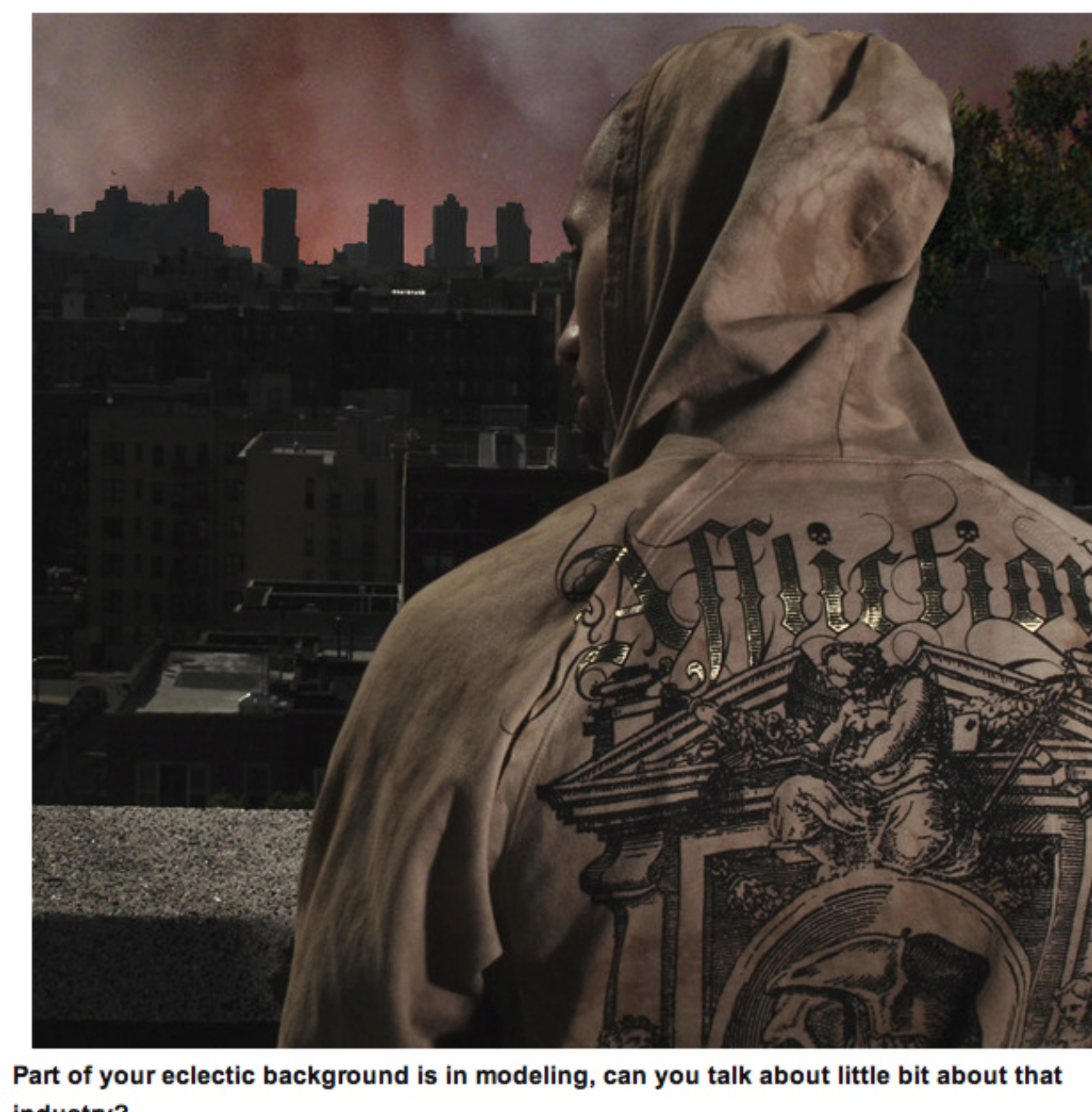


Hip Hop Industry Artist Spotlight: Faiya is heating things up

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"I didn't want the success of my music to rely on the success of a third party..." -Faiya

