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Baltimore Boom Bap Society

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★ Jordan Goodman



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Our Western culture is slowly suffocating.

As a society built on capitalism, it's only natural we experience entertainment as an "Artist/Consumer" model.

Let me introduce two guys committed to giving us a little breathing room.



DJ Dubble8 (left) Wendel Patrick (right)

To describe the type of music [Wendel Patrick](#) produces would be to miss the point. His music is rooted in hip hop, but feels both classic and contemporary. His records are entirely self-produced and mixed—truly a complete artist. “Wendel Pat” is Kevin Gift, a classically trained pianist who has performed all over the world. He lives and creates in Baltimore, where he has worked as a Loyola University music professor for a decade.

DJ Dubble8 is Erik Spangler, a *tour-de-force*, personified in the Baltimore music and arts communities. He is an adjunct professor at MICA, a founder of the [Mobtown Modern](#) concert series, and earned his Ph.D. in Music Composition at Harvard. I first experienced Erik’s contributions to Baltimore at his inaugural Vigil, an outdoor, sunset to sunrise event. [Check out](#) how Erik started this year’s event and [contact me](#) if you know of a more forward-thinking performance in the area.

These two friends and *culture-curators* wanted to collaborate. After a short stroll through Station North following last year’s Artscape, the Boom Bap Society vision was born.

Shifting the Culture

Let's consider the evolution of hip hop over the last decade. Like most forms of art, there has been a significant fragmentation of genres and fans. (Thank you, Internet).

You have Jay-Z's brand of "luxury" rap, the teen-punk ethos of Odd Future, the "elderly statesmen" in The Roots, etc. Yet, the Boom Bap Society doesn't just carve its own niche in the genre; it creates a new reality in which the art form can exist. . . at least, in Baltimore.

A typical Boom Bap Society evening will feature different combinations of carefully curated artists, including Wendel and Dubble8 themselves. I have been to a couple and already seen a harpist, vibraphonist, and full chamber orchestra adapt seamlessly to the Boom Bap universe. Soon there will be a more formal way to "audition" for a spot on a future performance.

What comes of it depends on the moment. Literally. Usually the performing members will meet once prior to the event, not unlike the feeling-out process of a first date. Each performance is as "in-the-moment" and "once-in-a-lifetime" as it gets. Or, in my quoted words, "fucking special."



Power in Numbers

The emcee, hip hop culture's "front man," is mostly synonymous with a braggadocios, ego-driven warrior. This makes sense, given the culture's competitive nature rooted in the "rap battle." Survival of the fittest, if you will.

And sure, hip hop artists are also known for sharing the spotlight, à la rap crews, the DJ-and-emcee, the "Rihanna and _____" collab. But the Boom Bap Society takes a different approach, more similar to the jazz and jam band cultures.

The performances are most effective when the musicians are fully mindful that each is contributing to the whole. You can begin to see the broader metaphor of how this relates to our community. The Boom Bap Society can begin to influence both young and seasoned generations who identify with hip hop culture. Fame, iTunes sales, and Twitter trends don't need to determine success; The performance itself can be enough.



The Boom Bap Society is by far the most promising thing this city's hip hop community has. Baltimore Club has already put the world on notice; Now the Boom Bap Society has the potential to change the perception of what "hip hop" can be.

There's power in numbers and the Boom Bap Society embodies this. To be an artist, especially an aspiring rapper, can be isolating, but Wendel Patrick and DJ Dubble8 have created a framework from which all artists can learn, and one similar to the other, proven, DIY art collectives that this city has spawned over the past decade.

Community Hip Hop has arrived in Baltimore, and we're all invited. Talk about a breath of fresh air.



Experience the Boom Bap Society monthly at [The Windup Space](#). The next event is Wednesday, June 6. Performances typically run from 9:30pm-12:30am.

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