.

“You don’t always have to throw yourself into a wave that’s already there,” he says. “Make music the way you want to make it, and 90 percent of the time it’s gonna come out 100 times better.”



Photo by Fiana Diaz



Photo by Cryptic Visions

1K

1K



1K

1K

"I'VE NEVER BEEN MORE SERIOUS AND FOCUSED AND AT A POINT WHERE I HAVE CONTROL OF MY CAREER."

LEGAL NAME: Michael Smith
STAGE NAME: 1K
AGE: 29
HOMETOWN: Born in Las Vegas, raised in Los Angeles
HEIGHT: 6-feet
HIGH SCHOOL: Durango
COLLEGE: Santa Monica College, West Los Angeles College
OTHER JOB: Sports book supervisor at Resorts World
MUSIC INFLUENCES: Nas, Kanye West, 2Pac
NOTABLE RELEASES: "Bike\$, "I'm Juss Saiyan," *Free*
NOTABLE MUSIC MOMENT: First ever solo performance

DREAM FEATURE: J. Cole
DREAM 702 FEATURE: Dizzy Wright
FAVORITE 702 VENUE: Backstage Bar & Billiards
FAVORITE 702 PRODUCER: "I'd give it to myself right now bro"
FAVORITE 702 STUDIO: The Gas Station Studios
FAVORITE 702 PROJECT: *The Golden Age* by Dizzy Wright
FAVORITE 702 RESTAURANT: Biwon Korean BBQ
WORST VEGAS ROAD: Eastern
WORST JOB: Ralph's or 99 Cents Store warehouse
OTHER HOBBIES: Sports, photography, "raising my son, being a parent"



MOVING FROM LA TO VEGAS:

"Honestly, just to have structure for me and my son. Even with music being the dream, my responsibility at the end of the day is my son. That's like my inspiration."

THE MEANING BEHIND YOUR NAME:

"1K is literally like the 'ik' in Mike, you know what I'm sayin'. It's kind of like what's inside of me – the 'M and E,' you feel me?"

ALMOST QUITTING MUSIC:

"I just got to a point where I was frustrated, like, 'fuck man this shit is not working out, the music stuff. I got to get things right for my son and stuff like that.' So I kind of gave up, but when you have a pattern or something, it's kind of hard to give up. So it's never like I stopped writing stuff. What I started kind of getting into was helping people with their music videos."

FINDING THE MOTIVATION TO KEEP MAKING MUSIC:

"Everyone's like, 'bro you one of the dopest artists that we know. You're probably one of the most passionate people about music we know, so you shouldn't just give up on something you're passionate about at the end of the day.' So I just kind of stuck with that."

DAILY ROUTINE:

"I get up at 8:30am really quick, take my son to school by 9. I come home and like, knock out. Go to work at 2pm, get off about 10, go pick him up. I'm at the house about 11, alright boom, put him to sleep, everything's good. Then I'm in the studio from 12am to 4."

LEARNING ABOUT THE INDUSTRY:

"Little mistakes that I would make, those used to frustrate me. You know, not getting the beats and getting stuff really cleared from the producers, and not understanding fully that exchange. And also not really knowing where to place your stuff correctly, and how to make money off it correctly and stuff like that. I started learning as I started making mistakes."

MAKING THE FREE EP:

"This was my, 'aye you know I'm back, I'm making music and I'm coming stronger than I ever have.' Like, I've never been more serious and focused and at a point where I have control of my career."

WHAT FANS CAN EXPECT NEXT:

"I'm really calling it an EP, but basically it's an album that I'm teasing. It's called *Villains*. It's a turnt look at going down the abyss, you know what I'm saying? It's kind of giving you the darker side of things."

WHO'S THE GOAT?:

"Don't ask me about Nas versus Jay-Z. Nas is the best rapper ever."

THE WRITING PROCESS:

"Apparently I've never written a bad verse, but that's real shit. My favorite part is just writing, you know, writing bars, killer shit. Even when I'm not writing something for myself, I've always liked writing just good songs or good music. I like a catchiness to it, some punchlines and verb play."

FAVORITE THING ABOUT VEGAS:

"Open 24/7."



1K

BUILDING A MUSIC CAREER IN

With a range of unique sounds and styles, Las Vegas artists are putting on for their city as they pursue individual stability in the developing local music scene.

By Sean Golonka

Throughout the Las Vegas Valley, more than two million residents and thousands of visitors labor through 115 degree heat, spending millions of dollars each day in one of the world's most active entertainment hubs. It's certainly easy to be trapped by the glitz and glam of the Las Vegas Strip. The Bellagio fountains. The towering Stratosphere. The Luxor Sky Beam. Iconic Caesar's Palace.

But the city's relentless hospitality industry blinds what lies behind this mainstream flashy front — a burgeoning local art and culture scene.

