

New Hip-Hop Business Blog Site Introduced

Written by Robert ID967

Saturday, 05 March 2005 02:38 -

There is a new hip-hop blog site up and going, it's called ProHipHop at www.prohiphop.com , and it has some very unique features. More than just a blog site it is a hip-hop business blog site with every area of hip-hop culture covered.

Run by Clyde Smith it is truly something different and is really a ground breaking concept in not only blog sites but as a resource site for business information.

The site is full of information and there are links to almost everywhere of interest to the hip-hop community. The wealth of information shows how deep the cultural roots of hip-hop are. From just not rap and hip-hop artist and records; the site covers any area of business related to the hip-hop community.

Clyde Smith is a unique person with a wealth of interpretations on what is going on. Reading his articles and input on what's going on in hip-hop and rap is an adventure within itself, but when you start going thru this site you will be truly amazed at the information that is there.

Clyde Smith writes ProHipHop drawing on a rich background in the performing arts (The Lost Colony, High Risk Group), academic research (Ph.D. in Cultural Studies from Ohio State) and freelance writing (Hip Hop Logic, New Age Retailer). Clyde is also the owner and editor of www.netweed.com

ThugLifeArmy.com wanted to ask Mr. Smith about this new site and his reasons for starting such a ground breaking 'blog' site related to hip-hop business. Check out www.prohiphop.com and see for yourself what all the buzz is about.

Robert - Thanks for your time for this.

CS - Thanks for your interest

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Robert - With all the hip-hop and rap sites and all the blog sites 'springing up'; what made you come up with the idea for such a complex and detailed site as www.prohiphop.com .

CS - I came up with the idea early last fall and started working on it in November. It's a combination of a lot of ideas I've been playing with over the last five years but, to be perfectly frank, the moment in which the idea emerged is lost in a cloud of smoke, both literally and figuratively.

Robert - How has the feedback and the traffic been?

CS - The feedback's been excellent but the traffic's still fairly minor. It's hard for me to tell how widespread the appeal will be.

I've mostly been focused on building a niche audience that includes a high percentage of thought leaders and up and comers in hip hop and that seems to be working.

Robert - How long did it take to develop such a diverse and detailed data base that covers every area of the hip-hop culture?

CS - I'm not sure I cover everything but it's mostly a matter of intensely following hip hop business news across industry sectors and simply letting it accumulate. The categories are added based on the actual news and it kind of builds itself.

I launched in November so it's four months with some time off at Christmas.

Robert - I know you have other sites like www.netweed.com/hiphopnews/ ; how long have you been doing news reporting on the web?

CS - I started focusing on the news in the fall of 2002 with my more personal hip hop blog, Hip Hop Logic (www.netweed.com/hiphoplogic). That's been the strongest influence on

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ProHipHop though it's been suffering since I started this project.

Robert - How did it start for you; being interested in web reporting?

CS - Actually all my online activities started with a site called NC Hip Hop Online (netweed.com/nchiphop) that was it's own thing at first. I was living in Greensboro, NC back in 2000 and started writing about freestyle artists in the area.

I had one piece in Blu and then did a bunch of interviews for an article called Cypher on Planet Iznak

(www.netweed.com/nchiphop/cypher) for another publication.

That didn't work out so I just took it straight to the people with NC Hip Hop Online which remains one of my most active sites. Everything else has built from there.

Robert - With the development of this new site, what are your expectations for its success and involvement to the hip-hop community?

CS - I have high expectations and I believe I'm establishing a solid base for a successful information service that will be of value to the business community. What's cool about that is my focus includes addressing such issues as the misrepresentation of hip hop in the media.

Such misrepresentation is bad for business and for the hip hop community, so I'd like to think that ProHipHop can offer a lot while focusing on business news and analysis.

Robert - In going thru www.prohiphop.com/ all the information is current and the site seems to stay updated. Do you do that all yourself or do you have other staff members?

CS - It's a one man shop but I'd love to expand when that's possible. I'm partly inspired by

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Rafat Ali at paidcontent.org who recently added two writers after doing a solo trade blog for a few years. Adding people would also allow me to branch out and provide services that go beyond what I'm doing now into territory that no one's explored, but I'm keeping quiet about the specific details.

