

B.o.B. Biography

In spite of the plethora of rap artists constantly emerging from Atlanta in the late 2000s, B.O.B., who was only 17 when he signed his first major label record deal, was still unique. His borderline eccentricity and artistic mind, belied by his music's conventional Dirty South appeal, raised his stock above the many copycat Southern upandcomers and, of course, welcomed comparisons to OutKast and, specifically, its offbeat half, André 3000. Although he grew up on the east side of Atlanta in Decatur, Bobby Ray Simmons was born in North Carolina on November 15, 1988. Creating music became an early hobby for the young talent, who played trumpet and other instruments throughout grade school. By the time he was in high school, he already had management and had formed a production duo called the Klinik. At age 15, he even successfully sold a beat of his own to SlipNSlide recording artist City. When his partner left for college, however, B.O.B. decided to take the solo artist path and subsequently recorded the hazy, spoken wordlike ode to marijuana, "Cloud 9."

In 2006, B.O.B.'s manager helped sneak him into Club Crucial (owned by Atlanta rap star T.I.), since he was underage, and the teenaged MC wowed the audience with his selfproduced ode. A part of that impressed crowd, producer and industry veteran TJ Chapman agreed to co-manage B.O.B., which only a month later led to B.O.B.'s signing with Atlantic and subsidiary imprint Rebel Rock, run by Florida producer Jim Jonsin (Lil' Wayne, Trick Daddy, Jamie Foxx). His first single for Atlantic, Haterz Everywhere (2007), showed lots of promise, reaching the Top Five of Billboard's Bubbling Under RB/HipHop singles chart. Before long, several outlets and publications, including XXL, Spin, as well as MTV, took notice of the Atlanta rapper, running "Artist to Watch" features and tagging him as the next Atlanta rap artist to blow up nationally. B.O.B.'s second single, "Grip Your Body," guested by British soul siren Amy Winehouse, also fared well and preceded his 2008 debut album.

- Cyril Cordor, All Music Guide