

Lost Cause, positivity and hip-hop in York

Amanda J Cain, York Dispatch

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(Photo: The York Dispatch)

The hip-hop game as I have known it is rather controversial and tacky. Tacky in the way that most rappers nowadays concede their lyrics are degrading to women.

To most of us, it portrays the black community negatively. It seems to say that we cannot think clearly about ourselves, let alone talk about what is real and honest in the community.

Here in York, the same can be said about the hip-hop scene. Most people don't even blink an eye when you bring up the subject. Is it that because we don't have any positive rappers here in the area?

Wrong, we do. They go by the name Lost Cause, and the group features producer Keith S. Mitchell Sr. and rapper Kahlil Thompson, a 24-year-old raised in this area.

Project: Over the past seven weeks, I have been actively following this group and gathering insight and first-hand understanding of what a conscious rapper/positive rapper does to prepare for success.

While this project is about Lost Cause, it is also about bringing awareness to the hip-hop scene in York. One of the reasons I am so drawn to Lost Cause is their message and also their passion for wanting to achieve greatness by starting off with the fan base here in York. They are going after York because this is where the magic all started for them.



Kahlil's dog Onyx grabs the spotlight, while he freestyles over a beat at his apartment Wednesday, April 6, 2016. Amanda J. Cain photo (Photo: The York Dispatch)

As a fan of music in general, I love the fact that when local musicians branch out, they can always come back to a great fan base. This is what Lost Cause is trying to achieve. They are also trying to educate the youth with a positive message that you don't have to cuss and do drugs to make it in this world. There are better options and routes to take in life.

When I first came to York, I wanted to know where the scene was. To my surprise, there really was no hang-out spot for hip-hop acts. In such a diverse city as York, it was disappointing. So here I am taking a stand for a group that I believe in and a group that everyone in York should listen to.

The game: Lost Cause's debut album, which came out March 18, goes into the great detail about real life and what Thompson himself went through growing up here in York. It raises issues about his abandonment as a child and losing a dear friend who was killed on these very streets.

Thompson, who has recently faced unemployment, continues to write daily to improve his outlook on life. It hasn't been easy by a long shot, but this is the hip-hop game that we know it to be. Nothing is ever easy in this game. Sometimes, you have to go through more failure and setbacks to improve your quality of life as an artist.

This facet of the game rings true for Lost Cause. What was set to be the group's first show here in York on Saturday has been postponed due to lack of ticket sales.



Kahlil Thompson, who is also known as MC Rare From, ponders his career, while visiting his grandma Wednesday, April 20, 2016. Amanda J. Cain photo (Photo: *The York Dispatch*)

While it is a disappointment for the group, it's also an opportunity to regroup and focus on the possibility of other shows in and out of the area, as well as to continue strengthening their core by adding other artists to the group. One show doesn't determine the success of a group, it's truly about the blood sweat and tears put in the music to make it a success.

Their first single of their debut album, "Decoys," parallels the general life and struggle as an upcoming artist.

"Will you buy my CD? — Naa I'm broke — But got money for weed — Got me questioning — Like am I weak?"

"Makes me go a lot — Harder each day of the week — We tryna spread — Peace and positivity — But these decoys."

These are the general statements you might hear from anybody on any given day. We support our habit more than we support others who are trying to bring positivity to the community. This is the struggle within hip-hop. We want people to make positive music, but when it's being made in our backyard, there isn't any support. Back in the day when conscious rap was alive and well, the people understood the struggle of getting played on the radio. Nowadays, we glorify negative rap that has a good beat to it. What is the point?



Kahlil Thompson performs "Beauty" at Education Fest Saturday, April 30, 2016, at Penn Park. Amanda J. Cain photo (Photo: *The York Dispatch*)

The 717 truly has something to offer, and it is Thompson and Lost Cause. To check out their latest music, visit www.m3musicgroup.com (<http://www.m3musicgroup.com/>).

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