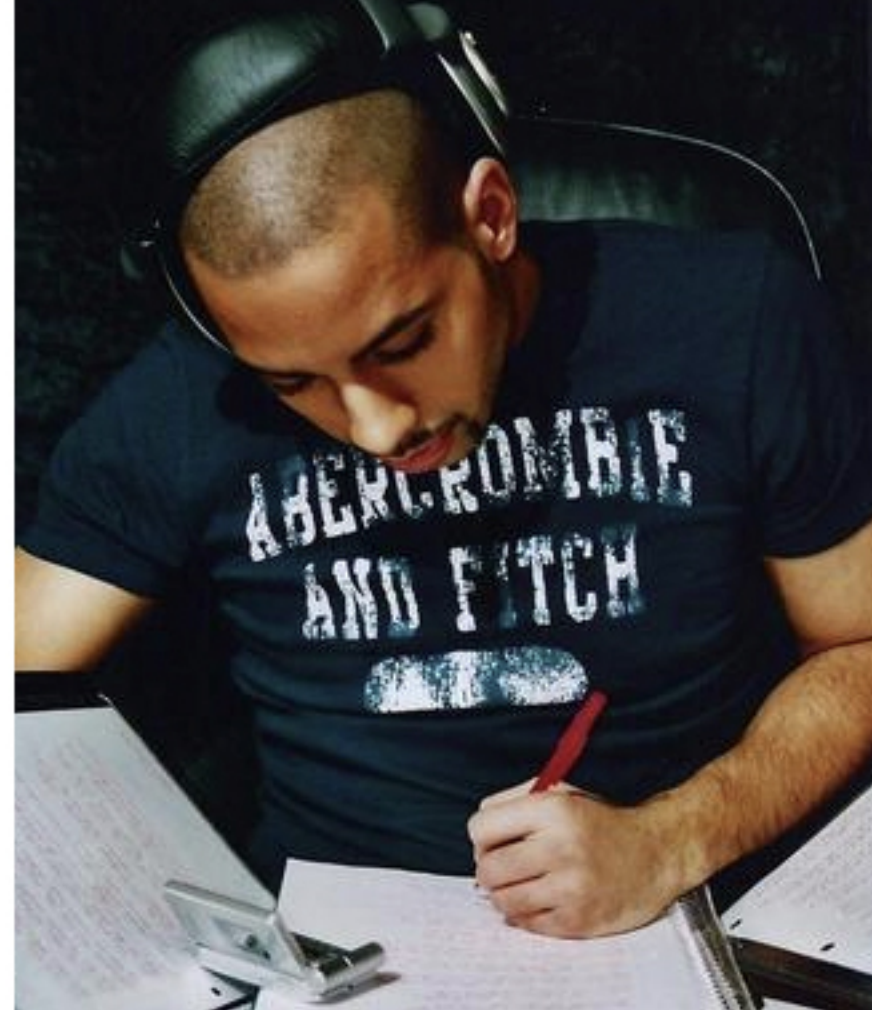


Part of your eclectic background is in modeling, can you talk about little bit about that industry?

I began pursuing modeling primarily as a way to get into the acting industry. Acting, along with music, is one of my life long passions. Once I entered modeling, however, I put my all into it. I began doing extra work in music videos for artists like Ricky Martin, Thalia, Mario Vasquez, etc. It's very humbling to work 16-hour days only to get fed crackers and carrots...but you do what you gotta do to get to the right people and ultimately to the next level. After I gained more insight through more work and auditions, I began to take big steps in the right direction. By the time I stopped modeling to transition towards my music, I had already done an XBOX 360 campaign ad, runway shows, a CORBIS Lifestyle shoot, and the cover of *New York Magazine's 1st Annual Sex Issue*. I gained a lot of valuable experience and contacts that carried over seamlessly into my music career.

How has the modeling business helped you prepare or transition into being a Hip Hop performer?

Modeling definitely molded me into a stronger performer. I have done plenty of plays and had lots of acting experience as a child, but modeling taught me how to work a crowd and generate a reaction. When you have to walk a runway and sell a product in literally 50 steps or less, you are forced to put ALL of your energy into every move you make. It's not just about the walk, but more how you bring attention to the product (shoes, jeans...or in my case now...music). Eye contact is essential because it makes the experience personal to every single viewer. Most importantly though is confidence. Confidence commands attention and respect, and modeling has helped me to remain mindful of this when it comes to ANYTHING regarding my music.



While watching your promotional video, it was impressive to see how you put everything together on your own- from recording to designing and packaging your product to creating your web site. Can you talk a little bit about the importance of keeping your hands in every aspect of your music career?

