

RAW LIVE HIP HOP!

THE FORMULA



LIVE REVIEWS

EPILEPTIC DISCO/THE FORMULA/DOWN LOW CONNECTION
The Middle East Downstairs
Cambridge, MA
March 1, 1998

It's a Sunday night at the Middle East, and though Sunday nights are usually a bleak showing for most bands, tonight the room is filling up nicely. I walk in to find Epileptic Disco in mid-set. Epileptic just loves what they do and it really shows in their live performance. Action! Action! Action! They've added an organ player to their original roster, and while the sound may be new to them, it's just a bit too emulative of the whole Beastie Boys style for bonus originality points. Regardless, Epileptic is going full throttle as their MCs trade-off lyrical solos and bound around the stage like popping corn from a frying pan. The words are completely inaudible but the audience seems satisfied to bob their heads to the distorted rhythms that they offer. Epileptic's bassist is their anchor man and has a really nice feel and tone while holding everything in place. Unfortunately, while ED's brand of jazz/hip-hop is laden with frenetic live energy, tightness and groove are often sacrificed.

The room is now becoming comfortably padded with hip-hop enthusiasts. The Formula is on deck. I'd heard a lot about this band after they did a recent show over at Mama Kin. Word on the street is that all the players from the original Fat Bag line up broke from the lead singer and put this band together with an eMCee known as Insight from Knights of the Round. The Formula have done only three shows this far but their tightness is incredible. We're talking about a band whose pulse surges from the same heart - an old, funky heart. Somehow they've managed to put together an unbelievable set of catchy choruses with bangin' beats and rhymes in only a few short months. The band is made up of one MC, bass, guitar, keys, drums, percussion,

a DJ, and a drummer. You would think with this instrumentation a band could really run the risk of having a cluttered sound. Not so with The Formula. Their approach is a united effort of minimalism and the overall effect is that of a live loop. This drummer must've really done his break beat homework too, because he can knock out a beat like a TR808. The thing that I really dig about Insight is that he projects his lyrics and doesn't cup the mic. If you really pay attention you can make out just what he's saying.

Well, after The Formula's set the mains go down and... WAIT! Radio Active jumps up on the stage and the mains come back up as he starts beat-boxing. Insight jumps back up on stage and starts freestyling while Radio astounds this

unsuspecting audience with his bigger-than-life drum sounds. For those who do not know of the one called Radio Active, he is just about the truest eMCees in the Boston hip-hop scene. This guy will jump on a stage with any band at any given time and proceed to rock *their* crowd. And that's just what he did on this particular night. He kept the house so transfixed that before too long Down Low Connection was not only set up and sound checked, they were slowly fading into this impromptu performance like a DJ blending a record. They feathered into a song which was not only unrehearsed but included an off-the-top verse from their two eMCees as well. Now that's real hip-hop.

The rumors of Down Low's demise have been greatly exaggerated... The DLC

Northeast
Performer



The Formula - Record Review

The talented collective of jazz musicians, turntablist, and mcs, known as The Formula, has put out a new six song EP. The tape includes performances by The Underworld Secret Service, Troop-Dawg Tamal, and their #1 emcee, Insight. Once again, the band exhibits the power behind the fusion of jazz and hip-hop, as they take the listener into deep grooves carved by hooks, beats, samples, instrumentation, and soundscapes. If you like the raw, get-the-funk-out-my-face battle style rhyming, then you may like The Underworld Service and Troop-Dawg Tamal. Personally, I felt Insight's "The Mystery of Hip-Hop" and "Quick Thinking for Slow Learners" on a deeper level due to its deeper lyrics. All in all, the tape has tight production and indisputable musicianship.

INSIGHT OF THE FORMULA ON THE MIC AT PARADISE

ERIC JAMES

The Formula

Some of you may not be familiar with the name The Formula, but any aficionados of the Boston music scene will recognize some of the ingredients.

The core members, Adam 'Mr. Kleen' Smirnoff (guitar), Adam Bomb (drums), and Eric 'Dangerous' Coones (bass) met at age 16 at a summer program at Berklee College of Music. Their friendship developed into a band called Lettuce. A few years later during their college years the group reformed as Fat Bag. Fat Bag won outstanding hip-hop act in '95 and '96 and best funk of '97 at The Boston Music Awards.

The Formula's home court is in Boston where they began under a different name, and even though they moved to NYC and traveled to perform in many other states, they have returned home to make Boston once again their stomping ground. They bring with them a strong hip-hop vibe to the music scene which it seemed in this town was in danger of becoming non-existent.