Robert Are business's receptive to the idea of the site and do they contribute; information wise and monetarily?

CS - Business people are picking up on it and giving me great feedback. In some cases, I'm establishing relationships that I hope to maintain and build upon for mutual benefit which is good for me because, as a writer, I've always tended to work alone.

Although it's too early for serious sponsorships I'm looking forward to that happening when the site is more established.

Of course, everyone's happy to send me their press releases!

Actually, the coolest development so far is a column that I'm writing called All In The Game that will debut in the next issue of Pound magazine (www.poundmag.com) out of Toronto. Each column will expand upon a timely topic from ProHipHop and I'm really excited about it.

I never expected this activity to open up opportunities in print media so soon but I'm definitely pursuing the possibilities, thanks to Pound's editor Rodrigo Bascunan, who suggested the column.

Robert - With your background in writing and in hip-hop, how do you view today's hip-hop compared to its roots?

CS - It's different and that's the way it should be. I understand people's disappointment with a lot of what's happening now but I think it's so amazing that this culture could emerge from the burned out Bronx to achieve world status as a force to be reckoned with.

And there are a lot of great artists out there who certainly share the values of earlier time periods that some feel have disappeared. Just because those people may not chart doesn't

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mean they're not out there.

I believe we're going to continue to see young artists with an old school attitude rise, for example, Little Brother from North Carolina or Bavy Blakes from Texas.

Certainly Jurassic 5 is an example of a successful act that has an old school edge and I think there's a lot more ahead.

Robert - Some say hip-hop and rap are stagnant and that the future of it is in doubt. What are your thoughts on the status of hip-hop today and its outlook for the future?

CS - Hip hop has proven to be such a powerful force in society that I'm really excited about the possibilities even though we face a lot of internal difficulties, such as violence and negative attitudes.

Again, focusing on the charts may be a mistake because those are so influenced by the whims of consumers that a lot of great work is being overlooked. But hip hop is like quicksilver and it can change in unanticipated ways when you're least expecting it to.

I'm also excited about the political developments in the hip hop community, especially at the grassroots level. I don't see the recent election of W. as a failure for hip hop by any means. I think a lot of expectations were overly inflated, partly due to celebrity activity, and that the reaction to somebody like P. Diddy talking junk actually mobilized the opposition.

But we'll learn from that and be smarter and stronger next time.

My one concern is that we should be building now for the next election, but people have to do things in their own time and I'm looking forward to seeing what happens both musically and politically.

Robert - What kind of music does Clyde Smith listen to? Which artist and groups do you like?

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CS - My big problem right now is that I can't listen to music while reading or writing and I read or write almost all the time these days. However, I mostly listen to jazz and hip hop. Miles, Coltrane and Keith Jarrett are at the top of my jazz playlist.

Public Enemy's a solid favorite but I'm very eclectic and will listen to somebody like Dr. Dre just as often.

I also have some favorites that most people have never heard of who are no longer together, like The Goats out of Philly or Michael Franti's Disposable Heroes of Hiphoprisy. I actually thought Nelly's first album was awesome though I've lost interest since then.

I'm also trying to fill in some gaps and I'm embarrassed to say that my knowledge of Tupac is relatively limited. Right now I'm getting into Tahir and will probably follow up with Dead Prez and related folks. I also want to get more into DJ Screw's work and influence, though I'll pass on the syrup.

Mostly I dig the political stuff but only when it's got flow and serious beats, so I'm always looking for that combination. I hate to state the obvious, but Public Enemy's 'It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back' still has everything I most love about hip hop.

Robert - Is there anything I failed to mention or anything that needs addressing?

CS - I've said too much as it is.

Robert - Well it was a pleasure to get some back ground on the new site and to get to hear a little more of your unique perspective of hip-hop culture.

The new site is great and I would encourage all to Check it out: ProHipHop at www.prohiphop.com, And I wish you all the best with it. Stay in touch with us and let us know how it is going. Thanks again---1

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CS - Thank you for being the first writer to do a feature on me. Let's hope you're not the last!