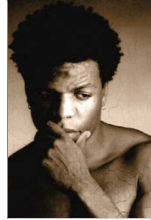


Tim'm West: My Favorite Things

BY KEITH BOYKIN, IN MUSIC
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 28 2005, 10:10AM

How do you describe someone like Tim'm West? He's a **musician, activist, author and publisher**. He's been a gay rapper long before the gay rapper question was even getting asked. And he's a modern day Renaissance man, gifted in many different fields with a diverse concern of interests.

My Favorite Things Officially described in his bio as an educator, scholar, journalist, poet, and rapper, Tim'm completed his B.A. at Duke University, but he says the foundation for his creative future was planted in Taylor, Arkansas, where he was well known in high school as a poet, choreographer, vocalist, and actor. Since then, he's come a long way, having been named everywhere from the New York Times to **Newsweek**.



In 1999, while a busy graduate student at Stanford, Tim'm co-founded Deep Dickollective (DDC). In 2004, he released a musical complement to his book **Red Dirt Revival** with the CD "Songs From Red Dirt" on Cellular Records.

But Tim'm is more than just a talented artist. He's highly educated as well. A former instructor of Writing Pedagogy classes at Eugene Lang College of New York's New School and in Stanford University's first-year Writing and Critical Thinking program, Tim'm received an M.A. in Liberal Studies/Philosophy from the Graduate Faculty at The New School for Social Research in 1998, and in January of 2002 and an M.A. in Modern Thought and Literature from Stanford.

Last but not least, he's a teacher. How can you not love a young black man in the classroom? While in the Bay Area, Tim'm was the department chair of English and Creative Writing at Oakland School for the Arts, but he now lives in Washington, D.C., where he teaches in the English Department at Cesar Chavez High School for Public Policy. And I didn't even know they had high schools that specialized in public policy. Wow.

Tim'm T. West can be reached online at his website at www.reddirt.biz.

Tim'm West's Five Favorite Websites

1. www.okayplayer.com

I became a member of okayplayer back in '99. It's a hub for all the backpacker, bohemian hip hop/neo soul twenty/thirty-somethings who like artists like The Roots, Common, Erykah Badu, Jill Scott, Mos Def and Talib Kweli, MeShell N'degeochello, and other artists on the vanguard of what's next. In particular, it was important to forge conversations about LGBT folk in these spaces. In 1999, when we introduced the notion of gay emcees to their forums, people were slightly taken aback. Now gay topics are a major preoccupation of the General Discussion boards. In 2005 Okayplayer held their annual reunion during the Memorial Day weekend in D.C. (and at the same host hotel as DC Black Pride). One disgruntled okayplayer greeted me at the hotel lobby reminding me NOT to go in the direction of the "gay stuff"... I took special pride in telling him that I was there to register for both.

2. www.lalahhathaway.com

There's something about Lalah fans. I'm not sure if I'm her biggest fan or not, but am fortunate to have gotten to know her personally. She's magic to me. Her spirit, her energy, her voice, brings much peace to my heart. Beyond the rich legacy she carries in those chords, she brings together a community of people unlike any other I've experienced online. A favorite is the "Tell Me" space on her site, where people can post about everything from other favorite artists connected to Lalah (e.g., Rahsaan Patterson, Ledisi, etc...) to politics or personal issues. It's a pretty amazing community who has also been very supportive of my own music. I just wish that I had more time to linger there.

3. espn.com

I'm a die-hard sports junkie, particularly when it comes to my basketball. I'd be lying if I didn't have espn.com here, because I spend a great deal of my time staying caught up on scores. I'd be someday interested in collaborating with jocks in the black LGBT community to produce some site where people could discuss our interests in sports. I'm fortunate to be in DC where I play hoops with a group of brothas in the life on Monday nights associated with a group called Brothers Reaching Out. I'm also co-coach of my school's Varsity Basketball Team. It's something I take a lot of pride in.

4. gayhiphop.com

Who is the gay rapper? Well actually there are so many of us, it's a pretty asinine question to be asking in this day and age. Why does the mainstream media keep this movement hidden from most of us? Perhaps some of us are actually pretty damn good. Look out for the documentary "Pick Up The Mic" which features me with Deep Dickollective and gives a broader picture of the influence of black LGBT folk in the whole gay hip hop movement.

5. deephousepage.com

Any other househeads out there? I miss the days when going to the club was less about keeping the clothes cute and more about releasing all the negative energy of the week. You went to clubs not to hear what's on the radio, but what wasn't. You looked forward to the vast spectrum of LGBT peoples (and yes, back then clubs were more co-ed too) and came out to celebrate living. Deep House page is just one of a few house music sites that helps me stay connected when I need to remember the first music that really moved my spirit. A PK (preacher's kid), I gravitated to spirituality of house music, and was also able to connect to it's roots in disco and club music that icons like the late Sylvester and Frankie Knuckles pioneered. It's a spiritual thing. It's important for us post 30 folks to get out now and again and support the dj's and the venues that still play it.

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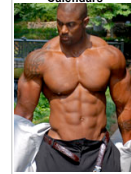


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