Vegas is a city of hustlers, and the artists in Issue 4: "Sin City" understand that all too well. They spend their time proving themselves and elevating the city's unique music community, all while hustling day in and day out to stay afloat in the fast-paced and expensive landscape.

Sin City



LEROYCHOPS embodies this spirit fully. On an uncomfortably hot — yes, uncomfortable even for Vegas — June night in his North Vegas backyard, he tells **UNDRGRND** about growing up on the north side of the city. He says he first learned about the local rap scene when he was attending Cheyenne High School. From his older brother and his friends, he learned about the culture of hip-hop that stretches beyond rapping, like graffiti art and skating videos.

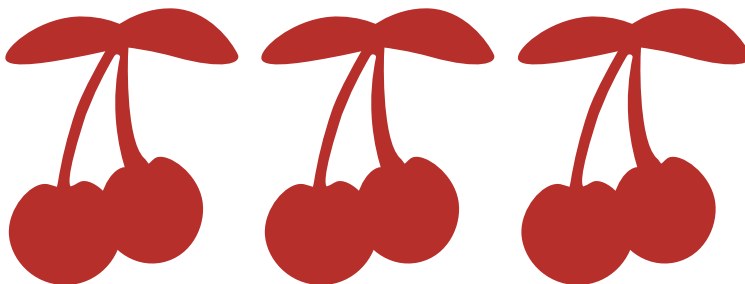
His North Vegas background blends with his 90s and West Coast rap influences in the music he makes today, and his sound has been a staple of the local rap scene for years. But others who grew up in Vegas have had completely different experiences on their paths to creating music. **LEROYCHOPS** recognizes those differences in the variety of musicians across "The 702."

"Our sound is an auditory version of what our city really is — it's just diverse," he says. "That's how I kinda look at it, especially from all the Vegas artists I've heard."



Nidia Martinez, who was born in Washington but raised in Vegas, grew up surrounded by music. Her mother was a singer and her father pursued a music career in Los Angeles while Martinez was young. The 23-year-old singer/songwriter sang in school choirs and even attended the Las Vegas Academy of the Arts, a premiere magnet high school that requires an audition to be accepted into the program. Today, she sings R&B and alternative soul music and plays the guitar.

"In high school, I started taking [music] a little bit more seriously," Martinez says. "I was signed to this, like, fake record label that we created. It was pretty cool, they had me record my best songs. They did photoshoots, and they got me gigs, like I performed at the Foundation Room at the House of Blues Las Vegas."



Las Vegas Profit, who attended Clark High School near the famous Las Vegas Strip, had some limited experience freestyling at parties and even less in an actual studio. But less than a year ago, he put pen to paper, set up a studio in his home and began putting in the work it takes to start a serious music career. He is known for making songs inspired by a myriad of rappers, including Ice Cube, King Lil G, Wiz Khalifa and Lil Baby.

Profit says that while the underground scene is hectic and high-speed, the Salinas, California-born rapper has been surprised by the support Vegas musicians show each other.

"It's more collaborative," says Profit, 21. "I thought it was gonna be a competition at first. But then I started stepping out here, you know, like I'm doing features with people. And like some people are reaching out to me, I'm reaching out to them, and everything goes cool."



Vegas' music community is also shaped by those who moved there as adults. New residents flock to Southern Nevada for the city life, sunshine, school, the cost of living, and financial stability. As more people from around the world come to Vegas with microphones, instruments and beats ready to show off, the city's sound is further widened.

Kareema Walters (a.k.a "Kareema"), 26, moved to the Las Vegas Valley from Long Island, New York in August 2020. She sings an old-school style of R&B that isn't often found in the Southwestern city. But her vintage East Coast style is what helped her find her role in "Sin City's" underground community.

"It's just so open, like everybody's so open-minded and just carefree," she tells UNDRGRND. "And I love that shit because I don't get that shit back home."

Vegas isn't a city full of trappers or drill artists or boom bap rappers. It isn't Atlanta or Chicago or New York, and is certainly cut from a different cloth than UNDRGRND's home of "The 805." But as with every scene across the world, the artists in Vegas must figure out how to not only survive, but to stand out amongst the rest.

Itzel Rodriguez (a.k.a. "Zelly Vibes") worked as an assistant manager in a retail store before losing her job in 2017. In order to make money, she relied on her voice, going to The Strip and Fremont Street to sing for tips.

From there, Rodriguez only continued to grind as an artist. She performs and saves money for flashy music videos and even has her own online fashion shop. She points out that she is not alone in being an up-and-coming artist currently making a living in the valley.

"There are so many amazing, talented artists, and I don't mean just artists who perform music," she says. "We have amazing photographers, videographers. We have rock bands, R&B and turn-up artists, and amazing lyrical rappers. We have stylists and designers. It's Vegas. It's like a little melting pot of different spices and flavors."