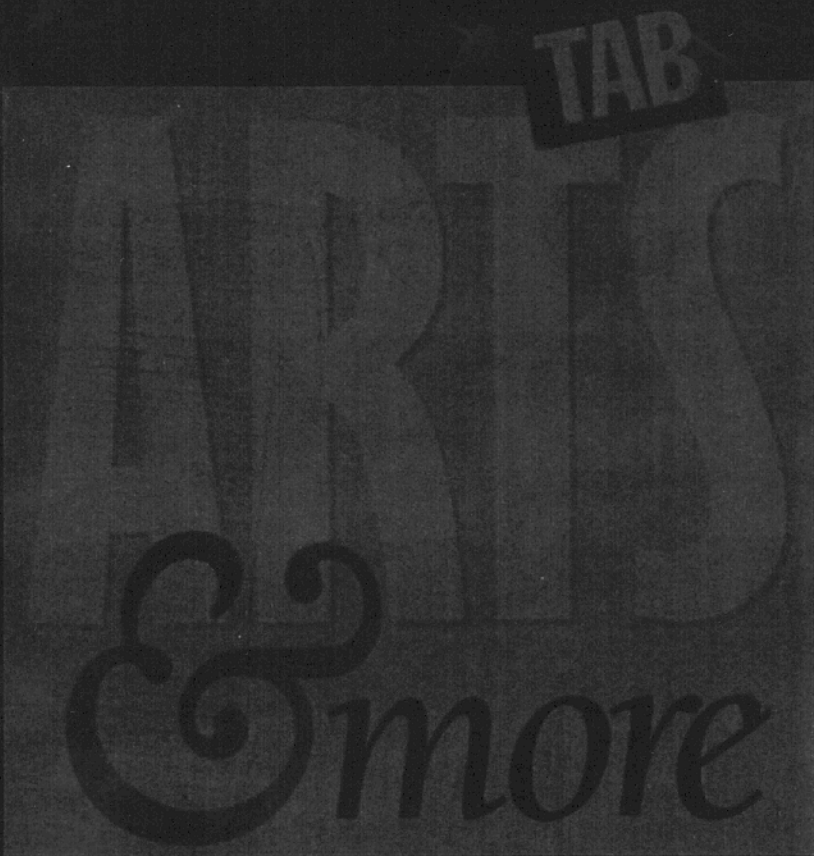
The band is tight, both onstage and off; each of them walked away from a record deal to be in their current position. As Jeff 'Mr. Rourke' Misner (turntables) points out, "Fat Bag allowed us to become brothers, and through our hard work we were rewarded with our present group". Newcomers to the group include Andre "Insight" Todman (vocals), Eric Coones (bass), and Nick Kasper (keyboards) "we're all part of the 'extended family,'" as Atticus "Shadrack" Cole (percussion) points out.

In The Formula's quest to get hip-hop on the beantown map, Atticus organized a night at The Paradise dedicated solely to the hip-hop groove. Included in the line-up was Radio and Professor, and The Mission.

The variety of Emcee's on stage gave this night a very positive force through music which acted to unite the room. As I looked around me I was surrounded by a group of rag-dolls bobbing their heads and dancing to the rhythm of the beats that shook the stage.

I encourage you to look out for "The Formula" because I guarantee they will be everywhere. They plan on shoving it down everyone's throat this summer with signs and fliers plastered all over the city. So keep up and don't be left out in the heat..

By Rebecca Sharzer



The Formula

If you don't know them, don't worry — they don't know you either. I actually stumbled onto this funky hip-hop troupe on a pretty dead night at the Middle East Down. They were doing an opening slot and they ripped up shop like few live bands I've heard over the past few years. Since then, I've seen them a bunch of times and they've gotten even better. The eight-piece unit is fronted by its MC, Insight, who drops intricate lines of positivity, self-knowledge and empowerment. He also knows how to work a crowd.

The rhythm section of drummer Adam Dietch, percussionist Atticus Cole and bassist E.D. is as rubbery as Gumby and DJ Jeffrey Rourke augments them on the wheels of steel. With Nick Casper on keyboards and Shmeeans on guitar, this is a full-bodied, straight-up, tight-as-Saran-Wrap-on-a-sweaty-bowl hip-hop band. They are about to drop their first CD and if it comes close to approximating their live show — watch out, Boston. If you're into funk or hip-hop, these guys are the real deal. If they stick it out they'll be in it for the long haul. □

88.9 WERS & The House of Blues presents:
An evening with



Featuring MC's: AKROBATIK

The Underworld Secret Service

Shuman

Crush1

TroopDawgTamal

LIVE at The House of Blues
Sunday October 29, 2000
Doors at 9pm-18+

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Boston's best unsigned bands

