

Hip-hop's current stars honor genre's veterans

NEW YORK — Early Friday morning in Times Square, there was a hip-hop scene you might only encounter once or twice in a lifetime. Ice-T, Shyheim (the former Rugged Child), the Furious Five, two-thirds of Whodini, Biz Markie, Rob Base & DJ EZ Rock, DJ Whiz (who spun for Kid 'N Play), Kwame and King Sun were all dancing to the words and music of the Sugar Hill Gang, who were on the mic. They had all come to B.B. King's Blues Club and Grill for a rare NYC treat: Big Daddy Kane was performing a concert filled with nothing but classic hits and new freestyles.

Hip-hop has been the predominant musical genre the last two days in the Big Apple. On Thursday night VH1 taped its second-annual Hip Hop Honors show at the Hammerstein Ballroom. Kane and Ice-T were honorees along with Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, LL Cool J, the film "Boyz n the Hood," Salt-N-Pepa and the Notorious B.I.G.

"One of the beautiful things about it is you gonna let the old-school cats perform and you've got a whole generation that has literally never seen Big Daddy Kane," Ice-T said Wednesday at the Hammerstein. As part of his tribute, Ice took the stage with Snoop Dogg for a medley of the Ice-Man's hits. "A whole generation has never seen LL Cool J onstage, and he's gonna scare the hell out of them. They've never seen the Furious Five, they've never seen Ice-T. They've seen other people, but they ain't never seen us. When they see the origin, they gonna feel it. It's gonna be a great thing."

Ice promised that he and Snoop were going to be keeping it extra gangsta during their set — but nowhere near as hard as Ice used to do it back in the day.

"We used to come out onstage with the pit bulls, pumping shotguns with the blanks," he recalled, citing shows with the Geto Boys



Sandy "Pepa" Denton, Cheryl "Salt" James and Spinderella arrive for the 2005 VH1 Hip Hop Honors event in New York last Thursday. Pictured below is rap pioneer LL Cool J.

and Scarface. "Gangsta rap was rock and roll. It was intentionally meant to cause chaos.

"It's all pimpin' to me," he said of being a guest of honor at the show. "To be honored by VH1 [when I] used to be hated by America — bottom line, it's all about how you control your life. I came out of real crime. So when I get in trouble for making ['Cop Killer'], I'm like, 'I'm gonna handle this. I ain't killed nobody, y'all gonna have to get over this one.' But it took five or 10 years for that to blow over. Now I'm on TV, and America is like, oh yeah, Ice T is cool. But I'm still a problem. I knew how to clean my image up a little bit, but I'm the same cat."

Common still looks at Big Daddy Kane with the same admiration he did in the late '80s. Common once had the chance to open up for Kane at a concert early in his career. Now Common actually gets to perform with Kane during the Hip Hop Honors ceremony.

"Being able to do a tribute to Kane, who is one of my favorite artists, one of my inspirations, one of the reasons I rap — to be able to be a part of that is a life achievement for me," the Chicago native said during the practice sessions. Salt-N-Pepa and Spinderella were going through their set with En Vogue. "It's like part of a dream. To see Salt-N-Pepa doing rehearsal with En Vogue. ... They're giving a tribute to Grandmaster Flash, LL — as soon as I walked in the place, I felt hip-hop. This gonna be some dope hip-hop, and we saluting it."

Kane's tribute also includes the Roots and T.I.

"I'm happy to have everyone here," the always laid-back Kane said. "T.I. is an incredible person, a major figure in the game who's doing some beautiful things. Common and [Black] Thought are very close friends of mine. I'm honored to have them be a part of this. I truly respect them as artists and lyricists. We're gonna have fun with it."

BDK was especially looking forward to

seeing Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five take the stage, as he'd never seen all of them perform together. Another first was Salt-N-Pepa performing with En Vogue. It's also the first time all four original members of En Vogue have performed together in seven years, and the first time Salt-N-Pepa have performed with one another in six.

"The first couple of days were rough," laughed Salt shortly after rehearsal. She stood in between Pep and Spin. "A little crick in the neck. We had to stretch a little bit, but it started coming back to us. The hips started moving a bit more."

"We were talking yesterday about how it felt like home being onstage together," Spin said. "That was one of our favorite parts of Salt-N-Pepa, being onstage."

"It feels great to be honored," Salt said. "We kicked down a door or two."



Pepsi: Not dumping West

Company says rumor of rapper's firing following anti-Bush comments are not true

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Pepsi-Cola North America has been busy trying to squash rumors that Kanye West has been cut from its current marketing campaign following his infamous comment:

"George Bush doesn't care about Black people" comment made during a live telethon.

Reports of West's forced exit spawned a widely-forwarded e-mail letter urging folks to boycott Pepsi in retaliation.

"You've received an erroneous email regarding Kanye West and Pepsi," Nicole Bra-

dley, Public Relations manager of Pepsi-Cola North America told AllHipHop.com in response to the rumor. "The letter said that Kanye has lost his endorsement deal with Pepsi, which is not true."

According to the web site, "boycott organizer" Shondell Towns e-mailed the plea to a group list of thousands of African-American professionals mostly located in California. Despite the rapper's statement during NBC's benefit for Hurricane Katrina victims, Pepsi says Kanye's deal was never in jeopardy.

"Our relationship with Kanye has not changed and our marketing campaign is continuing as planned," Bradley added. "In fact, his Pepsi commercial is scheduled to air several times this week."

Nelly to make reality TV show

NEW YORK (AP) - Nelly has inked a deal to develop a reality television series with A. Smith & Co. Productions, it was announced last week. The show will chronicle "the day-to-day life" of the rapper.

"I look forward to showing my fans what my world is about and bringing more attention to my nonprofit organizations," said Nelly, whose real name is Cornell

Haynes Jr., in a statement.

Nelly runs the nonprofit organization 4 Sho 4 Kids. He has participated in campaigns for bone marrow registration in honor of his sister, Jackie Donahue, who died in March after a long battle with leukemia.

The program is expected to air sometime early next year.

No further details were

available.

The 30-year-old rapper appeared in the film "The Longest Yard" earlier this year. His hits have included "Hot in Here," "My Place" and "Over and Over." He has won three Grammys.

A. Smith & Co. has produced reality programs such as "Hell's Kitchen," "The Swan" and "Paradise Hotel" — all for Fox.

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