

Beau Young Prince: started from Binford, now he's here



BY GABE POLLAK
STAFF WRITER

Baauer, known for his meme supreme "Harlem Shake," sat on senior Beau Young Prince's couch.

After playing with Baauer at a year-opening concert earlier that night, Prince, with encouragement from friends hanging out after the gig, decided to show Baauer his "Harlem Shake" remix.

"Stop that track," Baauer said.

The moment was tense. Then, like the famous lion roar before the shakes' drop, Baauer delivered his decree.

"Play it again."

Prince's Hodgins home erupted with Baauer's approval.

In that same apartment months later, Prince and friends were playing the original Super Smash Brothers, the atmosphere ringing octaves apart from the night of Baauer's visit, or, for that matter, the recording intensity that guided Prince's collegiate career.

Recently signed to Bargal Records, an independent label based in Prince's home city of Washington, D.C., Prince is a certified hip-hop artist. Prince has opened for the likes of Wale and Chiddy Bang, while, a hip-hop star in his own right, earning over one million views on YouTube.

Yet, a laid-back night of Super Smash Bros. may be more fitting for this dedicated performer than immediately apparent.

Inspiration starts close to home.

On an unassuming Friday night in Binford four years ago, Prince, senior Leia Gaskin-Sediku and Daron Witmore '11 played Mario Kart. The games' earworming theme — if you've ever fallen off Rainbow Road, you know it — instigated an impromptu jam. Prince freestyled as Gaskin-Sediku improvised a hook.

"We just had speakers and an imagination," said Prince.

Later, Witmore added keys, and the trio produced a track, leading to one of Prince's most popular songs among the Guilford set, "Star Power."

With Witmore's spacey production and a sunny hook from Gaskin-Sediku, Prince most perfectly manufactured music for Guilford lake lounging.

"Meet me at the lake / Open up my trunk and let my system Quake," rhymes Prince. Listening, you can feel sure that's a Guilford College reference.

"Yeah, I rep Guilford College," said Prince.

However, Prince and "Star Power" reflect more of Guilford than simple lake shine.

Community and diversity are two core values. Prince's career at Guilford is characterized by extensive collaboration. The individual shaped by community.

He performed alongside Gaskin-Sediku during their first year at school, this time as the fully formed group Superteam. In his junior year, Prince collaborated with Ryan James from Bitter Children. Junior Jordan Clark energizes crowds as Prince's hype man, performing under the stage name Fish. Currently, Prince is working with rising hip-hop artist L.A.B., known in the classroom as sophomore Rod Walker.

"He's a guy out here who has potential," said Prince. "Give him a look out."

More than music, though, Prince interacts with an eclectic mix of the student body.

"He's friends with so many different kinds of people," said friend and senior Rishona Pine.

Experiencing all these different artists and people transformed Prince's perspective.

"Guilford has opened my eyes so much to what I've wanted to do musically, which is to step into myself," said Prince.

Life meets sound. Prince loves artists ranging from Jefferson Airplane to Duke Ellington.

His music oscillates between frat hop and chill wave. He interacts and collaborates with artists from the lacrosse field to the Pines.

"Prince adds cohesiveness to the community," said friend and senior Ashley Lynch. "He motivates people to look at different perspectives."

"I love this place," said Prince. "It's been such an experience of personal growth."

As Prince walks in front of King Hall on May 18, he fulfills two familiar stories. Drake puts one succinctly in his recent single, rapping, "We started from the bottom, now we're here." Even more, Prince graduates having truly embodied the school's spirit. It's a liberal arts recasting of the hip-hop phoenix myth.

Started from Binford, now he's here.

Prince plays with L.A.B. at the second annual "A Dollar and a Dream" tour this Saturday in the Community Center. Prince's next mixtape, "Tapestries and Javelins," comes out in May.

LEIA GASKIN-SEDIKU/GUILFORDIAN

Every year, April 20 stands as hemp's high holiday

BY ANTHONY HARRISON
STAFF WRITER

In cannabis culture, 420 means many things. It is a time, a date, a holiday and marijuana itself.

"When I go to a college and ask, 'What does 420 mean? Raise your hand if you know what it means,' every hand in the room goes up," said Allen St. Pierre, executive director of National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Law, in a phone interview with The Guilfordian.

Despite how recognizable this number has become in Western culture, few people understand its origins.

"My knowledge of the historical background of 420 is limited to folklore and yearly fantastical additions from friends while sitting around a Ouija board pretending that it's working," said a Guilford student who wished to remain anonymous.

"When you say 420, you mean there is the perceived notion that everybody's supposed to smoke weed at 4:20 in the afternoon, right?" said Public Safety Director Ron Stowe.

Numerous theories have abounded for years. Suggestions include the amount of active chemicals in marijuana (there are actually 483), Dutch tea time, a police code for marijuana smoking in progress, or that Bob Dylan came up with the phrase. Dylan's song "Rainy Day Women #12 and 35" sparked the latter theory. "Rainy day women" was slang for marijuana

cigarettes, 12 and 35 multiplied equals 420, and in the song, Dylan sings over and over about getting stoned.

The truth is less deliberate than any theory but just as interesting.

In the fall of 1971, a few San Francisco Bay teenagers nicknamed The Waldos heard rumors of an abandoned field of marijuana. They arranged to meet at a statue of Louis Pasteur at their high school. The time they agreed to was 4:20 p.m.

The meeting time became code among the friends, and as fate would have it, one of the Waldos later managed bands for Phil Lesh, bassist for The Grateful Dead. Through osmosis, the term spread through the Deadhead community and the country.

This particular April 20 enjoyed a historic reputation, following the complete legalization of marijuana in Washington and Colorado.

"Those in Colorado and Seattle who will come out in favor of reform do so knowing that the marijuana in their pocket is no longer illegal," St. Pierre said. "The police and government have no reason necessarily to treat them like a criminal or an adversary, when in fact, these people are just peaceful taxpayers who support law enforcement's efforts to keep society safe."

"Outside of public use of marijuana, which is not allowed in either state — though I suspect there will surely be lots of it — it will be incredibly celebratory."

Though this April 20 was a red-letter day, memories of 4/20s past survive the purple haze.

"My first ever 4/20, my mom caught my best friend and I trying to sneak out of the neighborhood," said the anonymous student. "It was actually the first time I had ever smoked, and what I can remember, other than her physically piercing glare before allowing us to retreat shamefully to the basement for bed, was hallucinating that my friend was singing 'Row, Row, Row Your Boat' to me in Spanish. I also thought that my pillow was trying to eat my face. Thus, a lifelong friendship with marijuana was forged."

To others, April 20 is no big deal.

"As far as (Public Safety is) concerned, it is another day," said Stowe. "We certainly do not recognize it as a holiday."

No matter what, 420 has entered the cultural milieu.

"(On April 20), Comedy Central and Spike TV and G4, just to name three brands, will have 420 programming and make all kinds of references that are positive — not negative, not damning — about cannabis and cannabis users," said St. Pierre. "Major, multi-million dollar corporations mock the prohibition and make money off of it."

Perhaps the recognition and acceptance of 420 in mainstream culture bodes well for marijuana legalization. For the time being, 420 remains an open secret, and now you know the legend behind the code.