

# ARTS & LIVING

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**King of the Hill:**  
Using passion to reach  
success after doubt

PHOTOS BY GRAHAM ROBSON | THE SIGNAL



Georgia State freshman, Will Hill uses his music to overcome his past struggles.

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Two broken bones, a torn ligament and dislocated ankle from football during his senior year of high school kept him physically confined in his mother's basement and emotionally stuck in self doubt.

His blackberry and a mellow beat helped release his inner confidence and reunite himself with his passion for music.

Freshman and aspiring rap artist, William Michael Hill, known as "Will Hill," wrote his favorite and most personal song, "Lesprit" which made him aware of how far his talents could stretch.

Hill's persona is a melody of a laid-back character and a less cocky attitude mixed with quiet confidence and modesty.

So, who is Will Hill?

"Will Hill is just a regular teenager that decided he wanted to rap," Hill said. "It helps me to get out certain feelings that I have towards circumstances and things that I go through."

Hill always wanted to be a rapper, but, like most dreams, outside influences and critics weighed down the reality of those dreams coming true.

"The passion can go away when you realize how many people don't make it," Hill said.

His mother wasn't his number one fan in the beginning. "To be truthful, I sounded horrible at first," Hill said. "I became a better rapper from my mom doubting me as a rapper. I just wanted

to be better and show off to her that I could actually be good at this."

Her stance on his music did not last for long. "Overall my parents are more supportive now than they used to be. They see the passion I'm putting towards the music," Hill said.

One of his first encounters with rap occurred when he was about five years old, riding in the car with his older sister. The song, "Elevators" by the Atlanta hip-hop duo, Outkast, was the first rap song he learned all the lyrics to. Hill believes that is when he discovered his love for music.

Years later, this drove Hill to perfect his craft by writing songs and joining a hip-hop group called H.O.M.E Team (High Off Music Entertainment) after meeting high school classmate and fellow rapper, Perrion Rodriguez.

The two performed together at the Red Light Café in the spring of last year, which became Hill's first live performance.

This year, Hill and Rodriguez opened for rapper A\$AP Rocky with a crowd of more than 1,500 at the Masquerade in Atlanta. Since then, Hill has performed at the All Atlanta Music Bash as well as on Georgia State's campus.

Although Hill believes Georgia State has helped propel his rap career through campus performances, his dream is to follow in the footsteps of his rap god, Jay-Z, and sell out Madison Square Garden.

Hip-hop influences like Kanye West and the Notorious B.I.G. inspire



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him to write material.

"In order for me to get into the mood to write I have to put on Nas' *Illmatic* and Biggie's *Ready to Die*," Hill said. "I have to blast some really lyrical content and people that inspire me."

Those artists and his daily struggles as a regular college kid helped him create his newest mixtape, *W.H.* On his most well-known track from the compilation, 'Lesprit', which means 'the spirit', Hill expresses everything from the issues with paying

for college to his father almost dying from a heart attack last year.

"Everything that happens in my life motivates me to spit my heart out on a track," Hill said.

Even though Hill is a newbie on the block, he has cemented a quality of his music that some rap veterans have not. "I pride myself on my flow," Hill said. "A lot of other rappers pride themselves on their wordplay or on their lyricism, but I like to perfect my flow...if the flow is right then everybody will listen to it"

With all the success he has garnered so far, he's destined to reach new heights. With goals so high, he assures his supporters that he'll remain humble while achieving success.

"You have to have the best of both worlds by being humble but still know you're doing your thing and on your grind at all times," Hill said.

Hill's advice for other aspiring hip-hop moguls like himself: "Be persistent and resilient," Hill said. "If you don't have any dreams then there's no point in living life."