

# CLASSIC HITS

NEW YORK'S PIONEERING  
SUBWAY GRAFFITI WRITERS



Alan Fleisher & Paul Iovino  
Introduction by Phase 2







Hondo 1, Fresco 1 & Kool III, 1972

# THE MASTER- PIECE ERA





Mickey Mouse by Ale

“  
*In 1974, my Mickey Mouse cartoon character was the first Disney character on a New York subway train and in the years to come the public would see some amazing cartoon artwork on the trains.*  
”

Anthony met Vamm and Crachee 11, who were top writers on the number 2 line. They suggested that Burke Avenue lay-up, by Parkside Projects, was a great place to go painting since trains were parked there over the weekends.

Back at the school lunchroom, I convinced Anthony that we were ready to paint trains. After practicing on paper for weeks he agreed to make our next mission the subway trains. On a humid July morning in 1972, Anthony and I made our way to Burke Avenue train station. Each one of us carried two cans of spray paint up the station staircase. We passed through the turnstile, walking in rhythm. We prayed no one would hear the spray cans rattling in our dungaree jackets. It was about eight a.m. and the uptown platform was empty.

I jumped onto the tracks to make my first mark on a subway train. There it was, in the middle of the

station, the lay-up train. It looked a hell of a lot bigger up close. My heart was pounding and sweat was burning my eyes, but I managed to hold my hand steady as I started spraying that Delta Blue paint. I then filled the piece in quickly, after swapping my cap for a Jifoam top. Anthony went to work fast, painting a yellow MS 18 with a red outline.

While the paint dried, I walked along the side of the train and signed my name next to a Hulk 62 tag. I returned to outline my piece with gloss black, and wiped off some stray drips with my fingers. You could see the smile on my face from a mile away.

“Let’s get the hell out of here,” I told Anthony.

We stuffed the empty paint cans into the station garbage can and fled down the steps. Minutes later we were in the Burger King next to the train station, planning our next mission.

While attending Truman High school, I teamed up

with many writers that would make 1973 a big year for me. I met Doo 2 who had experience from bombing trains with Hondo 1 and Fresco 1. Doo 2 lived close to me in Co-op city, and it was just a short walking distance to Baychester lay-up. It was located on the middle tracks between Dyer and Baychester train stations and known to all the big writers. Stay High 149, Hondo 1, Lee 163, Phase 2, Dead Leg 167, Jester, Riff 170, Jive 3 and hundreds of others visited the lay-up regularly. Every night of the week a brave lone writer or group of kids could be found painting here.

Nearby the entrance to the lay-up, Doo 2 and I hid two large ladders to paint whole cars and top-to-bottoms easier. Along the track we cut large holes in the fence so there would be an easy way out should the police find us. Tav, who was in my homeroom class, lived nearby Baychester lay-up and started to come by often to paint. Another guy from school, Professor 2, was a member of the Fabulous 5 crew and he also brought his style to the trains with us. To keep up with constant bombing we had to rack paint almost every day. The number 5 train took us all over New York from the Bronx to Staten Island. For food and fat caps, supermarkets had all the supplies we needed.

In the laundry detergent aisle, the oven cleaner tops were waiting to be lifted off. Jifoam oven cleaner tops worked best with Red Devil brand paint and Scotch Guard oven cleaner worked well with Rustoleum paint for larger pieces. Before leaving the supermarket I would go by the deli section and grab packages of turkey and bologna, while Doo 2 would stuff bakery rolls and soda into his sleeves.

One afternoon in 1973, Doo 2 and I walked over to Tracey Towers to scout the 4 yard. Walking down Paul Avenue, there were some kids sus-





Jester

“

**JESTER 1:** Looking back at my graff life I gotta say that writing, bombing and racking was so much fun in the 70s. Going to stores with empty shopping bags and coming out with paint, albums, jeans and anything we wanted, was a blast.

I was blessed to go piecing with some of the greats, including IN, Dean, Cliff 159 and Fuzz. I remember meeting up with one of the greatest of them all: Mr. Iz The Wiz.

He was my competition on the As, and in those days you didn't go hitting with your comp. But Iz was a cool guy. One time we went to the A lay-up on 104th Street in South Ozone Park in Queens. You could do top-to-bottoms there, because they had a ridge-like thing between the middle track and the local track. It was around one o'clock in the afternoon on a weekday. Man we was killing this lay-up; insides and outsides. Suddenly we heard someone yelling: "Hey you kids". We looked around and there was three police officers climbing down from the station coming after us.

We were on the uptown side and ran away along the subway tracks hoping to escape at the next station. We made it to the next station in minutes and flew down the stairwell into the streets. We ran right by a police precinct and didn't stop until we got to the J train stop, leaving the cops in the dust.

”



Bat 1





IN



Blade looks out while Cliff 159 paints a top-to-bottom masterpiece. Bronx Park East Station in the fall of 1975.





“ *Classic Hits is filled with the most amazing photos and personal stories from the writers who started it all in the earliest days of subway art.* ”

- Blade 1

“ *We created an art form that came up from our supposedly insignificant neighborhood existences and now it's everywhere on Earth.* ”

- Phase 2

**E**arly 1970s New York saw the growth of a new phenomenon. Graffiti was created by kids, for kids, and became the greatest and most influential artistic movement of our time.

In *Classic Hits*, the pioneers tell their own eye-opening first-hand story in the most visual book on early 1970s subway art ever published.

Introduction by Phase 2

Stories by Ale One • All Jive 161 • Blade • Cay 161 • Checker 170 • Clyde Death • FDT 56 • Flint 707 • Iz The Wiz • Jester 1 • Joe 182 • Lava 1&2 • LSD OM • MICO • Pnut 2 • Roger 1 • Ski 168 • Snake 1 • Taki 183 • Vamm

  
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