Editorial for the Salisbury flyer

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**Turn off Carly Rae and listen to the Rhymesayers**

When you turn on the radio to search for some sweet jams, you may hear the notorious Carly Rae Jepsen along with any other terrible- uh, I mean today’s popular hits. But while we live in modern times, you mustn’t suffer the wrath of unnecessary noise and phrases with *some* rhythm coming from the stereo; with technology come options.

Along with the radio, iTunes updates the top songs for any genre and album quite frequently, but that doesn’t always mean that the number-one hit is a tune that everyone can stand hearing, I mean haven’t you heard the new depressing, yet up-beat Taylor Swift song about breaking up? Not much meaning there.

I have come to you, students of Salisbury, to introduce some feel-good hip-hop that spreads amazing vibes and words worth listening to. Don’t get me wrong, I get that some artists believe that they have talent and that they can make a living out of singing, but that will last as long as the listeners will let them.

About a year ago I came across a few artists through Pandora radio, which ultimately led me to attending a concert that was showing near my house only a few months later. In August of 2011 I went to my first concert, sponsored by a hip-hop company called Rhymesayers.

The Rhymesayers are an independent hip-hop label that was founded and raised in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota. They started out struggling, just as any other record label, but eventually formed a crew and to this day, continue to sign new artists. One of Rhymesayers’ first groups to generate an audience and tour life was Atmosphere, featuring Slug as their leader. Their 1997 album “Overcast,” is considered a classic in its genre, with dark and melodic beats.

Just recently my brother saw one of Rhymesayers’ most unique artists, Brother Ali, perform in Vermont. This rapper joined Rhymesayers’ wagon in 2000 and was brought along to Scribble Jam music festival, where Ali was a finalist. Later in 2003, Ali introduced a song, “Forest Whitiker,”that spoke about his albinoism and how “when I look in the mirror I see sexy ass me.” Brother Ali’s most recent album debuted just a few weeks ago with a more political mind titled “Mourning in America and Dreaming in Color.”

The radio is currently used as an easy and quick escape from reality on your way to work or to school in the morning or evening. However, to actually analyze and respect what the popular people are singing about is ridiculous. The artists that are still on the bottom are there because they are true to their audiences and care about what kind of message their lyrics relay. A lot of Rhymesayers’ artists have such amazing stories to share and they tell it in a creative and effective way. Hard work and dedication is what comes from independent labels.

Brother Ali, for example has songs about respecting women, “My Beloved,” and his views on politics. Almost any mainstream rap song today explicitly states the artist’s sexual needs and specifically describes them without any regard for a filter. As a female, I do not understand how women can respect someone if they don’t show respect to our own kind.

There is a major difference between music that is written just to be a number-one hit and music that is written to get a message across and share experiences. Then, there is the manner in which it is done. All musicians go about their career differently, but the one thing that is the same is the support and feedback from their audiences, which ultimately keeps them going. So, the next time a radio is playing “Call Me Maybe?” do yourself a favor and shut it off.