One musician who balances the line between lyrical and turn-up rap is Michael Smith (a.k.a. "1K"). Smith bounced between Vegas and Southern California throughout his life, but settled in Vegas a few years ago to find structure for him and his son. Since then, he has been completely in tune with the city. He's worked at the Luxor and the brand new Resorts World as a sports book manager, while continuously building his rap career.

When he committed himself to pursue music as a way to become financially stable, Smith says he set himself a goal of putting in 10,000 hours to perfect his craft. With that goal in mind, he's spent day after day in the studio from midnight to 4am. But his grind outside of music remains the same.

"I go to work every single day and work eight hours for somebody that's paying me a check to pay my bills," the 29 year old says. "Then from that, you're supposed to find a way to pay yourself. I need to pay myself in time, you know? Like, I need to honestly put time into the things that I want in my life."

Like Smith, the rest of the "Sin City" cast are underground artists operating independently. They have to find ways to support themselves everyday, all without a label backing their efforts and releases. Martinez works two jobs and recently got her real estate license. Profit is a supervisor at a local restaurant. Walters works in health care. Rodriguez says that finessing ways to make money is an essential part of the city's culture.

"If you're not getting money in Vegas, that's crazy," she says. "Like, I proved it. Anyone can do what I did. There are people now that can go dress up in a costume and go to The Strip and make fucking money. You can learn a skill. You can go on Craigslist, work at conventions, work at casinos. It won't be your ideal job, but I feel like there's always something."

Some, like Rodriguez and Smith, are focused on creating more music and showing off their versatility. Walters says she is working on asserting herself as an artist through performing more and releasing better music. Profit sees his music career as a hustle to build a good life for not only himself, but his daughter too. Martinez says she has dreams of starting a publishing company and building a platform to showcase other Vegas talent — she even put on her first event in October 2020.

And LEROYCHOPS is out to prove not only his own skills, but also the versatility of the city he grew up in and has ingrained in his DNA. As he said through our Issue 4 photoshoot day in June 2021, "we the muthafuckin' greatest." And these six artists are on their way to proving just that.





Photos by Luizzy G





Photos by Luizzy G



LEGAL NAME: Nidia Martinez

AGE: 23

HOMETOWN: Las Vegas (born in Yakima, Washington)

HEIGHT: 5-foot-3-inches

HIGH SCHOOL: Las Vegas Academy

COLLEGE: College of Southern Nevada

OTHER JOB: Restaurant hostess (I also just got my real estate license)

MUSIC INFLUENCES: Frank Ocean

NOTABLE MUSIC MOMENT: Performing at a cathedral in Spain with her high school choir

NOTABLE RELEASES: Inhale Exhale, Give Myself Away, Think You d Do Better (feat. Toryon)

DREAM FEATURE: Frank Ocean

DREAM 702 FEATURE: B. Rose

FAVORITE 702 VENUE: Fergusons Downtown

FAVORITE 702 STUDIO: Junxion Sønd

FAVORITE 702 PROJECT: *The Melting Thot* by cuddlethot

FAVORITE 702 RESTAURANT: Lazeez Grill

NEXT UP OUT OF VEGAS: Reagan Capaci

WORST VEGAS ROAD: Las Vegas Blvd.

WORST JOB: A restaurant in the Venetian

OTHER HOBBIES:

I would like to get back into doing yoga



WOULD YOU EVER LEAVE VEGAS?:

"Next year, [my boyfriend and I] would like to transition to LA. It's so close, and I feel like it would be easy to take what we've learned here and apply it in LA at a bigger scale. One of the issues with Vegas is just lack of opportunity. Yeah, we can release music, make music here, but it kind of caps out at that."

MUSIC AS A GREATER PURPOSE:

"I just find that no matter what I do, I'm always drawn back to music. It just, it feels inevitable, and I feel like it was something that was instilled in me."

FAVORITE PART OF MAKING MUSIC:

"My favorite part is writing the song. I think that I thrive the most when it's just me and my guitar, and just letting the inhibitions come out. It's just super raw."

DREAMS OF STARTING A PUBLISHING COMPANY:

"It would be a cool opportunity for people here in Vegas because I know that there's so much potential — there's so much here. So I would like to just give artists a platform here."

WORKING WITH OTHER ARTISTS:

"I think what I bring to the table the most is inclusivity, kindness, positivity, authenticity, and love. And I'm willing to work with anybody, like I am so willing to be a part of someone's growth or of someone's foundation. I have no preference, and I don't judge others based on clout."

PLAYING THE GUITAR:

"When I write a song on guitar, there's not really a structure or a pattern. It's more of a feeling. And I just play the same thing over and over again, and I'll just let it come out."



"I FEEL LIKE I AM THE ONE TO CARRY THE TORCH."

