Rap Sheet

Hip-hoppers rhyme “HIV awareness”

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Ten years after rapper Eazy-E died from AIDS, hip-hoppers are lyrically battling their fans—to get tested. “Hip-hop is our generation’s tool for education and liberation,” says Monifa Bandele, executive director of the Malcolm X movement, which organized Black August, an annual hip-hop benefit in New York. The concert, headlined by rhymer Mos Def, netted a much-needed $14,000 for HIV awareness in the U.S. and Africa. Half of all new HIV cases in the U.S. occur among African Americans.

Also in August, VH1 aired *Tracking the Monster*, documenting singer India.Arie’s African AIDS-clinic tour. Black Entertainment Television, meanwhile, continues to educate young adult African Americans with its Rap-It-Up programming . Even rapper/actress Eve got tested on her UPN show. Marteniz Brown, a patient advocate who played Eve’s testing counselor, says clients ask, “I’ve been thinking of getting tested since I saw Eve—where can I [go]?” Hip-hop hooray.

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