Well this might not be true to every individual, but from my life experience I have found that the only way to get YOUR dream out to the world is to do it YOUR way. I love to collaborate, but more often than not, people just aren't willing to put in as much work as I am. And I can't blame them... it's my passion after all, so it's my responsibility. Plus, having done most of the groundwork in almost every aspect of the music (physical album, website, mixing/mastering, video editing, promoting) makes it THAT much easier for business partners to sign on with me. Since the launch of the website I've had partners sign on for marketing, management purposes, graphic design, and photography. Not to mention the countless artists and producers who contact me everyday to make music together- lead by example.

So many artists today put some music online and call it a day. They've neglected to actually create a physical product. Can you discuss your decision to also offer a CD? Have you ever considered offering your product on vinyl?

CD will always be my first priority because as a fan growing up, I was always excited to grab the physical copy just so that I could appreciate the artwork. An album cover is like a book cover...it can enhance or hinder the overall listening experience. When fans purchase the physical product, I want them to feel like they just bought into something big. Every copy has a personal signature and a message that slips out from the cover as a keepsake. Even a gesture that small, to a true fan is monumental. Imagine Elvis Presley handing you a bubble gum wrapper, and on the inside wrote "Thank You"...would you not treasure it?

As far as vinyl is concerned, I was raised on cassette tapes and CDs, so vinyl never had much influence on me. Plus I don't have the materials to make them in my house. [laughing]

Can you describe your live performance?

My live performance is all about energy and feedback. I love to feel and hear the crowd before I perform, so I can gauge the feeling of the crowd immediately after. I always start off smooth and slow with the first song and then gradually escalate...make love to my crowd to gain love from my crowd. There are certain shows I have done where it was just me, a mic, a spotlight and an instrumental. Others are more elaborate with dancers, choreography, lights and hype-men. It all depends on what mood I want the audience to walk away with for that specific show.

New York is one of the most competitive places for many careers, including being a performer. Can you describe what you do to differentiate yourself from competition?

One big way I separate myself from the competition IS the promo video I put together. In a day and age where rappers are all about bragging (whether it be their chain, their watch, what they're sippin' on, or the whips they got), I feel as if the workingman has become invisible. I proudly display the fact that I do EVERYTHING on my own, because when the majority of these rappers take a second look and realize that I have gotten further in my career alone than they have with help, they will have to reassess exactly how much they love hip-hop. Will they be willing to put so much of themselves into their craft? It's my way of scaring off anyone that isn't looking to elevate the game.

Everyone's story is as unique as their fingerprint, and so if I stick to MY story, I will inevitably stand out. My music is also very eclectic, ranging from love songs to club songs, hood songs to conscious songs, and so on and so forth. I don't limit my music to a specific demographic...I make the song that I feel like getting off my chest at the moment, and I trust that somebody, somewhere in the world can relate to it.

Some of your tracks reminded me of good old school rap, for example "Ocean Drive" felt a bit like some classic Slick Rick. Some tracks even had a southern feel. Can you describe your sound and your goal when making music?

I am a poet before I am a rapper. My goal for any listener that presses play on any given song is to take them away from their reality. I bring them into my world, let them walk in my shoes, and see things through my eyes...this allows them to walk away with a deep understanding of the artist they decided to support. With that said, I make introspective music. In the midst of all my dancing and lovmaking songs, you will notice that I methodically sprinkle songs with deeper content throughout my album. It is my way of changing the world without overwhelming anyone by coming on too strong. As my career grows, so will my influence...and I look forward to using the power of music to shape a new generation of leaders.

You have a variety of ethnicities in your heritage, has this influenced your music creation?

It wasn't so much the ethnicities, but more so my parents influence. My mother loved to listen to salsa and ballads, while my father loved The Beatles, Elvis, Bruce Springsteen and The Rolling Stones. And all this was going on in an apartment situated in Flatbush, Brooklyn. This gave me an ear for MUSIC as a whole...not just for specific genres. Rap music was MY generation's form of expression, so I would always write poetry or write raps to my favorite Tupac or LL Cool J songs. But at the same time, me and my brothers would throw on some music from Offspring and just rock out. On moodier days, I would listen to my old school favorites from Bryan Adams or Richard Marx. I'm an artist looking to make audio paintings...rap is my paintbrush...and the colors come from dipping into the full spectrum of Music.

