

Comin' straight out of Truro

BY SOHRAB FARID AND CHEKLOVE SHAKIL

Watching Muchmusic's Rapcity with Six-Too (aka Truro's Rob Squire), one comes to realize how little he cares about being hip, or pleasant for that matter. While others found room to compliment the various artists on the show, the rapper found little to say other than "this guy sucks" or "Rapcity sucks." What Six-Too does care about is putting out a quality product — his new tape *Return of the Seeker* is just that. In town for a James Brown tribute gig, Six-Too sat down with Hip Club Groove's Cheklove Shakil and myself.

Six-Too: Low quality gear, high quality material

CD

Return of the Seeker
Six-Too
Ant Records

"Then its back to the lab/to stare at the ten dollar microphone I gotta grab/it makes me mad that I ain't got nothing but 808's/You gotta have the SP 1200's rocking in the place/But I ain't got none of the shit that I'm supposed to have/No rich dad/I can't laugh..."

One listen to Six-Too's *Return of the Seeker* and one shares his frustration. Frustration about how there are artists with much higher quality equipment putting out much lower quality material. A rule of thumb in hip-hop nowadays seems to be you need good quality turntables, samplers, mix-

Gaz:How did you actually get into hip hop?

Six-Too: When I was like, ten years old...I was living in Toronto and all I heard was hip hop music everywhere. Being in a neighbourhood that's pretty much bred hip hop culture...it's just something you pick up. I started writing rhymes when I was 13...I started making stuff seriously after I moved to Truro.

Gaz:Speaking of moving to Truro, how tough was it being a hip hop artist from a place like Truro? Did you find it hard to get accepted?

Six-Too: As soon as you come from a small town, there's automatically going to be a credibility

It's not all tar-paper shacks

and moonshine

problem. But in terms of the problems of being in a small town, there's lack of support and people don't take you seriously.

Gaz:How about Halifax as compared to the rest of the country?

Six-Too: Halifax is a really small place compared to Toronto, or Vancouver, or whatever, and people look at that and say "Oh yeah, they're just a bunch of smalltown kids," which is like, total bullshit. We make beats, we rhyme every day, we got no money. People have these preconceived notions about Halifax or

Truro or whatever. It's not all tar-paper shacks and moonshine...

Gaz:How hard would it be for you, a Canadian hip hop artist, to get a full record deal, and is that what you want in the long run?

Six-Too: Right off the bat, that isn't what I want. If I was doing that, my music wouldn't sound the way it does now. For me to do that [get a record deal], it's next to impossible. I'm looking at this realistically: I'll hook up my shit, I'll put out my own record, tour in support of my own record, and if someone comes up to me with a deal and says "Oh, we want you to sign," I mean, that's not gonna happen. The chances of that are very, very slim.

Gaz:What are your thoughts on the hip hop scene in Halifax?

Six-Too: The hip hop scene in Halifax is one that is real confused and divided, and it's over bullshit petty stuff. The only way that any one of us groups is gonna get over is by having everyone push, and have the scene come together, and that's not happening. Plus, there's only one element of hip hop that's being pushed out, and that's the mc's. For the most part, the DJ's aren't getting props at all.

Gaz:How are the other three, or better yet four, elements of hip hop, other than mc-ing, represented?

Six-Too: Well, production: there's some production. Kids got

no money, and for the most part we're working with garbage gear and coming out with some stuff that I think is like totally compatible with anything else in the world. DJ's, as far as hands on DJ skills, there's a lot of skilled DJ's. There's some b-boys, those guys are always practicing and are getting featured in some videos. Graf...shit...I don't think it's really broken here and I think a lot of kids have a really confused notion as to what this graf thing is.

Gaz:Hip hop is rapidly becoming pop culture in urban scenes. Groups like Mobb Deep and especially Wu-Tang get ripped off. What keeps you and your style original?

Six-Too: Well, I mean, I don't listen to a lot of new music, but I'm not writing about how my whole clique is Gambino's or whatever, and I'm not some Superhuman MC who doesn't have any feelings towards anything. I mean, I write when I'm frustrated, when I'm angry, upset, whatever.

Gaz:What's with the Superman agenda? Are you going to keep putting out three albums a year?

Six-Too: (laughing) Yeah...I'm puttin' out my own record — I think on vinyl and maybe a couple of CD's for radio stations — and I'm going into a studio to record that. I got some credit cards so...

Gaz:Why is your show dope? Why should people check it out?

Six-Too: My show is dope because...cause I'm not doing what everyone else is doing. I'm not afraid to sit down and express myself to the crowd

ers, drum machines etc., just to be down. *Return of the Seeker* is the exception that proves the rule.

Like his previous two tapes (this one is his third in less than a year), Six-Too does everything from the production to the rhyming to the artwork on the cover of the tape by himself. His production, despite the aforementioned monetary problems, will be the first thing noticed. Six-Too has a knack of finding samples that sound exactly the way you want them to, be it the guitars in "Introduction to the Six Too band" right through to the piano on "Outro." The production has obviously evolved from *4 Elements* (his last tape). Only a couple of songs on *ROTS* sound dark and heavy like the sound that was comprised most of the last tape.

On the mic, Six-Too continues to improve, still managing to flow straight from the heart. Much of the album is braggadocio battle lyrics, arguably the essence of rapping, but there are also a couple of interesting narratives, most notably the very metaphorical "The Peach," and also "Beat Breaker's Block." The latter tells of the plight of a frustrated producer searching for the perfect sample.

Six-Too's *Return of the Seeker* is the latest effort in an ever-improving local hip-hop scene. For those who enjoyed *SuperStar Props* or *4 Elements* (or him at his live shows, for that matter) — you'll enjoy *Return of the Seeker* even more. If you've never heard Six-Too, this is the tape you want to get.

SOHRAB FARID

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