

MUSIC TIMES

Marley Marl and Kid Capri overshadow Kendrick Lamar, Grand Wizzard Theodore, A-Trak at World Spin DJ Awards



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Marley Marl arrives at the World Spin DJ Awards. (Photo : Andrew Williams/The Music Times)

A virtual who's who of turntablists gathered Monday night in Midtown Manhattan for the Global Spin DJ Awards, a ceremony celebrating the role of the DJ in the hip-hop culture, as well as honor two of the biggest names in the history of the sub-genre: DJ Marley Marl and Kid Capri. Marl received the Legendary DJ Award, and Capri received the Lifetime Achievement Award.

Marl earned renown as the go-to producer for Queens rap collective The Juice Crew during hip-hop's "Golden Age," helping to build the careers of Big Daddy Kane and Biz Markie, as well as outside rappers including LL Cool J and Eric B. & Rakim. Those in-the-know cite the DJ as the first to sample and reprogram a breakbeat, an essential moment in the evolution of hip-hop. Capri made a name for himself in the industry through his acclaimed mixtapes, and broke into the mainstream by appearing on HBO's *Def Com Jam*.

Russell Simmons, the producer of *Def Com*, spoke in support of Capri via a video tribute.

"Kid Capri is a direct link," he said. "So many DJ's came before and inspired his work, but he brought it to the future."

The night's popular theme was discussing how often DJ's get slept-on in the grand scheme of hip-hop, versus the work of the emcees working with their beats. Capri stuck to the mantra, reminding the audience during his emotional speech that "without us, there's no party."

Marl's star-studded tribute ended the night in grand finale fashion, parading a slew of classic hip-hop names onstage. Legendary producer DJ Premier joined Pete Rock for a turntable highlight reel of Marl's hits, followed by performances from Queens emcees Big Daddy Kane, Masta Ace, Craig G. and Roxanne Shanté. The lattermost gave perhaps the most honest summary of Marl's relevance to hip-hop.

"Marley Marl has made so many people in hip-hop rich," she said, after describing his popularity in her neighborhood. "And I thank God I'm one of them."

Kendrick Lamar was the biggest name in a night full of celebrity presenters, and Marl playfully called him out when accepting the Legendary DJ prize.

"Right now Kendrick, I feel like the motherf---n' king of New York," he said with a smile.

Monday's event marks the second annual Global Spin Awards, and a few technical glitches couldn't damper the spirits of the convivial crowd. Other performances came from turntable legends including Grand Wizzard Theodore and DJ Scratch, as well as more current artists such as A-Trak. DJ Drama and DJ Irie were the night's other big winners, with the former taking home Online/Satellite Radio DJ of The Year and National Mixtape DJ of The Year, and the latter winning National Club DJ of The Year and DJ Entrepreneur of The Year.

The night's guests of honor gave *Music Times* a few bits of advice to pass along to new generations of beat-makers. Marl acknowledged advances in technology, but suggested going retro.

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"The TR-808 (drum machine)," he said, nodding wisely. "I introduced it and I still use it."

Capri was more accepting of the modern methods for producing mixtapes, but he offered a general rule for creating beats, which he said worked for him and still applies today.

"Keep it as real as possible. Don't use too much trickery," he said, before breaking into a grin. "And if you use trickery...keep it as real as possible."