COMING FROM A MUSICAL FAMILY:

"My mom sings, she did more Spanish music — Mariachi and stuff. My dad moved to LA when I was pretty young, and pursued music and stuff. He got pretty far, but then he had other children, so he put it on the back burner. But I feel like I am the one to carry the torch."

LEARNING THE INDUSTRY IN HIGH SCHOOL:

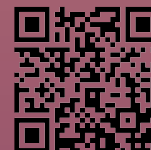
"In high school, I started taking it a little bit more seriously. I was signed to this, like, fake record label that we created. It was a class at LVA. It was pretty cool, they like had me record my best songs. They did photoshoots, and they got me gigs, like I performed at the Foundation Room at the House of Blues."

FINDING INSPIRATION FOR WRITING:

"Creating any type of art, it's well worth the wait if it's, like, intentional. I write music when I'm reflecting. Whether I'm experiencing something that's happening in my life or someone else's life, I try to capture that moment."

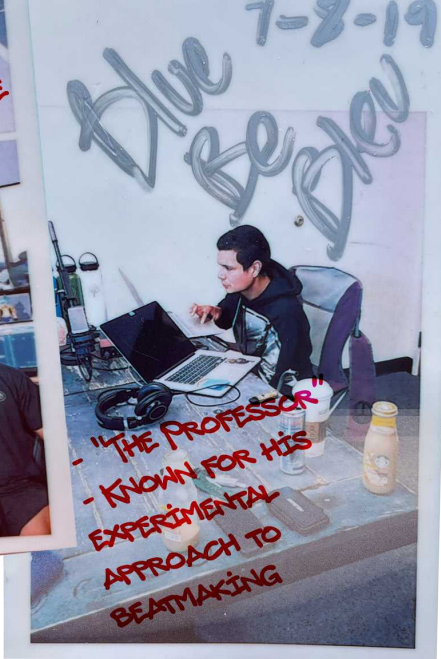
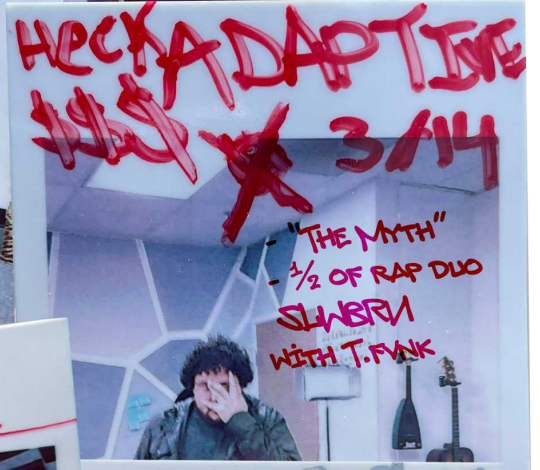
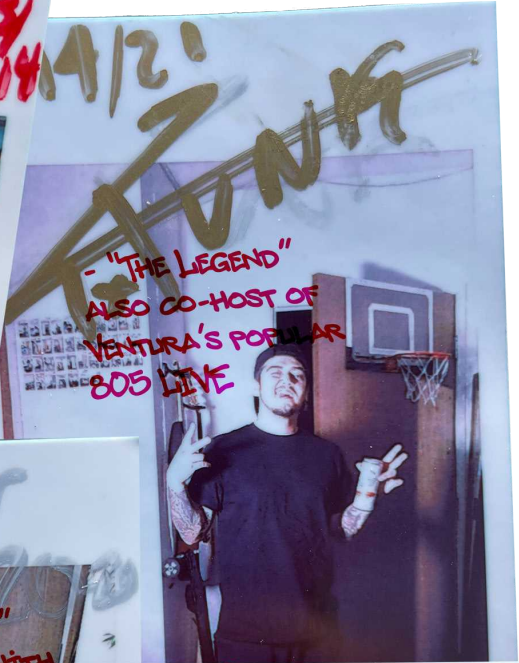
MAKING "ON OUR OWN":

"I wrote that at the beginning of quarantine. The entire world had stopped. But for me, I was so restless. I think that I got carried away with just doing tasks that I couldn't normally do. It finally feels so good to figure things out on my own. Being myself, just taking that time as self care."