Can you discuss the process of creating your music (gear, software, etc.)?

When I decided to venture out on my own and learn to record and mix music, SONAR was my digital audio workstation. Nowadays I work with ProTools LE 8.0 connected through my Mbox-2 Mini. My microphone of choice is the Samson CO3...it works flawlessly for solo performances and does a great job of keeping the surrounding noises out of the final recording. I'm a perfectionist, which is what led me away from outside recording studios. Producers just could not offer me 24 hour availability, and believe me there are countless times where I sit for up to 16 hours solely editing, mixing, and mastering tracks. My recordings usually take place between 2-6 am, when the world is asleep. It gives me that feeling of isolation that helps me pour myself into each record.

Can you talk a bit about your new album?

I decided to title the new album "Welcome to the FAIYA" even though it is not my first release, because I have grown so much as an artist and because it marks the beginning of a movement. With the first album, I had passion with no direction. Now I know where I stand. I know what I am capable of, and I know where I am headed...so "Welcome to the FAIYA" is a doormat, inviting listeners to become a part of history.

What would you want people to know about you that might not be clearly conveyed within your web site?

I want the world to know that I will bring the respect and dignity that other genres enjoy back to rap music. I rhyme with purpose...this way nobody will be able to say my success was by Accident.

What sites or services do you use to connect with fans? Which social networking sites do you feel are most productive?

Myspace was my number one social networking site since the inception of Faiya. In 2008, however, I strayed from my connection to fans and contacts so that I could research and really get my productions to sound "radio-ready." By the time I got back (2009), Myspace no longer held the image it did in the years prior, and so I had to start from scratch. This was the main reason I decided to build FAIYA.net. I didn't want the success of my music to rely on the success of a third party website. Facebook has proved very productive in the couple of months I have been using it, since people develop deeper relationships and seem more connected than they did on Myspace. I have also been using ReverbNation since I began pushing my music online in 2007, and it has never failed me. The tools they provide, and the interaction they allow with fans as well as their community of artists, to me is unrivaled.

I keep all ties to the various sites, and the ultimate goal is to have everyone connected through FAIYA.net.

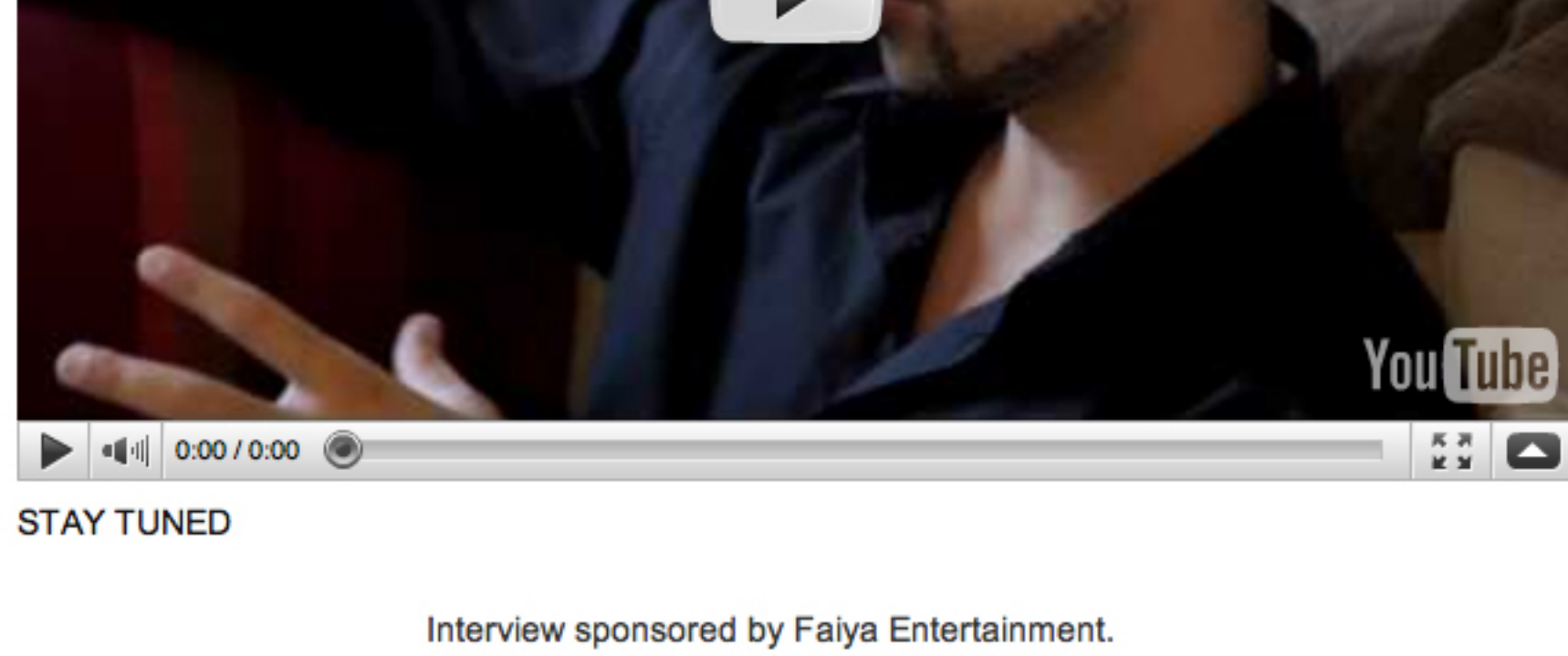
What services do you use to sell your music?

