

Ahead of Boston show, Cousin Stizz reflects on the city's burgeoning music scene

By **Chris Triunfo** Globe correspondent, September 26, 2019, 2 hours ago



Dorchester rapper Cousin Stizz (pictured at Boston Calling in 2018). KEITH BEDFORD/GLOBE STAFF/FILE/GLOBE STAFF

Cousin Stizz is on the rise, but he's also already at the top. Last year, the Dorchester rapper was [named artist of the year](#) at the Boston Music Awards. He recently released his second studio album, "Trying to Find My Next Thrill," [to positive reviews](#), and last week he [received four nominations](#) for this year's Boston Music Awards. Stizz, born Stephen Gross, has made it into the mainstream, but he still thinks there's much more to be done.

Slated to perform in the Seanort Friday at the Artists for Humanity EniCenter as part of <https://www.bostonglobe.com/arts/music/2019/09/26/ahead-boston-show-cousin-stizz-reflects-city-burgeoning-music-scene/koDcnZRPkgB2n5VzFcR2...> 1/4

the Red Bull Presents concert series, Stizz and Michael Christmas will be the headlining the show, dubbed “Beantown Uprising.” The Globe chatted with Stizz before the show to hear his thoughts on Boston’s music scene and his experiences in it.

Q. Part of Red Bull’s goal with this concert is to showcase Boston as a new cultural hub. Why do you think it took so long for Boston to get on the map? And why now?

A. I think there are a couple different reasons. Infrastructure is definitely the biggest thing. There was never really anything we could use to build hip-hop with. There were no places you could come out to and rally around. That’s one of the main reasons. But there are definitely other variables that contribute to it. Now we’re starting to get some spots, and events like these help, too. It’s more than having a creative mind, you have to have a place to exercise it, too. I personally worked in a little house. We had our spaces and we worked hard to make things happen. With more infrastructure, those things would come a little more naturally. Once you find that space, the energy is wild. Back when I’d meet up with my friends to work, the energy was so infectious, and it was natural. More and more people joined us and more and more relationships were made. With that sense of community, it was that much easier to make my dream happen.

Q. A lot of artists who leave home have described that it can be difficult to stay connected to home, but you seem to never lose touch. Is it hard to keep Boston at the forefront of your career?

A. Oh, that’s a no-brainer. Absolutely not. I may be in LA a lot, but I also spend so much time at home, it’s almost like I never left. I have my family, my friends, so many people that mean so much to me here. I could never leave this town behind.

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Q. You won't be alone on stage for this concert. Many of your peers will perform and join you as well. Can you tell me a bit about them?

A. They're my boys! They've been working their [expletive] off for such a long time. To see them come out with music, to see them onstage with me, it just makes sense.

Q. You're one of Boston's trailblazers when it comes to music. How would you describe the city's music scene?

A. There's so much energy. But it's new. A lot, a lot of new energy. That's one of the benefits to this place, we have so many young kids at the ready, and you just don't find it on that scale in other places. I'm hoping that energy will take off and lead to greater things. We have to give them a platform.

BEANTOWN UPRISING

Featuring Cousin Stizz and Michael Christmas

At Artists for Humanity EpiCenter, 100 W. 2nd St., Boston, Sept. 27 at 6 p.m. (doors).

Tickets \$15 (18+, no tickets at the door), www.redbull.com/beantown

Interview was edited and condensed. Chris Triunfo can be reached at christian.triunfo@globe.com.

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