

hip-hop remix

street wear and high fashion hook up

STORY BY KAREN VITT / SPECIAL TO THE OREGONIAN
PHOTOS BY TIM LaBARGE / THE OREGONIAN

Toni Hill and Syndel of Portland hip-hop duo Siren's Echo recently returned from a CD release tour of the Western United States and Canada with DJ Wicked, to promote their debut CD, "Psalms of the Sirens," available at www.sirensechomusic.com. From 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. on Saturday, catch the duo performing in a live, televised CD release party on Portland Community Media Channel 23. The show is free and open to the public. For information, call 503-288-1515. Here, the duo rocks street-worthy Adidas gear dressed up with sexy accessories, in perfect sync with their tough, soulful style.

On Toni (left): Adidas grid tank \$35
Adidas Judo Girls warmup \$100
Both at Adidas / Baby Phat
asymmetrical skirt \$48 At d.e.m.o.
Dollhouse silver slingbacks \$59
At Sole / Silver hoop earrings \$25
Heart chain necklace \$25
Both at Guess

On Syndel (right): Adidas grid tank \$35
Adidas grid hoodie \$70
Jerez 2 Ripstop satin sneakers \$20
Originals Missy cap \$25
All at Adidas / Baby Phat
boot cut jeans \$59 At d.e.m.o.



These days, hip-hop is just plain hip. Since its Bronx beginnings, elements of hip-hop culture have been creeping into mainstream fashion through music, language and art. And today, the same creative urban culture that rose from the streets with rap music, break dancing and graffiti art has become such a major influence that it can be difficult to distinguish between "hip-hop style" and style itself. "It's safe to say that hip-hop is mainstream now," says Joe Flannery, global director of sport heritage for Adidas. "Not too long back, hip-hop was looked at as a small niche market. Now, it's

the hip-hop lifestyle that is pushing and determining the fashion trends of today." The overwhelming popularity of hip-hop music is the driving force, and because so many clothing labels have been launched by successful hip-hop artists, hip-hop-inspired fashion is taking on a more moneyed look. In other words, it's all about the bling. Warm-up jackets and cool kicks are still dope, but the way to wear them now is with a sexy top underneath and accessories that gleam.

"In the past, sportswear was standard hip-hop uniform, most likely because hip-hop is associated with the streets and being on the move," says Mireaya Medina, a designer who launched the

local label Afrodijio with Shaneika Warden. "Nowadays, high fashion is just as acceptable. We see Mary J. Blige as a spokesperson for Viva Glam by MAC, and sporting Versace. You hear rappers talking about Prada shoes."

Fortunately, you don't need mad flow to get today's sexy, powerful hip-hop look. For as much as it's about designer labels and bling, hip-hop is still about keeping it real. "It's all about mixing designer pieces with street wear to get a comfortable but stylish look," says Amy Volk, designer of Lovely Clothing. "What makes clothing 'hip-hop' is the person and the way they wear it. When Eve shows up in a head-to-toe Gucci outfit, she doesn't look any less hip-hop than if she were to wear a baby tee, some tight jeans and a pair of Tims. It's a lifestyle and an attitude." Word.

