

# SCENE **NOT** HEARD

## WOMEN IN PHILADELPHIA HIPHOP

A documentary by Maori Karmael Holmes



## SYNOPSIS

Philadelphia is often referred to as *the* mecca for American soul music, however its contribution have been overlooked despite its mass proliferation of artists, many of whom have made landmark contributions as emcees, graffiti artists, dancers, and most notable as deejays.

Native talents such as Will Smith, The Roots, and Eve have become international pop stars and made great strides domestically and internationally, but somehow “the Illadelph” still doesn’t get the kind of props of a city like Los Angeles or even Atlanta.

Despite all of this, the City of Brotherly Love has continued to churn out some of the most innovative hip-hop artists of the current generation. Perhaps one of the most unique aspects to the scene is the abundance of powerful female voices that it has produced as artists, promoters and writers.

In this debut featurette, director and producer Maori Karmael Holmes seeks to tell the story of these women—the legends, the famed, and the ingénues—as they struggle to succeed in a male-dominated industry in a city that has been left behind in the national consciousness.

Scene Not Heard features interviews with some of the originators of hip-hop such as **Lady B**, **Schoolly D** and **Rennie Harris**, with vanguards chiming in including **Bahamadia** and **Ursula Rucker**, and presents current talents such as the **Jazzyfatnastees**, **Ms. Jade**, and **Lady Alma**, and emerging talents such as **Versus**, **Keen** of Subliminal Orphans and **Michele Byrd-McPhee** of Montäzh, as well as scholars, critics and local promoters.

Directed & Produced by: Maori Karmael Holmes  
Total Running Time: 45 minutes



## DIRECTOR BIO

Maori Karmael Holmes was born on Sunset Boulevard in a post-Hippie household raised with limited access to television and Barbie dolls and thus has become an avowed pop culture fanatic.

Maori's fascinations have led her down a career path that has included a variety of experiences in the arts, culture and music. She has been a freelance writer for many national publications including *SaVoy* and *Alternet.org*; a publicist for independent musicians; an editorial assistant at the *Washington City Paper*; and for three years

she worked as a Marketing Representative for Sony Music Entertainment.

Her primary artistic avocation is filmmaking. Additionally, her costume designs have been featured in the films *Just Old Friends* (dir. Wan-Ching Ke), *In Between* (dir. Narcel G. Reedus), and the multi-media opera *Violet Fire* (dir. Terry O'Reilly).

Her most recent professional positions include: Director of Community Arts at the University of Pennsylvania and Coordinator for the Philadelphia Independent Film and Video Association. She is currently a full-time lecturer at Temple University.



## STATEMENT

The title of my film refers to an old Southern adage my grandmother often said about the necessity of children being "seen" and not "heard"—*as if* they get in the way.

In my own experiences in hip-hop culture as an artist, promoter, fan, and scholar, it has occurred to me that for many, women often get treated as if we also get in the way.

The ironic aspect to an often misogynistic and paternalistic "b-boy culture" is that women are a major buying force and fan-base within hip-hop. As Schoolly D says in his interview "guys wouldn't come to a party if there were only going to be other guys!"

I wanted to make this film to reflect not only the many faces of women and girls in the crowd but also to give voice to the artists and promoters who keep the industry wheels turning.

## FILMOGRAPHY

*Scene Not Heard: Women in Philadelphia Hip-Hop*  
Documentary, 45 minutes.  
Color video. 2005.

*Introducing Versus*  
Documentary, 4 minutes.  
Color video. 2005.

*The Moment*  
Narrative, 32 minutes.  
Color video. 2002.

*Twenty-Four*  
Experimental, 3 minutes.  
Color video. 2002.

*Mei by Mai*  
Documentary, 8 minutes.  
Color video. 2003.

*Reasonable Doubt*  
Narrative, 11 minutes.  
Color video, 2003.

*My Name is Rich Medina*  
Documentary, 11 minutes.  
Black & White 16mm. 2001.

