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compiled by Thomas Quinlan, Jason Richards, and Marsha Greene

Although not fully represented in the media, small-town Canada is churning out some great hip hop. Arguably the country's most consistently strong label is Peanuts & Corn (www.peanutsandcorn.com), thanks to the release of one solid album after another. *Pinky's Laundromat* from youngin' **John Smith** is no exception with its blue collar worker concept, darkly-detailed production from **mcenroe**, and Smith's in-depth stories and character studies.

Dragon Fli Empire's Teekay gets a lot more personal on *Conquest* (Makebelieve Records), the debut album for this group with fellow-Calgarian **DJ Cosm**. D.F.E. harken back to the heyday of the **Native Tongues** movement with laidback boom-bap and fun, if sometimes inquisitive, raps. Vaughn, Ontario's **Syntifik** is also keeping it real (just check "Only the Real") with his debut, *The World I Live In* on Urbnet, (www.urbnet.com). A little more lyrically obvious and a greater interest in the current sounds of hip hop means there's a lot of R&B hooks.

Blurring the line between reality and fiction is **Pimp Tea** with his sophomore disc, *The Urbal Remedy* on Brockway Ent (www.pimptea.com). His first album brought more than expected exposure to this Fredericton, NB, rapper despite being sub par. Here, he returns with simple lyrics and a sometimes sloppy flow, but he has a knack for infectious hooks ("Shake Your Caboose," for example) and picking fantastic beats that suit his feelgood hick-hop.

Also repping for New Brunswick is **First Words** with their self-titled debut album. Haltown's **Jorun** helps out on the beats, cuts and vocals, and it's nice to see him doing his hip hop thing again. **Sean One, Above** and **DJ STV** round out the group. It looks like New Brunswick might finally get some exposure for its hip hop scene.

Hand'Solo Records (www.handsolorecords.com) unleashes its first video to support the *Bassments of Badmen* compilation series with **SJ the Wordburglar's** animated "The Wordburglar." A fan favourite on *Bassments of Badmen: Volume 2*, it's also the focus of *The Wordburglar* EP, a slice of vinyl that includes a few tracks and remixes from his out-of-print debut and a few new ones from his upcoming *Burglaritis* album, including a smooth jam with **Pigeon John**.

Canadians also represent hard on a couple of compilations just released by HipHopHotSpot.com. *Bare Skin* features some nice appearances from **Fermented Reptile, Tachichi** and **Moves**, and **Pip Skid**. But *Well Flavoured Essentials: Aberfoyle Springs Volume 2* is the better of the two with a flawless flow and appearances from **Governor Bolts**, the **Goods** and **Sixtoo**. **Jeff Spec** and **Frek Sho** get up on both.

If you prefer your compilations straight Can-con, CHMA's Ya Heard?! Programme have put together a sampler of some of their favourite Canadian hip hop tracks which includes some of the above as well as **Josh Martinez, Birdapres, Abs & Fase, Circle Research, Kamau,** and a chance to hear Canadian Idol Top Ten contestant **Kaleb Simmonds** beat box and sing along with some **Skratch Bastid** cutting accompaniment. Contact the hosts of Ya Heard?! Directly for more info at oneohsixdotnine@hotmail.com.

Toronto's **Kamikaze** aka **Kama** recently shot the video for his single, "Kama's World," with Doug E. Fresh in Toronto. The catchy yard-vibed single is out now and the album by the same name comes soon.

Wake up, player! You weren't sleeping on **Kia Kadiri**, were you? For the price of just ten cups of coffee you can get yourself *Feel This (Maximum Music)* the debut album from Van City's new face of multi-talent. Kia spits like a fiend, sings like a queen, and the beats are pure organic, cultural heat under some genuine poetic depth. It even features an obscure guest shot from Malcolm "Theo Huxtable" Jamal Warner. www.kiakadiri.com

And then thurr's T-Dot's **Mindbender** spittin' the on the positive tip with his double LP jump-off, *Beautiful Mutant* (Futurecho). What it is right now? Def Jux-style indie rap beats blended with a **Del**-style flow, this is wild hot, if a bit lo-fi. www.supremebeingunit.com

With **DJ Unknown's** natural mystic-flavoured beats and emcees **Akim** and **Boozy's** ragga hooks and street-reflective lyrics, **Tru-Paz** (pronounced 'troopas') is coming out swingin' with *State of Emergency* on Urbnet Records.

Or, for some more laid-back instrumentality, you could go for **Buck 65's Sebutones** partner **Sixtoo** and his "Chewing On Glass & Other Miracle Cures" on Ninja Tune. Darkness abounds on this Halifax producer's latest.

And finally, while we're on the subject of hip-hoppers emerging from beyond the genre's pre-conceived borders this issue, cop you **War Party's** *The Greatest Natives From The North*. Hailing from Hobbema, Alberta **Mic Noble, Girlie MC, Big Stomp and Kool-Ayd** spit mad flava in ya ear while addressing important issues facing Canada's indigenous communities. www.warparty.cjb.net

Send your vinyl, CDs, and pics to: Headspace, P.O. Box 124, Station B, Toronto, ON M5T 2T2