

Hip Hop in North Carolina ^[1]

Hip-Hop in North Carolina

by Max Eckard, 2012.

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The Triangle region of North Carolina, anchored by the [University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill](#) ^[3], [North Carolina State University](#) ^[4], [Duke University](#) ^[5] and [North Carolina Central University](#) ^[6], is a well-known center for all types of music and boasts a long-standing and diverse hip-hop scene.

Acclaimed alternative hip-hop groups from North Carolina include Lords of the Underground, whose members met at [Shaw University](#) ^[7] in [Raleigh](#) ^[8] during hip-hop's "golden era," and Little Brother, whose members met while attending [North Carolina Central University](#) ^[9] in [Durham](#) ^[10]. The latter group also co-founded the Justus League collective, which features other important North Carolinian emcees.

While southern hip hop is typically characterized by its upbeat, exuberant, club-friendly tunes and simplistic, heavily rhythmic lyrical delivery, alternative hip-hop in North Carolina is anything but. Lords of the Underground, for example, has been described as matching "socially conscious raps with hard-hitting beats," while the "old school" group Little Brother drew from atypical East Coast inspirations like De La Soul, A Tribe Called Quest, the Roots and Black Star.

Major-label rappers and producers from North Carolina include [J. Cole](#) ^[11], from [Fayetteville](#) ^[12], and Petey Pablo, from [Greensboro](#) ^[13].

North Carolina is also home to a number of well-known underground acts, including Kooley High.

Other hip hop artists from North Carolina include L.E.G.A.C.Y., The Away Team, Darien Brockington, Edgar Allen Floe, Chaundon and Cesar Comanche (all of the Jusus League collective), as well as Kaze, Ski, Travis Cherry, Troop 41, Lazarus, Thee Tom Hardy, The Beast, Bryce Snow, Harvey Blount and The Nobodies. Brotha Soul and Supastition also hail from North Carolina; they both have worked with Little Brother and [9th Wonder](#) ^[14].

[WQOK 97.5 FM](#) ^[15], home to the [Russ Parr Morning Show](#) ^[16], is a Mainstream Urban Contemporary formatted broadcast radio station serving the [Raleigh](#) ^[8]/[Durham](#) ^[10] area. For listeners in [Raleigh](#) ^[8], [WKNC 88.1 FM](#) ^[17], NC State's college radio station, plays alternative hip-hop on their program "Underground" on Sunday and Monday evenings. [9th Wonder](#) ^[14] hosts a radio show along with Kyle Santillan on WCCG 104.5 FM in [Fayetteville](#) ^[12] entitled "True School Radio."

On Tuesday, September 27, 2011, three of the state's top hip-hop artists released albums. [9th Wonder](#) ^[14]--who recently accepted a year-long residency at Harvard's [Hip-Hop Archive](#) ^[18]--and [Phonte Coleman](#) ^[19] of Little Brother fame released *The Wonder Years* and *Charity Starts at Home*, respectively. That day, [J. Cole](#) ^[11] also released his debut studio album--following three successful mixtapes--*Cole World: The Sideline Story*. The day was unofficially declared "N.C. Hip-Hop Day" on Facebook and Twitter by local rappers and fans, although it sent mixed messages about the state of local rap.

References:

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