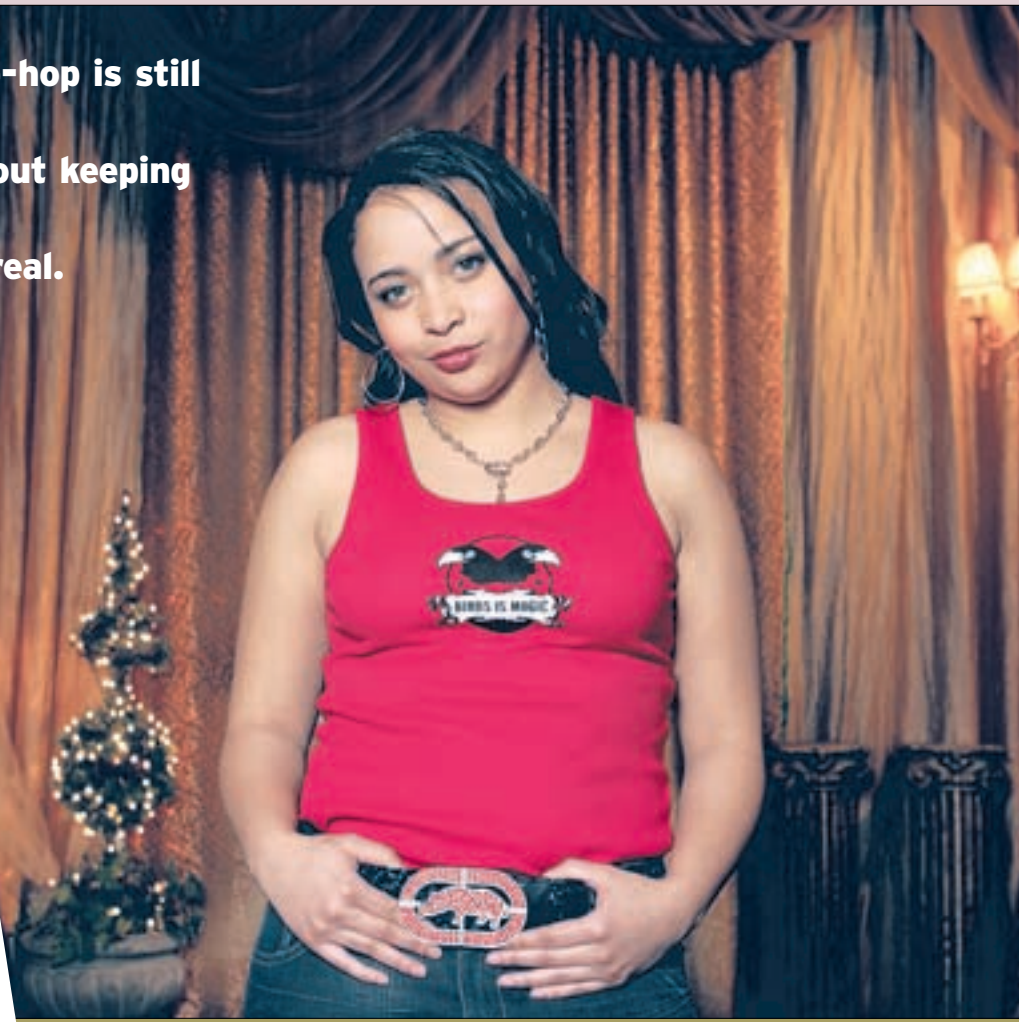
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Baby Phat Diva sneakers
\$72
At d.e.m.o.

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"Hip-hop style to me means going the extra mile to be original," says Syndel, sporting local gear from Same Underneath. "It means being noticed – catching people's eyes for all the right reasons. Hip-hop fashion, head-to-toe attitude!"

Same Underneath "Birds Is Magic" tank top \$16 At Local 35, Exit Real World and 360 Vinyl / Ecco Unlimited belt \$38 At d.e.m.o. / Guess earrings \$15 At Meier & Frank / Guess chain necklace \$22 At Guess



"Hip-hop is real flashy right now," says Toni Hill, whose friends dub her "The Chameleon" for her ability to change up her look from show to show. "It's platinum and diamonds now," Hill says. "Eve is going to the same clubs as Paris Hilton."

Michelle DeCourcy strapless silk dress \$279 At Michelle DeCourcy / Gold satin "Boomtown" evening sandals \$59.99 At Nine West / Multi-layered gold necklace \$15 At Aldo / Gold hoop earrings \$18.50 At Guess / She & Josh gold evening bag \$24 At Blush Beauty Bar



Steve Madden sunglasses \$30 At Meier & Frank



Logo purse \$29 At Marshalls