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### Story by Emma Hurt

When D.C. catches the national (or international) media’s attention, it’s usually not for music. But D.C., and its Maryland and Virginia neighbors, definitely have a music scene of their own that’s worth keeping an eye on. Some of the DMV’s bigger claims to fame include Duke Ellington, Marvin Gaye, Go-go and Wale; yet a creative momentum and community continues to build in and around this city, most recently in hip-hop. Wale might say that he “put this s\*\*\* on the map,” but there are countless others around here putting out their own original and experimental sounds, too. In honor of REVOLT’s #DMVweek, here are just a few rising acts that stood out at Trillectro.

### ***D.R.A.M. Is Here To Spread The Good Times***

**Chaz French:** Chaz French isn't afraid to talk in brutal, introspective detail about his life story. The Washingtonian is the self-proclaimed leader of “Struggle Rap” (#strugglewhatmadeus) and calls Basquiat and Kanye his biggest inspirations.

**Where to find him:** [www.chazfrenchhh.com](http://www.chazfrenchhh.com),

[SoundCloud.com/ChazFrenchhh](https://www.soundcloud.com/ChazFrenchhh)

**Notable selection:** On his debut EP, *Happy Belated*, Chaz bares his soul throughout, with "Whatcha Know" and "Primavera" as standouts. Look for his D.C. pride in one of his newer tracks, "What Ya Say" (featuring a fellow DMVer, Saba), and if you like it, pay attention since something should be dropping very soon.

**Chaz on working in the DMV:** "It feels good to be making music in the DMV right now. I'm blessed to be coming of age in my artistry at a time like now when people are checking for the DMV and interested in what we have to add to the culture."

**Meet Jay IDK, The DMV's Subtrap Architect**

**Babeo Baggins:** You might have heard of Barf Troop, the gender nonconforming group from Tumblr. Or maybe you saw Drake wearing one of their shirts. Baggins, a Virginia native, founded the group, and makes what the *Washington Post* appropriately dubbed "technicolor rap." You need only listen to a few tracks to understand how truly technicolor and fluid it is.

**Where to find them:** [SoundCloud.com/BabeoBaggins](https://www.soundcloud.com/BabeoBaggins),

[@BabeoBaggins](https://twitter.com/BabeoBaggins)

**Notable selection:** They released their first mixtape, *Posi+ve*, in July. It simply cannot be pinned down, from girl power "Team" featuring two other Barf Troop members to narration from a grandmother in "Love," from a fierce "Rumble" to a slower, jazzy "Underdog" on the

B-side.

**Babeo on working in the DMV:** "Every other city, to me, feels like one big competition. But D.C. feels like a family, the artists here are closer to each other, they're more supportive.... You're very supported here in D.C. and your creative efforts don't go ignored, as long as you're in the right places."

### ***Yung Gleesh Is Fresh Out Of The DMV And Ready To Turn 1017 Into A Holiday***

**Kelow Zilla:** Hailing from Maryland, Kelow Zilla-illa-killla wants you to know that she is all about the art, is not afraid to tell you what she thinks, and is a pimp. While her artistic background is obvious in her visually rich videos and album artwork, (she paints and draws), it's also present in her textured, synthy and intense music.

**Where to find her:** [SoundCloud.com/Kelow](https://soundcloud.com/Kelow), [@SuperKelow](https://twitter.com/SuperKelow)

**Notable selection:** Her latest album, *Amethyst Stoner*, pulls no punches. In "Jiggly Puff" she compares some of her fellow hip-hop artists to the Pokemon character that sing others to sleep. She threatens to steal your girl in "BADDABING," and if the album title didn't alert you, weed is a big part of her life and music.

**Kelow on working in the DMV:** "[The DMV is] very humbling and motivating. I'm surrounded with one extreme to the next. You can spot million dollar houses in D.C. and then boarded houses. The DMV is motivating with all its contrast and inspiring with all its gifts and

talents from the area.... It truly is a diamond in the rough."

## ***Trillectro Was A Lituaton, Check Out The Best From The D.C. Festival***

**HI\$TO:** While his music might seem otherworldly, this Baltimore-based producer is actually from Houston, and the "chopped and screwed" influence shows in his slower-paced, club music. Also heavily impacted by Baltimore club, he also seems to have combined it with Houston's "Space City" alter ego in this experimental, intergalactic club sound.

**Where to find him:** [@\\_HI\\$TO](https://soundcloud.com/history)

**Notable selection:** His latest, an EP titled *Yung Spvce Cadet*, is utterly interstellar, like all of his music. It's interesting to see how far his sound has come since his earliest release, *Pre-Hi\$toric Future Vol. 1* in 2011. He seems to have really gotten into his own groove on his EP, calling it "a journey through spvce and time that was meant to be cranked at ignorant levels."

**HI\$TO on working in the DMV:** "There's more unity and support between the artists that have shows in the DMV. Most of the artists I know all promote and go to each other's shows, share each other's music to their followers and collaborate on music. I see the whole DMV being like how Atlanta is when it comes to the music scene, but better—no offense to my ATL people....There are a lot of hidden gems that *need to shine.*"