

# Hip-hop on the high seas

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*Pulse Writer*

**I**t's not just seagulls and buoys making noise on the waves these days. Beats are booming from area pleasure cruises that are booking hip-hop artists and DJs who are taking their shows to the high seas.

"Most of these cruises have an option that plays hip-hop music, said DJ E.M. of the New York City-based Lower Deck Productions. "It's because even at the snobbiest party, from Puff Daddy to Donald Trump, if you play hip-hop, that gets people dancing. People talk bad about (hip-hop), but it makes people happy."

DJ E.M., also known as Edgar Muniz, will be spinning on the ones and twos July 30 on "The Return of the Blackout Midnight Cruise" party aboard the multileveled Paddle Wheel Queen, which embarks from the Sky-Port Marina on 23rd Street in New York City. More information is available by visiting <http://lowerdeckproductions.com>.

Closer to home, New Brunswick's Angelz Inc. will be spittin' rhymes on the "The Most Anticipated Summer Midnight Cruise," which embarks at 11:55 p.m. July 24 from Perth Amboy for a four-hour cruise featuring music and a fashion show.

A portion of the proceeds for the event, presented by Caj Entertainment of East Brunswick, will benefit the New Brunswick-based Women Aware, which aids victims of domestic abuse and their children.

"It's going to be a party, don't get that twisted," said Angelz, Inc. member Kush. "The overall message is people saying, 'I understand what you're saying, I'm going to support this cause.'"

On a boat. On the ocean.

Hip-hop has long held an affinity for taking to the waves. Early rap videos by Big Daddy Kane and Biz Markie showed that true playas like to sail in style.

Now, the genre leaves land almost out of necessity. Municipalities in Central New Jersey seemingly have held a long, unspoken anti-hip-hop stance, making it difficult for area clubs and stages to book hip-hop acts.

There are no area clubs that feature live hip-hop acts in Central Jersey, and club owners and promoters claim that they receive extra scrutiny if they attempt hip-hop nights. Plus, Jersey's early last-call times, which range between 2 and 3 a.m. as opposed to New York's 4 a.m. closing, make heading out to sea a more viable option than securing a club, say cruise organizers.

"They're looking for somewhere to go," said DJ E.M. "If you go to a club in New Jersey, you're out the door by 2:30 a.m., that makes no sense."

In New York City, the smoking ban in clubs makes boat cruises that much more attractive.

"We won't let you smoke inside the yacht, but you can smoke outside of it," said Tom Gross, president of East Coast Yacht Charters, which operates cruises along the Eastern seaboard. "But you can go outside of the yacht, smoke and it's never a problem. We provide a smoking receptacle."

East Coast Yacht Charters provides more upscale trips, including dining cruises from the Quay restaurant and marina in Sea Bright, but they do offer midnight cruises for the younger set from time to time. More information is available by visiting [www.eastcoastyachtchartersinc.com](http://www.eastcoastyachtchartersinc.com).

"We have to adhere to a lot of regulations," Gross said. "There's no underage drinking, and if people try to bring it on, they're off the ship. We have to really watch what we do because we're governed by the same laws that are on land, but we're also governed by the Coast Guard, and we live in a different time now."

Behavior, by all accounts, is not a problem on the water.

"It's a special occasion," said Antoinette "Toni" McDale of Caj Entertainment. "It's not