THE STU CREW

The members of THE STU CREW are helping to keep the culture of community-based music alive. While all continue to pursue individual solo careers, the eight artists started linking up throughout 2020 off of genuine friendship and a passion for hopping on each others' songs. Now, this growing collective of rappers and producers out of Oxnard, California is ready to drop their second official project later this year — a follow up to the group's April 2021 debut album, **STU CREW TAPES VOL. 1.**



CHILL CACTUS

THE CHILLEST PODCAST
IN THE 805



@jeffrey_ricklin
@chill_cactuss



ADVERTISEMENT



“SCENES COLLIDE”

POV: YOU’VE ARRIVED AT THE ISSUE 3 RELEASE PARTY

by Malcolm Bowman

Ayone who has been to a UNDRGRND show knows that they carry a completely different kind of energy. The Issue 3: “Scenes Collide” magazine release event was nothing short of my expectations. It was the first live event that I’ve been to since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic — also my first time attending an UNDRGRND show in general — so I was pumped. The release was held at “The Lab,” a small spray paint shop with a large backyard that the owners transformed into an impressive 200-person underground music venue. It was in Saticoy, a small unincorporated town located on the outskirts of Ventura.

I walked through the front door and immediately met UNDRGRND’s original founder, Andrew Mason, and was hit with that immense feeling of acceptance and hospitality that isn’t felt at any “mainstream act’s” concert. We’d never met before, but he was treating me like we’d been homies for years. After I checked in with my ticket, I headed further into the venue and the sounds and smells of a live music event all came back to me.

I could hear the bass from the speakers bumping, people laughing. It felt like the world was “normal” again. The first time I found that feeling in a while. I got a quick drink from one of the many dope vendor booths that had been set up, and met up with my good friend and Issue 3 rapper, Knotti. I questioned him with specifics like when he was going up on stage to perform.





Photos by Chris Gonzo and Michael Dean



Soon, the artists started to take the stage and turn up. It was an incredible experience hearing each of the individual styles and flows each had to bring to the table, representing the different cities and music scenes they come from. I specifically remember L.I.R.A., Big Dub, Rimi, and Vanessa Lynnae bringing great energy, and the crowd was having a fantastic time. Everyone was enjoying themselves, in person, as a community, once again.

The sun eventually set behind the Saticoy horizon, and Central Coast artist FYAMOJI took the stage in full rage mode. He, without a doubt, had one of the most memorable performances of the night with high energy beats and using the entire venue as his stage, hopping in and out of the crowd and vendor areas. FYAMOJI takes the rock star title and embraces it fully.

The artist who was least afraid to go all out and put on a show for the UNDRGRND attendees was Nigerian-born rapper, CharQoal. He had the entire space hyped-up with his banger single "Fire in My Soul," and his use of unique pyrotechnics and propane torch connected to a Fender guitar. This was something I — and I can almost guarantee everyone in the audience — had never seen before.

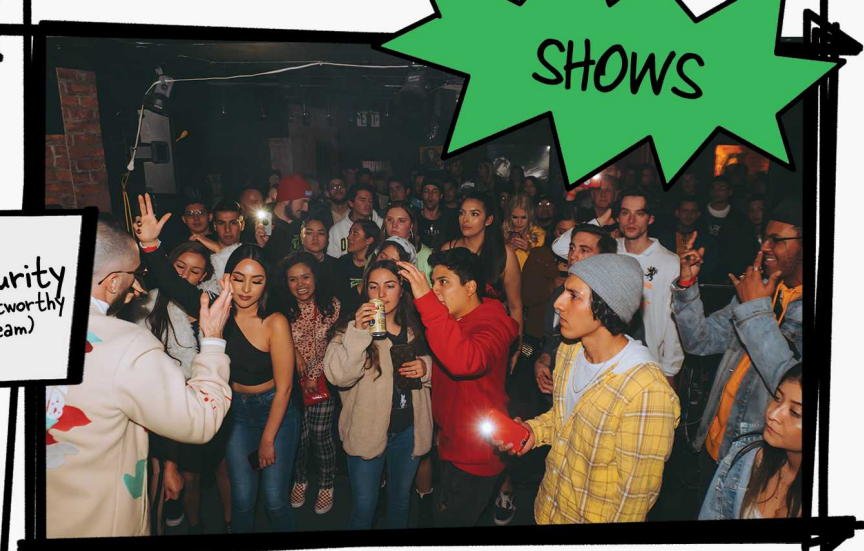
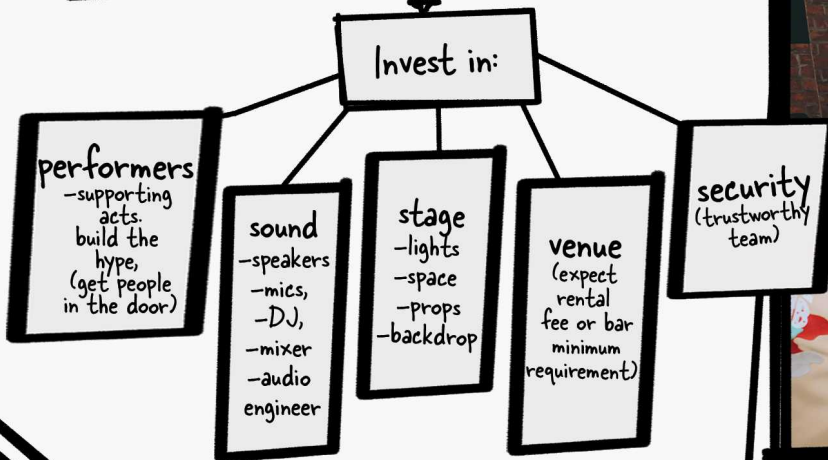
I consider myself fortunate to have witnessed an UNDRGRND show for myself. There's nothing like it, and the community that is a part of it is hard to find. I came with an open mind, not knowing what to expect from a small venue show, and left having one of the best musical experiences I've ever had.