# SCENE **NOT** HEARD

## CREDITS

### **DIRECTOR & PRODUCER**

Maori Karmael Holmes

### **ASSISTANT PRODUCER**

Araeia Robinson

### **ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS**

Deirdre May

Roxanne Lawson

### **PRINCIPAL PHOTOGRAPHERS**

Maori Karmael Holmes

Deirdre May

Tina Morton

### **ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHERS**

Christopher T. Conway

Stephanie Garoian

Martín Lautz

Simbarashe Madziva

### **PRINCIPAL EDITOR**

Maori Karmael Holmes

### **ADDITIONAL EDITORS**

S. Christian Rozier

Rob Patterson

### **MUSIC SUPERVISOR**

James “Statik” Peterson

### **AUDIO EDITOR**

Rodney Whittenberg

### **PRODUCTION ASSISTANCE**

Bridgette Brundidge

Carla Carter

Misia Denea Cole

Laska Jimsen

Teishan Latner

Lydia Patterson

Heidi Saman

Sosena Solomon

### **ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE**

Benjamin Barnett

Mike Dennis

S. Christian Rozier

### **STILL PHOTOGRAPHY**

Ainé Ardron-Doley

Kamau Blakney

Simba Madziva

Dave Moldavon

Docta Shock

### **ORIGINAL MUSIC**

Hezekiah

Illvibe Collective

Kn0wledge Brown

Lady Alma

Malene Younglao

Slo-Mo

Versus

### **FUNDING PROVIDED BY**

WYBE Philadelphia Stories V

The Leeway Foundation

### **POSTER & WEB DESIGN**

Anthony Forcet-Howard



## FEATURED SUBJECTS

**AMY “KEEN” YANICK**  
MC, Subliminal Orphans

**BAHAMADIA**  
Legendary MC and DJ

**CAROLYN CHERNOFF**  
Founder, Girls DJ 101

**D. RYVA PARKER**  
Former Hostess, Black Lily

**DJ LISA LOVE**

**DJ SESI**

**DJ SPARKLES**

**DJ ULTRA VIOLET**  
Promoter

**DOCTA SHOCK**  
urbanbeatmovement.com

**DYANA WILLIAMS**  
CEO, Influence Ent.

**EMIKO SUGIYAMA**  
B-Girl

**IRIZE REFINED EARTH**  
GM A Touch of Jazz, Inc.

**JAMES PETERSON, PH.D.**  
Professor, Penn State

