

Diversions

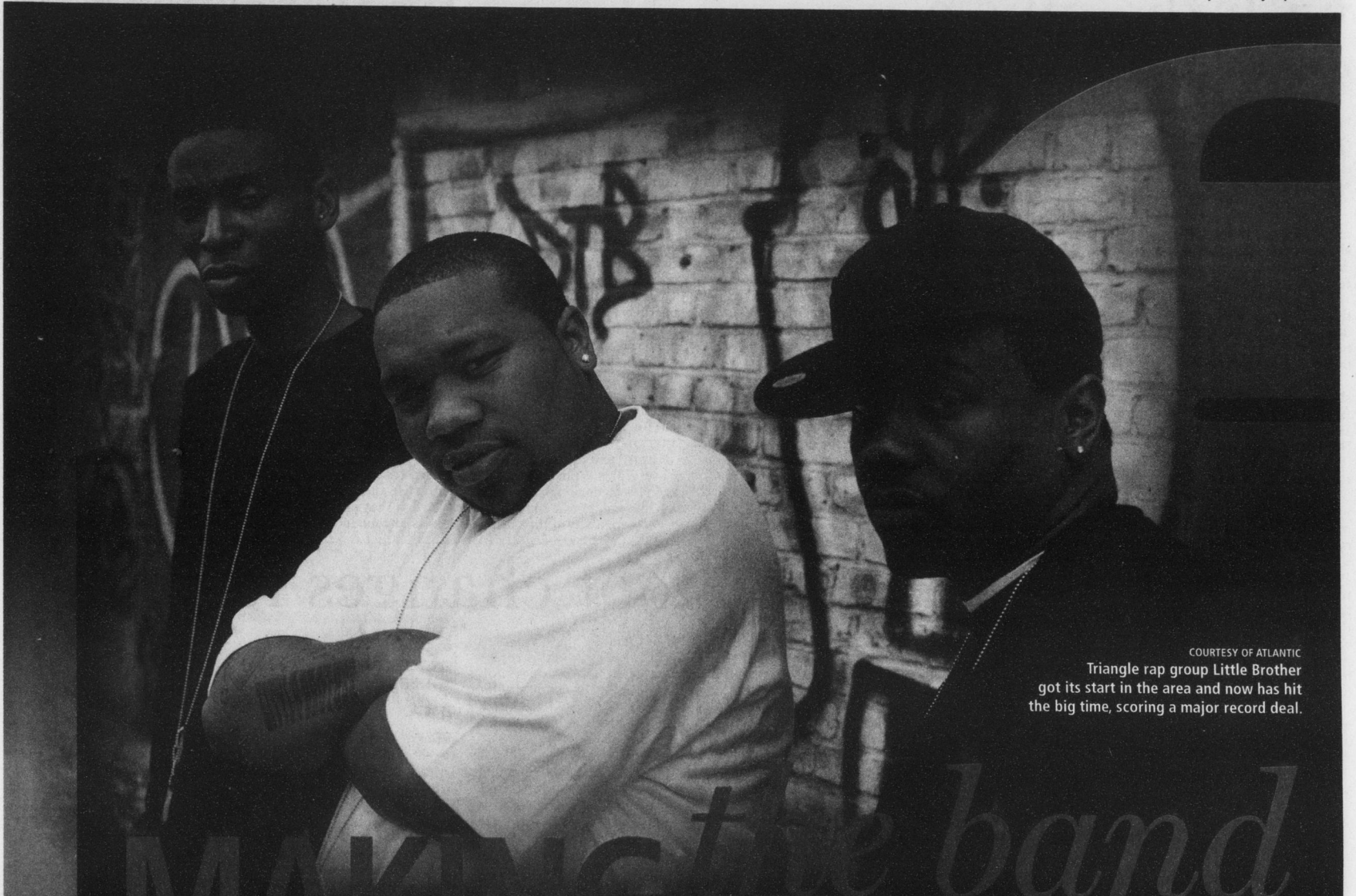
The Daily Tar Heel

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DIVE ONLINE ■ **MORE OF THE SAME** ... 'Just Like Heaven,' just like every other romantic comedy — but with ghosts ■ **WOW, THIS IS BAD** ... Tony Yayo returns from the clink to drop a trashy rap album



COURTESY OF ATLANTIC
Triangle rap group Little Brother got its start in the area and now has hit the big time, scoring a major record deal.

MAKING THE BAND WELCOME TO MUSIC TOWN

BY TANNER SLAYDEN, ASSISTANT ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

Few have heard of the local band Nine P.M. Traffic.

But the group, composed of four University juniors, is working to change all that. The young men, who pull their sound from contemporary rock, funk and the '90s R&B group Blackstreet, are trying to make their way onto the national playlist — having little idea what challenges the local scene will throw at them first.

For many, the answer is rejection and failure.

Rolling Stone magazine labeled UNC as one of the top "Schools that Rock" and noted the Triangle's thriving indie-rock community, but that doesn't mean the area is immune from two brutal music and industry realities: There is no correlation between talent and success, and it is nearly impossible to make a living playing music.

"Major record labels are quite often run by stupid people who have no concept of what good music is," said Mike Phillips, founder of local music store Schoolkids Records. "Musicians have to get some sort of big break these days, no matter where they are based."

Traffic is about to hit its first series of road blocks, but Chad Hines, Jason Ray, Nick Burns and Erik Turnblom are ready.

Getting started

Artists who pursue the rock 'n' roll dream have one thing in common: For them, music is more than a hobby.

Michael Rank is the front man for Snatches of Pink, one of the oldest bands still grinding it out in Chapel Hill. He has been in the game for a long time, going to California to learn how to rip on a guitar instead of going to college.

"I started Snatches of Pink 20 years ago, and rock has been my nine-to-five ever since," Rank said.

For people such as Rank, the choice to pursue rock makes perfect sense.

Andy Herod, lead singer of Chapel Hill's The Comas, is one of those people. He and his bandmates garnered national press last year following the release of their critically acclaimed album *Conductor*. But Herod said he would still be making music even if his group wasn't one of Spin magazine's "Bands to Watch."

"I have played since high school, and it was never a hobby — it was a lifestyle," Herod said.

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COURTESY OF MORISEN
Snatches of Pink, a rock staple in Chapel Hill, has been making music in the area for some two decades.

TIPS FOR BANDS

BREAKING ONTO THE LOCAL MUSIC SCENE

Create a press kit | Include band description, contact information, a demo CD, song lists, photos, equipment list and newspaper reviews

Play for free | Open for other bands, play at community festivals and compete at "battle of the bands" events

Make friends in the industry | Network with local bands, get to know booking agents and talk to reputable sound and light technicians

Promote your band | Send press kits and a list of upcoming shows to local media outlets, create a Web site, distribute posters and flyers, and ask local newspapers for reviews

Submit demo CDs | Submit demo CDs, wait a few days and call to get feedback