

## The 'It List' 2013

Written by Harry Colbert, Jr.

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Now that we are just days into 2014, let's take a look back at some of the major entertainment happenings of 2013 in the Twin Cities.

Before we start, let's be clear this retrospect is presented with no empirical data – there were no pollsters out at malls or restaurants asking each shopper/diner for their insights, though unofficial Facebook polls were taken. The accounting firm of Price Waterhouse Coopers was not charged with tabulating the results. Nielsen was not called in to rate the list – the Aesthetically Speaking It List of 2013.

Also, let it be stated that the author of this list is also an event producer and some of the events that made the list were produced in association with said author. In such instances, these events will be denoted with an asterisk.

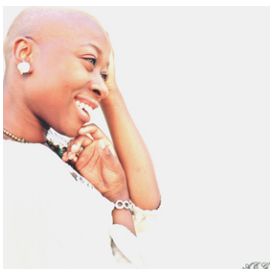
Now with the housekeeping out the way, let's get to the It List.

### It Artists (music)

The Twin Cities offers a wealth of outstanding musical talent. Come on, Prince is from here. Enough said. But allow us to say more. 2013 saw the emergence of several other outstanding artists in soul/R&B and hip-hip. So, who made the list?



For outstanding soul, the It "award" goes to Timotha Lanae. When your album ("Red") tops the soul charts in London, you're doing something very right. "Red" is a timeless project that we're shocked isn't garnering her more attention here in her hometown. The Twin Cities needs to take a cue from the Londoners and get hip to Lanae.



"It" song of 2013: We have a tie. "Beautiful" by Lia Renee Dior and "Wish You'd Let Me Love You" by Janey Neal.

Contrasting songs – "Beautiful" is a life-affirming feel good melody that provides daily

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motivation, while "Wish" is an emotional tale of one yearning for the love of another – but both are equally outstanding. Dior's "Beautiful" was one of the most played on KMOJ – FM, while Neal has yet to crack the limited R&B/soul/hip-hop airwaves in Minnesota, but that takes nothing away from her song. In fact, it maybe says a lot more, considering Neal had only social media and live performances to get her music out. Kudos to both talented artists.



2013 just may have been the year of the woman, as the It List award for outstanding hip-hop goes to Lioness.

The Lioness' mixtape, "Queen" is a hands down no doubter for the best hip-hop project of the year. While Grrrl Prty and its standout member Lizzo was the media darling of other outlets (and certainly not without merit), Lioness was grinding the club scene showing up her male counterparts time after time. The Lioness' true coming out came in July when she opened for Doug E. Fresh and proudly proclaimed her stake as queen of the hip-hop jungle.

The It CD of 2013 goes to Villa Rosa with "Blue Diamond Island." "Blue Diamond" is the joint project of Maria Isa and Muja Messiah. While Messiah holds his own and has an undeniable flow, Isa, the duel threat singer and MC elevates "Blue Diamond" to It worthy status. Do not be shocked to see her on the national radar very soon.

The It DJ of 2013 is DJ Willie Shu. Shu – or Shu Nasty, as he's often called – has risen to area stardom with his unique ability to cross DJing genres, spinning everything from hood-hop to underground hip-hop, to neosoul to fusion. What sets Shu apart is his willingness to play songs and artists that aren't the same five to 10 that we hear at almost every other party. Shu takes it back to the era when DJs actually broke records instead of relying on radio to dictate what gets played.

### It Events



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