



LBXX

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From 'lunch lady' to hot rapper: LBXX storms Fresh Meat queer-trans arts fest

By JOSHUA ROTTER JUNE 12, 2023



Local pop-hop performer, turntablist, and Makeroom Collective cofounder, **LBXX**, can't be contained.

Combining East Coast energy with West Coast calm; hip-hop beats with pop hooks; and conventional rap rhymes about manifesting money, cars, and fame with soulful stories of boys and heartbreak, the up-and-coming San Francisco artist defies traditional music boundaries.

"I don't feel like I fit inside any box, which is why I believe my art and music are unique," says LBXX (pronounced *Lunchboxx*). "From my stage name to the way I present myself, I think I am a force to be reckoned with."

Young and hungry, LBXX (born Gyasi Curry in Long Beach, CA) is the perfect addition to this year's 22nd annual **Fresh Meat Festival**.

Hitting Mission District's **Z Space** for four nights (Wed/14-Sun/18, LBXX performs Wed/14 and Thu/15), the festival celebrating out-the-box trans and queer performance returns in the flesh for the first time since 2019.

Organized by **Fresh Meat Productions** (run by founding artistic director **Sean Dorsey** and managing director **Eric Garcia**), the showcase includes three programs, six performances,

and 18 artists and ensembles—spanning music, dance, and comedy—in the 13,000-square-foot venue.

LBXX ft A.M.K - FATE



In advance of LBXX's Fresh Meat appearance, I spoke to the rising star, about the importance of events that amplify the voices and talents of LGBTQ+ artists, the many influences that shaped his music, and transmuting his pain into art.

48 HILLS *Why are you excited to be part of this year's Fresh Meat Festival line-up?*

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LBXX A few reasons. The first and most exciting is showcasing my art alongside many other talented artists. My favorite part about this musical journey has been the beautiful souls I've met along the way.

Secondly, I'm thrilled because this incredible organization supports my music and art, providing me with valuable opportunities to showcase and develop my talent while connecting me with a diverse and enthusiastic community of like-minded artists. I'm grateful for the platform Fresh Meat Festival has given me to express myself and share my passion with the vibrant arts community in the Bay Area.

48 HILLS *Why is an event like Fresh Meat Festival important? Where else are you performing Pride Month?*

LBXX An event like the Fresh Meat Festival holds great significance as it serves as a vital platform for amplifying the voices and talents of LGBTQ+ artists. It provides a safe and inclusive space for expression, celebration, and connection within the community. By showcasing a diverse range of performances and art forms, the festival promotes visibility and representation for queer artists.

In addition to participating in the Fresh Meat Festival, I am actively engaged in other Pride celebrations, including the **Fern Alley Music Festival** led by the iconic Juanita MORE!.

LBXX - OO WEE (Official Music Video)

48 HILLS *What are you most proud of? What kinds of inroads have the queer community made in the last year that bring you pride?*

LBXX During Pride Month, I take pride in my personal and professional growth. I am proud of embracing my identity and fostering a supportive and inclusive environment for myself and others.

Professionally, I am proud of the progress I've made in advocating for LGBTQ+ youth rights in educational institutions in our community. I believe it's crucial to use my platform to amplify queer voices and contribute to a more inclusive society.

Though queer and trans people remain under attack and are at the center of political discourse, I am particularly proud of the increased visibility and acceptance of the queer community, the advancements in LGBTQ+ rights globally, and the growing recognition of diverse queer experiences in mainstream media and culture.

48 HILLS *How did you come up with your stage name?*

LBXX The creation of my stage name is hilarious because, at the bottom of it all, I used to be a lunch lady!

I moved to the Bay Area five years ago for an assistant teaching position in a small elementary school in the Mission. Working at a small, underfunded school, I quickly realized that educators must wear multiple hats to support their students and the institution. One job I had at the school was running their lunch program for the students. I would package their lunch and hand deliver lunches to each classroom. It was my favorite part of the day because no matter what kind of day a student had, they were always excited to eat, which meant they were also excited to see me during lunchtime.

This led me to start a podcast on Spotify titled “**Lunch Lady Mantra**,” where I produced motivational stories to help listeners get through their week. After a year of making podcasts to help motivate others, I found it was time to pour into myself.

I called a good friend and expressed how I’ve always been interested in music and now want to take that step into the music scene. After a few conversations and brainstorming sessions, we decided that “Lunch Lady Mantra” was so popular that I kept the idea of Lunch and wanted to make it sound more like a stage name, which is how we came up with LBXX.

I love acronyms for artist names, and I figured LBXX would be one of those names where fans are arguing about how to spell it or say it, which is exciting.

AMK (ALIENMACKITTY) FT. LBXX - SMKE BRK

48 HILLS *How has your childhood in Long Beach and early adulthood in New York impacted your music?*

LBXX I was born in Long Beach, California. My dad’s side of the family is from Los Angeles, and my mother’s side of the family is from Buffalo. When I was 11, my parents divorced, leading my mother to move me and my siblings to Buffalo, where I spent much of my youth. It wasn’t until age 24 that I returned to California.

I was raised in a Jamaican household, and my father was a reggae musician, so our family was immersed in the Southern California music scene. This is how I was exposed

to such a wide variety of music at a young age, from reggae to house. My parents loved it all!

Moving to the East Coast, my soundscape changed. By then, my older brother, Pierre, was becoming a young adult, which meant he controlled the TV. I spent countless hours with him watching MTV music videos and BET award shows.

I didn't realize that both sets of cultural roots would impact how I create my music. The West Coast has granted me a deep appreciation for all music and equipped me with a laidback attitude that I utilize in not only music but also my professional and personal life. This comes out in songs like "Ride the Wav" and "Why Do I." The East Coast taught me how to be gritty, energetic, and tough, which is heard in "Bic" and "Hilary Banks."

48 HILLS *What distinguishes you as a hip-hop artist?*

LBXX My unique perspective and lived experiences as a gay, queer, black individual. Growing up in a family deeply connected to music, I was immersed in a vibrant musical environment that influenced my artistry. My stage presence is captivating and powerful, reflecting the confidence and authenticity I bring to my performances.

I make pop-hop, which is hip-hop and pop music. In my songwriting, I like to utilize typical rap topics of cars, money, and fame to express to my audience that I am manifesting these things. I lean into being a queer artist and share stories of boys and heartbreak, which gives me a chance to relate to everyone who's been through similar situations. With music, I write whatever my soul is saying, and the blessing of this journey is that it resonates with others.

With a burning passion for my craft, my ultimate goal is to make a lasting impact in the music industry and get recognized for my artistry on a global scale. Winning a Grammy would not only be a personal achievement but a testament to the power of representation, manifestation, and the limitless possibilities for queer artists in the rap and hip-hop genre.

48 HILLS *Tell me more about transmuting your pain into music.*

LBXX Life can be painful. We experience so many hardships as people that we all need some way to cope. I went through one of the hardest breakups of my life two weeks before the pandemic started. I never knew pain and isolation like that before. That's when I began taking my music seriously because I knew it was the only thing that could save my life at that moment. So it's magical for me when you can channel your pain into something so special and healing.

48 HILLS *What's next for you?*

LBXX Becoming a full-time artist. I'm hungry for this and want nothing more than to succeed in music. This year, I achieved my goal of playing in festivals; next year, I want to go on tour!

FRESH MEAT FESTIVAL runs through June 18. LBXX performs as part of program one, Wed/14 and Thu/15. For tickets and more info, go [here](#).