**JAMES ELAM**  
Entertainment Attorney

**JAMIE MERWIN**  
Dir. Olive Dance Theater

**JEANINE LEE**  
Editor, Verbalisms

**KAMILAH CLARKE**  
MC, Versus

**KILLA CASS**  
MC

**LADY ALMA**  
Vocalist

**LADY B**  
Radio Personality

**MALENE YOUNGLAO**  
Vocalist and MC

**MECA ISA**  
Graffiti writer and Graphic Designer

**MERCEDES MARTINEZ**  
Vocalist, Jazzyfatnastees

**MICHELE BYRD-MCPHEE**  
Founder of Montāzh Co.

**MONIE LOVE**  
Radio Personality

**MS. JADE**  
MC

**NICOLE HARRIS**  
MC, Versus

**RENNIE HARRIS**  
PureMovement

**SARA GREEN**  
Co-Director, The Gathering

**SCHOOLLY-D**  
MC, Producer & Composer

**SHEENA LESTER**  
blackamericaweb.com

**STACEY WILSON**  
Promoter and Visual Artist

**STEF “TATAZ” DOUGLAS**  
Promoter, Beat Society

**TAÍNA DEL VALLE ASILI**  
Spoken Word Artist

**TIFFANY BACON**  
Radio Personality

**TRACEY MOORE**  
Vocalist, Jazzyfatnastees

**URSULA RUCKER**  
Poet

**WALIDAH IMARISHA**  
Journalist and Poet

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

**CONTACT NAME**

Maori Karmael Holmes

**MAILING ADDRESS**

1730 N. 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Unit #101  
Philadelphia, PA 19122 USA

**PHONE NUMBER**

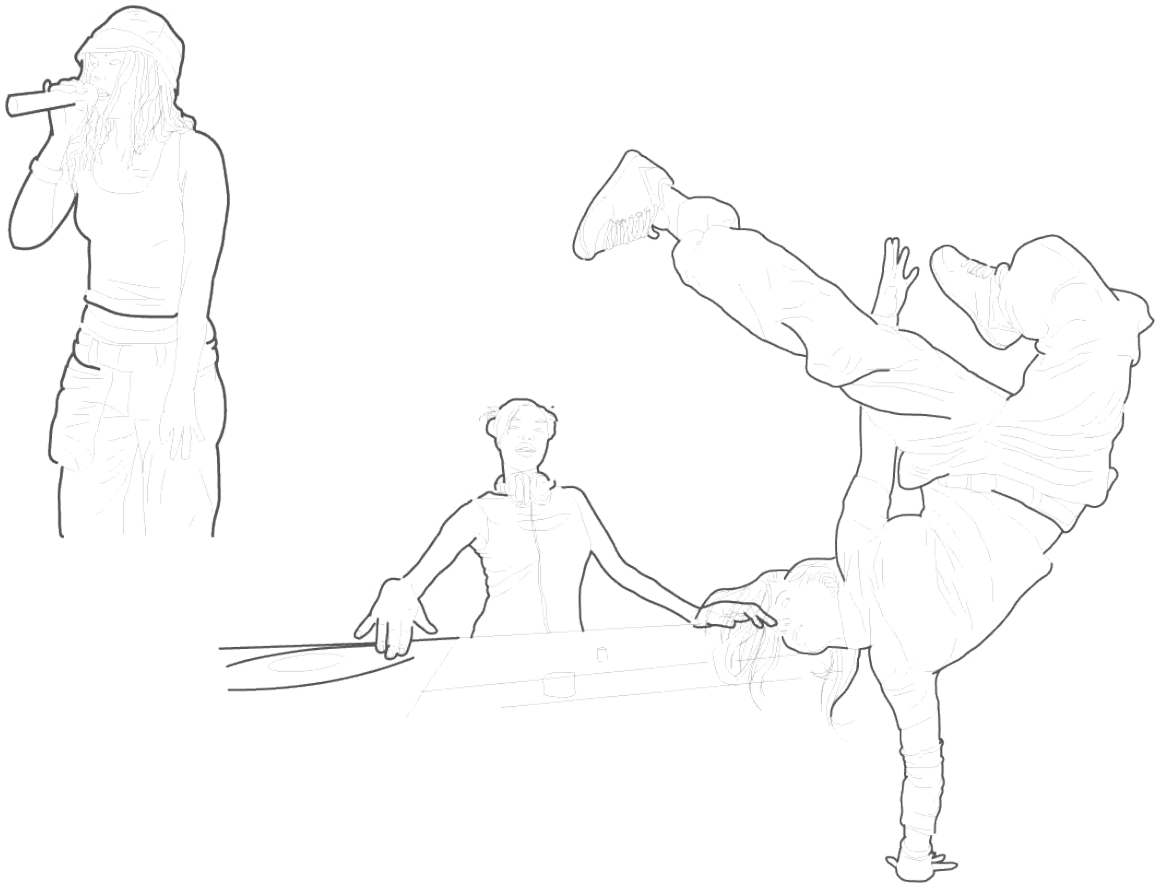
215. 978. 6918

**E-MAIL ADDRESS**

maori@karmalux.com

**WEBSITE**

[www.karmalux.com](http://www.karmalux.com)



## SCENE **NOT** HEARD



Graf artist Shiro and her work at the B-Boy BBQ. June, 2005.  
(credit Tina Morton)



DJ Ultra Violet mixing in her studio. July 2005.  
(credit Maori Karmael Holmes)



B-Girl Sara Green rehearsing at The Rotunda. August 2005.  
(credit Tina Morton)



MC Greylogik rocking the mic at The Gathering. July 2005.  
(credit Simbarashe Madziva)