"Welcome to the FAIYA" is sold directly off [my page](http://my.page) through PayPal, but I recently signed up to Tunecore.com for distribution through major online retailers such as iTunes, Amazon and Rhapsody.

Can you talk about your offline marketing activities?

Outside of the World Wide Web, we are concentrating first on finishing up the mixtape "Burn After Hearing." This will be my business card for all potential listeners. Then comes the shows...the most crucial aspect of ANY artist's longevity. We are currently scanning the album together to select the perfect single. Once selected, we will have an official music video shot for this single and then design performances that revolve around this single.

Performances will spark the interest of potential supporters, the mixtape will ignite their feeling to co-sign me, and the web site will allow them to spread the FAIYA!!!



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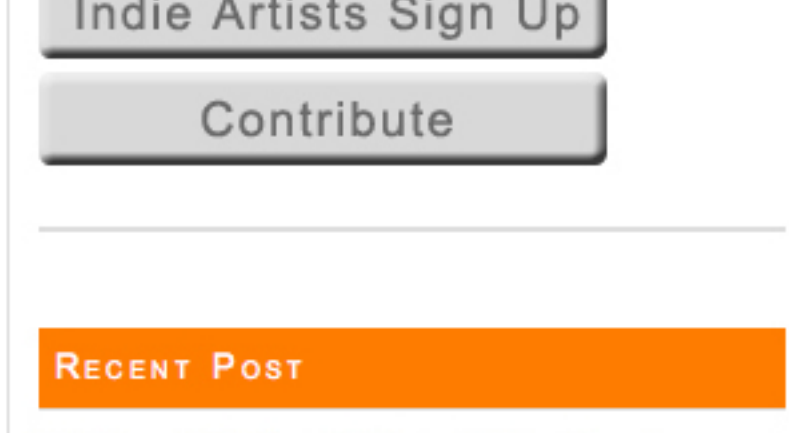
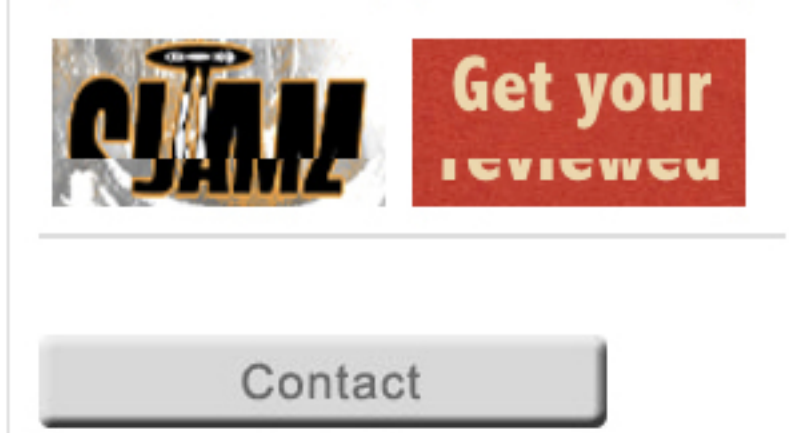
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