POFSKY'S TIPS FOR THE DEVELOPING ARTIST

You've made some songs and have begun your path as both an artist and a brand owner. Now it's time to take the next steps and start building your empire.

ORGANIZING YOUR OWN SHOWS



*Throwing your own show is always a risk — will you profit or even break even? It's okay if you lose money in this process. We all have. As long as you learn something from each experience and move forward stronger.

Photos by Luizy G, Michael Dean, Andrew Mason, Chandler Martineau

PERFORMING AT OTHER EVENTS

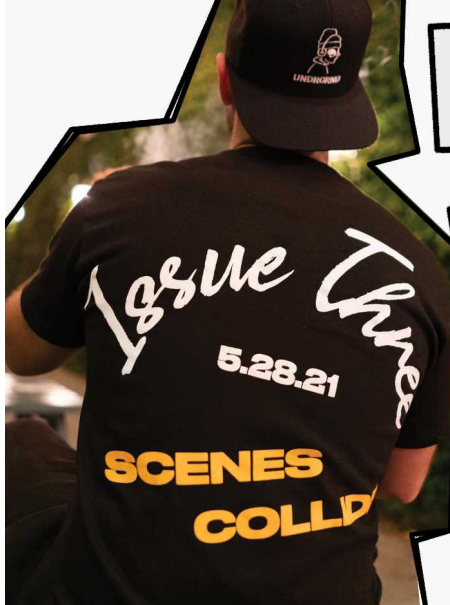
If you book yourself on somebody else's lineup:

avoid "pay to play" systems (at least find events that give you a % of ticket sales)

Does it make sense to play this show? (there is no right answer and only you know what's right for your artist growth.)

*If you don't need to sell tickets to perform, take advantage of doing as many shows as possible. Even a small crowd can grow your fan base by one.

MERCH



Developing "brand identity"

YOU are the brand

T-shirts, hats, stickers are always great — but get CREATIVE! There's an unlimited amount of ways to rep your logo with unique items

*Merch is a great way to make money while in the early stages. Most venues will let you sell merch at any show you do. Just ask



CONTENT & PROMOTION

Don't get stale, especially the socials. Update sites regularly, spice up the content. Invest in:

music videos (KEY!)

regular photoshoots (cool photo spots are available for cheap)

in-studio live performances

Podcasts and radio interviews — TELL YOUR STORY!
Plenty of media outlets are looking for hard-working artists to link with and put on

music campaigns (Spotify, YouTube)

rolling out releases (good cover art & preparing a realistic plan for drop)



HONING IN ON YOUR SOUND & IMAGE

Growing into the artist you want to be

find a team that works and stick with it (producers, engineers, writers, musicians, photographers, videographers)
Working with the same team will not only increase your workflow, but also allow everyone the comfortability to think outside the box

pushing barriers (constructive criticism is MANDATORY in the studio setting)

collaborations (get your name in the minds of another fan base)

NETWORKING

"be everywhere & do everything" mentality



Find the right environment. Keep yourself in the atmosphere of people who you want to engage with.

get comfortable being uncomfortable (you'll never be on the same level as those you look up to if you can't hold your own in room with them)

*Networking is a never-ending task. When you learn how to network 24/7 throughout your daily life you'll see your connections and opportunities increase rapidly.



*Trust and comfortability takes time to build no matter where you are — ideally you want to be in your most trusting, comfortable place when working on your passion. That's really the only way to ensure your art remains you as you navigate the turbulent music industry

KARE



LEGAL NAME: Kareema Walters

STAGE NAME: Kareema

AGE: 26

HOMETOWN: Long Island, New York

HEIGHT: 5-foot-5-inches

HIGH SCHOOL: Brentwood High School

COLLEGE: Tompkins Cortland Community College

OTHER JOB: Health Care Worker

MUSIC INFLUENCES: Janet Jackson, Ashanti, Beyoncé, Whitney Houston

NOTABLE RELEASES: *Revamp*, "Still Care," "Let's Chill"

DREAM FEATURE: J. Cole, Queen Naija, Brent Faiyaz

DREAM 702 FEATURE: Nidia Martinez ("I love her vibe. We're definitely gonna be working on something soon")

