

# Trap Roundup

## HANDSOME BOY MODELING SCHOOL



Apply For Admission, today!

Let's have a round of applause for Dan "The Automator" Nakamura and Prince Paul. You've got to hand it to these guys – they just won't quit. Though they're both proven super-producers who could easily move into the mainstream, they've both pushed on creating hip-hop that is quirky, conceptual and downright hilarious.

Prince Paul, who started his career with the legendary '80s rap crew, Stetsasonic (the first "hip-hop band") has always been a cutting-edge, yet often-overlooked producer. His work with De La Soul is beyond classic and his Gravediggaz project alongside the Wu-Tang's RZA, tested his humorous and conceptual dark side. Of course, one must never forget his superb star-studded "hip-opera," *A Prince Among Thieves*. Automator put his skills on the map when he teamed up with Kool Keith for the underground classic, *Dr. Octagon*. Since then he's masterminded the futuristic *Deltron 3030* (with Kid Koala and Del Tha Funkee Homosapien), the animated *Gorillaz* (along with Damon Albarn of Blur and comic artist Jamie Hewlett) and the lounge-y Mike Patton R&B project, *Lovage*.

In 1999 they donned fake suits and fake 'staches to become Chest Rockwell (Paul) and Nathaniel Merriweather (Automator) of the Handsome Boy Modeling School (borrowed from the Chris Elliott sitcom *Get A Life*). Their first album, *So... How's Your Girl?* featured an eclectic mix of artists including DJ Shadow, Kid Koala, J-Live, Del Tha Funkee Homosapien, Sean Lennon, Miho Hatori (of Cibo Matto Fame), El-P and even Brand Nubian's Sadat X and Grand Puba. For their second outing, *White People*, they kept up this trend by recruiting Cat Power, Pharrell, De La Soul, Mike Patton, RZA, Lord Finesse and a host of others, proving that there's still room in hip-hop for professional male models.





Visit  
Beautiful  
Omaha:  
Where  
Folk  
Music  
and Rap  
Collide

## MARS BLACK

Other than the high-quality freeze-dried steaks anyone can order online, Omaha is best known (at least in the current music industry) for its Saddle Creek Records label. For years now, Saddle Creek has been home to some of indie rock's finest artists. Bands such as Bright Eyes, Cursive and The Faint call Omaha home and Saddle Creek their label of choice. Hip-hop has never been the city's strong point, until now.

"I have a lot of friends on Saddle Creek. These are people I just grew up with, went to high school with," explains Mars Black. "It's a really special scene. We just keep making music, and if nobody likes it, we're just gonna keep making it." Well, like it or not, the music Mars is currently making for Bright Eyes' indie rock pretty boy frontman Conor Oberst's Team Love label strips hip-hop down to its very roots. His debut album, *Folks Music*, is just that – folk music presented in the form of rap. "I wanted to create an album that my folks could listen to and say, 'that's Mars' – a rap album without the fake hip-hop trappings of glam and glitz that's not about being content with yourself or feeling good enough." If you think the idea of folk-rap is crazy, think again. According to Mars Black, "Bob Dylan raps all the time."



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## THE PERCEPTIONISTS

Boston:  
Bringin' the  
Hits like Red Sox

While not nearly as massive as the scenes in New York or Atlanta, Boston's been holding its own in the hip-hop underground for quite some time now. Cats such as 7L & Esoteric, Krumbsnatcha, The Kreators, Mr. Lif, Akrobatik and DJ Fakts One have kept Beantown's hip-hop scene on

the map and the latter three have recently joined forces to form the Boston all-star trio, The Perceptionists.

These guys are far from strangers to each other. Fakts has done production for both Lif and Ak, whereas these emcees have dropped verses on each other's songs and toured together as early as the late '90s. On their own they've been known to drop that true school hip-hop. Stuff that ranges from the deeply political (which fans of Lif are very familiar with) to things friends can laugh about while chatting about life on the back porch. Though they've called themselves The Perceptionists in the past, they've only just released their debut CD, *Black Dialogue*, which features hot production work from the likes of Fakts and El-P. Like the Red Sox did in baseball, this group of friend's is out to prove that hip-hop is alive and well in Boston.

Even though it may be "The First State," Delaware may be the very last state to discover hip-hop. Luckily, this didn't stop Hezekiah from mastering his musical and lyrical abilities. Unlike most rappers, Hez didn't get his start spittin' verses on a street corner. This emcee was born into music and honed his vocals at his family's church. Following his stint as a member of God's choir, he started singing for his uncle's band, the Funk Disciples. It wasn't until '86 that his life took a turn towards hip-hop.

When Hezekiah's cousin brought home track and drum machines, things began to change. Soon, Hez was hooked, producing his own tracks and performing live hip-hop with him on the machines, his cousin on bass and his uncle on guitar. Straight out of high school Hezekiah had linked up with possibly the then-only hip-hop crew in all of Delaware. From mixtapes to working his way into the Philly scene with The Roots, this emcee/singer/songwriter/producer/guitarist was soon in great demand, working for the likes of Musiq Soulchild, Bilal and The Jazzyfatmastees. Recently he was signed on to co-produce music for the Showtime original series, *Street Time* and finally got around to releasing his long-awaited album. The title of the album rings true for most independent artists who find that this industry forces them to constantly *Hurry Up & Wait*.



*The  
Name  
of the  
Indie  
Game:  
Hurry  
Up &  
Wait...*



**HEZEKIAH**