



Don't be fooled into thinking that TFOS are a bunch of sci-fi geeks, sporting pocket protectors and watching The X-Files in their parent's basement till the wee hours. They may have taken their name from an episode in which Scully tells Mulder about a Reagan speech - something along the lines of "The only thing that can unite mankind is a threat from outer space." But the truth is they are a hard working multi-ethnic (Chinese and Muslim) band from Richmond, BC who have been politically outspoken from the get go. At their music's root are heavy influences of Hip Hop, Dub, Funk, Jazz, House and Drumn'n'Bass.

Bomb Beat is a term invented by the band, which means beats characterized by quick funk breaks and tight changes. Their style is conscious Hip Hop – live music mixed with deadly freestyles and written rhymes that wage a balance between political commentary and comic book fury. Threat From Outer Space is music for critical thinkers as well as fans of live music.

Tameem B has been writing political poems since the age of fourteen about things such as US testing of acid on soldiers and nurses in the '60's. "I didn't write too much about girlfriends and stuff like that. I figured there's enough people talking about love. I was more interested in writing caustic stuff – dark imagery." He now has eighteen books filled with his writing. "I don't memorize everything, but most topics I've probably thought about at least once." This probably helps with freestyling, something he is known to do at times for the whole set. The first song on their latest album 'Bomb Beat Music Since 1997' is an example of this - an audience member throws him the topic "Sneakers" and without skipping a beat, he freestyles for the next three minutes. Not surprisingly, he just won the Vancouver rap competition and he hosts various freestyle battles across the city.

The band is made up of Tameem B – Vocals, Percussion, Trumpet; Dennis Chan – Drums, Guitars, Synthesizers, Samplers; Ryan Cranston – Tenor Saxophone, Drums, Guitars and Matt Creed – Bass Double, Bass, Samplers, Vocals. The rhythm section had been playing together since '89, and Tameem joined the group in '94.

“When we first started playing together we were experimenting with Hip Hop and Rap. We were influenced by a lot of bands in Vancouver like Minority and DDT who used Hip Hop beats blended with Ska and Rock. You had bands that were like heavy metal but were into Public Enemy. We were still listening to De La Soul. The first stuff we saw locally was where the guys were crossing over live music with Rap lyrics, usually with two vocalists. Because we were younger, we had a lot more Hip Hop influence. We just came out and did straight out Hip Hop beats with lyrics over the top and turntables and I don't think anyone in Vancouver was pushing it that hard. But when we went to the radio stations like The Fox - they were like “No way – forget it”. It worked out well though because it forced us to do our craft live, so we got the best promo out there – word of mouth.”

Ten years later they are now a self-assured, tight knit band, in demand on Friday nights at places like Sonar, who in previous years had barely squeezed them in on a Monday or Wednesday. “Sometimes a club just gets hip to what's going on”, says Tameem.

They have a kind of world weary ‘Been there, done that, sold 30,000 CDS’. They've paid their dues, eaten out of cans on long national tours, played to crowds of deafening roars as well as deafening silences and learned how to keep the fans up and dancing, as well as listening to their messages.

“When we were young, we used to want people to mosh. Then we realized that was scaring the girls off. So we started trying to play stuff to make the girls dance, which in turn made the guys dance, which in turn made them buy more alcohol so the bar would be happy, hire us back and pay us more. Seemed like a simple formula. Coupled with making the heads think.”

They are a band that believes in doing things for themselves. Tameem describes their marketing model as hand to hand combat – the model of perpetual motion. “We've played so many rooms now that we know how to sell CDs to every single person in the room. We just go up and talk to everyone. We'd rather bypass the twenty-million dollar industry and do it for ourselves and keep all the money. People think we're losing money because we sell our albums for \$5. But we're cutting out the middle man costs. We make dollars off the album sales instead of cents.”

Threat has opened for Ninja Tune's Cinematic Orchestra, Battleaxe Records, Swollen Members and Moka Only. They have shared bills with up and coming talents such as Josh Martinez, CR Avery, Kia Kadiri, Blue Quarter and DJ's Mat the Alien and Kilo Cee.

This is Threat's third release from their own label, Concepticon Records. It is a sampling of styles from their time in Vancouver's underground scene, alternating between two settings – live tracks from tour stops in 2003 and studio cuts recorded in sessions between road trips. They have been touring heavily since the albums release in summer 2003. The single ‘Walking On the Width of a Blade’, featuring DJ cuts by Mat the Alien has been included in multiple soundtracks for film as well as the 2004 Circa Presents compilation.

For the complete TFOS discography, log onto www.threatfromouterspace.com