702 ARTISTS ON THE PLAYLIST: 1K, Zelly Vibes, ESEE

FAVORITE 702 VENUE: Tuesday Blend
NEXT UP OUT OF VEGAS: Me ("it's long overdue")

FAVORITE 702 PROJECT: *The Self*

Portrait by AR Wesley

FAVORITE VEGAS RESTAURANT: Giuseppe's Bar & Grille, at home ("I make smoothies a lot and I'm a salmon lover")

WORST VEGAS ROAD: Interstate 15 ("in New York we drive crazy but we drive straight")

WORST JOB: Assistant Manager at Foot Locker ("dealing with rude people")

OTHER HOBBIES: Exercise

"LAS VEGAS IS INTEGRATED WITH EVERYONE, FROM EVERYWHERE. AND THAT'S WHAT MAKES IT INTERESTING TO TUNE INTO"



FEENA

VEGAS AS A MELTING POT:

"People come to Las Vegas from everywhere — from different states and even from the world. So you're not dealing with just, you know, native people from Las Vegas, you're dealing with everyone else. It's like "The Avengers." Like Atlanta has their own vibe. New York has their own vibe. Las Vegas is integrated with everyone, from everywhere. And that's what makes it interesting to tune into."

COMPARE VEGAS AND LONG ISLAND:

"It's much more laid back and slow in Vegas. It's more peaceful and quiet here. I moved just to, you know, better myself and to push and succeed, especially when it came to my music. I kind of found myself stuck back home. I mean, I know a lot of people out [in New York] but I just wanted to migrate and branch out."

LEARNING MUSIC IN SCHOOL:

"When I was in college, I was studying to be a journalist, but then I switched over to broadcast production and radio. So within that switch, I found myself more into the music realm, because I was taking music classes and pre recording myself and doing projects. And it helped me study the background of the music business."

2020 EP REVAMP:

"*Revamp* actually came to me in an epiphany. I was driving in my car one day to work in New York. And I was saying to myself, "what do you want to name this album? What defines what you're going through?" And then *Revamp*, just, you know, came to me. The revamp of my sound, me as an artist, an individual — basically reshaping me into what's to come."

BEING COMFORTABLE WRITING PERSONAL LYRICS:

"I'm actually planning on releasing a new single that I recorded a long time ago. Growing up, I was always so conservative of myself and conscientious. So I'm being more explicit in the song. Who I am and how I want to feel as a woman — empowerment, when it comes to love and sex and emotion. I really feel like a lot of people are going to love this. They're going to be a little bit surprised, but in a good way."

CONTENT CREATION AS AN INDEPENDANT ARTIST:

"You honestly have to be really consistent. You have to keep dropping music or just putting anything out there so people can

still see that you're there. That's what I feel like I've struggled with in the past, but obviously now I'm learning to be more open and just throwing stuff out there."

SETTING THE WRITING VIBE:

"I always write after work, but it's a process. I'll boil my tea, set the mood, you know, it has to be quiet — no distractions. I put my phone on Do Not Disturb. And I just sit down in my couch, I have my pen, I have my notebook. I just wind down, listen to my beats, and I just actually go with it."

INTEGRATING INTO VEGAS' R&B SCENE:

"I'm learning to be more open minded because I feel like when it comes to R&B, there's not a lot of people that know the real sound of R&B. So it's kind of complex with that. But I'm always open to work with different people — I'm working with my new [engineer] next month and I'm super excited."

LONG TERM VEGAS PLANS:

"I never like to get comfortable in one place. I never like to stay in one place for long. When I moved out of New York, it was one of the hardest decisions I had to make because I was moving away from everything — friends and family. But I don't regret it. And I don't see myself moving out of Vegas."



LAS VEGAS

PROFIT

'I GOT A DAUGHTER THAT I'M DOING THIS SHIT FOR. NOW I'M TRYING TO FUCKING BUILD MY FUTURE.'



STAGE NAME: LAS VEGAS PROFIT
AGE: 21
HOMETOWN: SEASIDE, CALIFORNIA
HEIGHT: 5-FEET-10-INCHES
HIGH SCHOOL: CLARK HIGH SCHOOL
OTHER JOB: RESTAURANT SUPERVISOR
MUSIC INFLUENCES: ICE CUBE, 2PAC, SNOOP DOGG, WIZ KHALIFA
NOTABLE RELEASES: "SEE ME NOW," "BUENOS DÍAS," "SWERVIN," "KILLA" (FEAT. TONIKK)
DREAM FEATURE: KING LIL G
DREAM 702 FEATURE: DIZZY WRIGHT
FAVORITE 702 VENUE: T-MOBILE ARENA
FAVORITE 702 PRODUCER: MIXEDBYSINATRA
FAVORITE 702 STUDIO: HOME STUDIO A.K.A "THE BOOTH" ("I FEEL I CAN DO WHATEVER THE FUCK I WANT IN THERE")
FAVORITE 702 RESTAURANT: TACOS LA CARRETA
WORST VEGAS ROAD: MARYLAND PKWY.
WORST JOB: CAR WASH ATTENDANT
OTHER HOBBIES: SMOKING WEED

