

Herschel and the Detainees

Written by Alaina L. Lewis



When Herschel and the Detainees take the stage in a venue, the whole pulse of the room intensifies.

Over time you'll soon discover that without protest, your heartbeat drifts in tune with the Funkadelic sounds of this ska-Caribbean-hip hop blend of new age music that can't help but make you wonder why hasn't the music industry scooped these guys up yet?

The answer is simpler than you think. They're fresh out the womb but truly just footsteps from the target. Have patience.

Herschel McPherson of Herschel and the Detainees has only been paired with his masterful band since the earlier part of the summer. The actor, singer and model whose family hails from the Virgin Islands has been attached to music for a multitude of years, but is now harnessing his power over the microphone.

On Nov. 17, Herschel and the Detainees lead fans at the Dakota Jazz Club in downtown Minneapolis to an attractive set of exclusive songs such as "Carlita" and their hit, "Out of My System" along with a few reinvented cover tracks such as "Purple Rain" and "Mambo Italiano" which were graced with the eclectic Herschel twist. The beautiful people were in full swing, and in total awe of these Twin Cities rockers, who performed for a good two hours and never failed to lose energy or impress their audience.

With only five months of working together as a band, what Herschel and the Detainees lack in years of musical service, they easily make up for by having a solid stage presence and a command over each of their gifts. Like the ease of a flying V formation of birds, their showmanship will make you think these folks have been in a marriage of many years. And when it comes to their leader, Herschel's contribution to the band, well, there's not much more to say than that if you're not an instant fan of his after watching this would-be rock crooner belt out a song like "Out of My System" then you my dear, need to recharge your battery.

"My music to me is much more than a representation of rock and hip-hop," said McPherson.

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"The first record I ever put together as a solo artist was a combination of reggae, soka, calypso and ska, with some hip-hop and pop undertones. I'm just influenced by a lot of the music I grew up listening to. My family is from the Virgin Islands, so the music I grew up listening to was more of a world beat."

The band's biggest asset comes from a natural synergy and a miraculous fusion of undeniable talent. To watch them is to feel like you're looking at a lifelong partnership of solid rockers. Their music captures you; takes you away with its unapologetic truths, laid out so eloquently over their fantastic production. Most can relate to their ditties, because they don't over-complicate, over-glorify, or over-saturate you with the same telling of a subject. Their songs are the offspring of a truth to writer McPherson, and how he's experienced many of the things in life we've all gone through just with his own twist on the moment.

"Most of the songs I write start with me, or are somehow related to me," said McPherson. "But when I write songs, even about different people, they somehow end up taking different formations and different meanings to me, and become about me. I have another song called "Karma" and I wrote it about some of my friends' situations. What you throw out there comes right back to you, and then my father recently passed away a few months ago and now the song has taken on a different meaning. Songs tend to do that."

Herschel and the Detainees are gearing up for another show next month at the Dakota. The show is slated for Dec. 15, and promises to be one worth your musical appetite.

For more information, visit www.herschelsmusic.com.