

## Sound Verite: Musical agitator Jon Jon Scott talks about choosing sound

Written by Toki Wright (Twitter - @mrwrighttc)

---



As an active member of the arts and culture scene in Minnesota you often hear complaints, mostly from musicians, about their careers.

Most of the time the responsibility for one's own success is placed outside of the person. Musicians say, "a certain radio station won't play my music," a certain venue won't book them for a show, or a specific act is getting all of the shine. As valid as those statements may be, very few times do you hear the same artists being critical of their own work. Have they truly analyzed how they present themselves or their music? Have they thought about how they can contribute to the music scene with something new and out of the box? Ultimately do they make music that moves a group of people to support that sound?

These were a few of the questions I had in mind when I sat down with Sound Verite Records head Jon Jon Scott. Sound Verite means "choosing sound" a play off of Cinema Verite's "choosing cinema." Scott has built a career around discovering unique sounds and presenting it to the masses.

"All I want to do in my own space is develop artists and find artists who I think are going to be respectable and lasting," said Scott.

Scott has helped to develop the careers of Graph Nobel (of Idle Warship with Res and Talib Kweli), Villa Rosa and most recently breakthrough MC/producer Greg Grease.

Scott speaks with the speed of someone who has a lot of valuable information but not a lot of time to play around. When I asked him about his path to the Twin Cities he name checked stints living in Philadelphia, Chicago, Toronto and New York City. He's always struck me as a person I knew from one of those locations that had a different way of looking at music than most of the people in the room. The influences of these locales help you to understand why he takes music so seriously.

"Sound Verite strives to deliver, with each new edition, a dynamic and satisfying work of art," said Scott. Scott made a transition from working with major labels to focus on his own. "With a lot of money and a lot of energy behind it my biggest record with Graph Nobel on Sony never came out. We spent three or four years working on it. When I got back to Minneapolis the music

## Sound Verite: Musical agitator Jon Jon Scott talks about choosing sound

Written by Toki Wright (Twitter - @mrwrighttc)

---

scene was starting to change. I'm out here trying to chase labels and I'm realizing that everyone that's winning is doing it themselves. I thought, 'I want to be a part of this.'"

Long time collaborator Doc McKinney (The Weeknd, Esthero) gave Scott some key advice.

"What I learned from Doc is to work with an artist that wants to do as much as he can for himself so you are not babysitting," said Scott.

Our interview was filled with gems of insight that would not fit in the confines of this article but there was one key idea I wanted to grasp. My final question was about Scott's vision of the Minnesota music scene in the years to come. He noted his appreciation of support from KMOJ and the importance of having programs solely dedicated to emerging music on Black radio. He also stated that he looks forward to seeing, "a colorful playground of people all making music without limitation to genre and category. Genres and categories will wash away each year. A rapper gets on a rock song. An electronic kid plays at a rock show. As the scenes of music become more inverse the kids all become one," he said.

Look out for these upcoming projects from Sound Verite Records in 2014 including Greg Grease's "Born to Lurk Forced to Work" (with River Life Media), Muja Messiah's "God Kissed It the Devil Missed It," and a new project from ZULUZULUU. You can find new music from the Twin Cities and around the world daily on Sound Verite's blog, [www.soundverite1.blogspot.com](http://www.soundverite1.blogspot.com)