DE FIT



GETTING INTO MUSIC:

"MY UNCLES AND MY DAD AND ALL THEM USED TO BUMP THAT EARLY 2000S SHIT, LIKE SNOOP DOGG, 50 CENT, LIKE ALL THAT FUCKING OLD SHIT, BRO. AND I JUST STARTED LIKING MUSIC, STARTED RAPPING OVER THE SONGS."

RAPPING AS A TEENAGER:

"I JOINED THIS LITTLE GROUP, AND I HAVE HAD A SONG ON THEIR YOUTUBE SINCE I WAS LIKE 16, BRO. BUT THAT WAS JUST BACK THEN, LIKE LITTLE BULLSHIT. LIKE, 'AYE, I CAN RAP, YOU CAN RAP TOO, LET'S HOP IN THE STUDIO.' BUT IT FELT COOL THOUGH, IT FELT NATURAL FOR ME. I WAS IN THAT LITTLE BOOTH WITH HOMIES JUST RAPPING AND SHIT."

FINDING TIME FOR MUSIC:

"I HAVE A DAUGHTER, SO I'VE BEEN WORKING ALL THE TIME. I STARTED TRYING TO FUCK WITH THE MUSIC A LITTLE BIT MORE. I HAD A HOMIE OF MY ROOMMATE, HE WAS KIND OF HELPING ME OUT, YOU KNOW, HELPING ME WITH SHIT. I GOT A STUDIO WITH HIM AND EVERYTHING."

BUILDING YOUR SOUND:

"I LISTEN TO MUSIC LIKE KINDA ALL OVER THE PLACE. I LISTEN TO OLD SHIT, LIKE OLD WEST COAST SHIT. I LISTEN TO THIS NEW SHIT THAT BE COMING OUT, LIKE DABABY, LIL BABY, ALL THAT. I GUESS THAT'S WHAT MY STYLE IS - KIND OF PULLING TOGETHER THE DIFFERENT INFLUENCES AND SEEING WHAT SOUNDS RIGHT WITH WHAT."

"PROFIT" AS A STAGE NAME:

"EVER SINCE I WAS YOUNG, I WAS QUICK TO RUN UP SOME MONEY, BRO. I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS ABOUT ME, BUT I GOT THAT HUSTLER MENTALITY. BACK THEN I WAS TRYING TO MAKE MONEY BECAUSE I WAS TRYING TO DRESS NICE, LOOK FLY AND SHIT. I'M STILL LIKE THAT, BUT THE REASON'S

CHANGED. I GOT A DAUGHTER THAT I'M DOING THIS SHIT FOR. NOW I'M TRYING TO FUCKING BUILD MY FUTURE."

THE MUSIC PROCESS:

"EVERYDAY I'M WRITING SHIT BRO, LIKE EITHER WORKING ON THE SIDE, COMING UP WITH SOME FREESTYLE SHIT. I'M IN MY HEAD AT WORK WHEN I COME UP WITH SOME HOT ASS BARS. AND SO I JUST POP UP MY PHONE AND JUST TYPE UP THE LITTLE SHIT AND THEN GO BACK TO IT. AND TO RECORD, I'M RECORDING IN MY HOME STUDIO. BUT I DON'T KNOW HOW TO MESS WITH THE SOUND LIKE 100 PERCENT YET, SO I'M GOING TO AN ENGINEER."

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS WITH MUSIC?

"I DON'T KNOW, I JUST KNOW I WANT TO BE LIVING GOOD. MY TYPE OF MUSIC, I WANT TO BRING IT INTO THE FUCKING GAME."

PERFORMING ON THE "BRIDGE THE GAP" TOUR IN THOUSAND OAKS:

"I WAS A LITTLE NERVOUS BECAUSE I'M LIKE, 'DAMN, I DON'T KNOW NOBODY HERE. IT'S MY FIRST TIME IN THIS FUCKING CITY EVER, BRO. THIS SHIT IS NEW TO ME, AND I'M LIKE STEPPING OUT OF MY COMFORT ZONE. IF I DON'T FUCKING DO THIS SHIT, WHAT THE FUCK? LIKE HOW AM I GOING TO EXPECT TO BE A FUCKING ARTIST IF I CAN'T PERFORM, YOU KNOW?"





Photos by Luizy G





201202

CLOTHING
FOR THE
CONSCIOUS



TREY ANTHONY

GENUM

GENUM

GENERATION UMBRELLA