By Ken Capobianco
CNC Arts Writer

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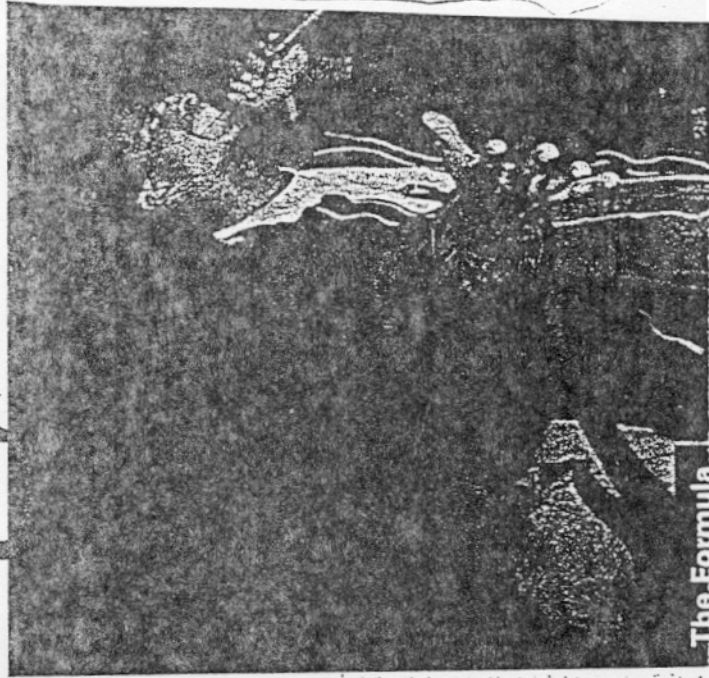
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Lockgroove

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APRIL 1999

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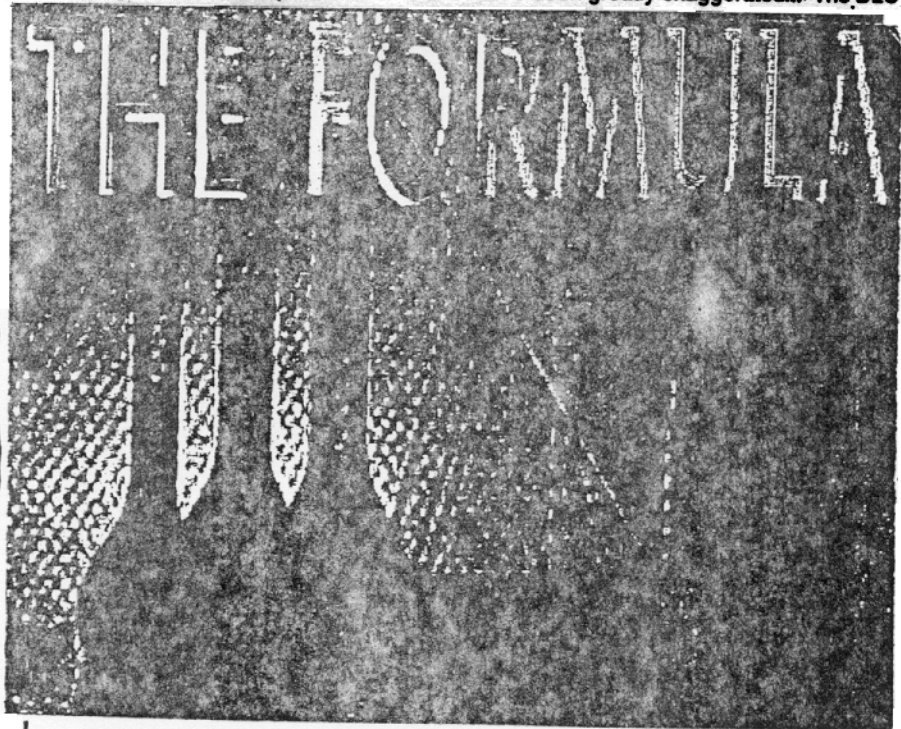
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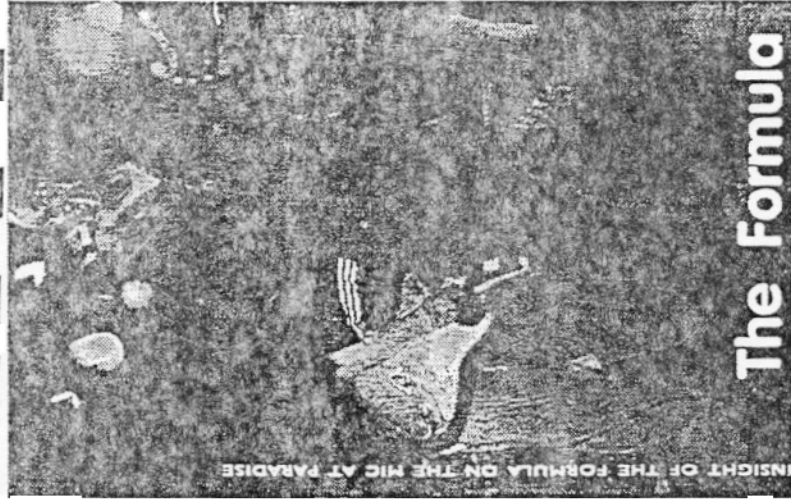
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WHAT'S UP

Issue # 6
May/Jun 1998

Combining Entertainment
and Social Awareness



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