

Rye Rye

As a fixture on Baltimore's notorious all ages club scene, Rye Rye had a taste for beats before most kids went to their first school dances. She started dancing and rapping in her early teens, and grew up listening to hard-hitting DJs like Technics and K-Swift—icons of the clubs and local radio who didn't sanitize their sets of DIY club productions that made the city's soundtrack. With spine-rattling basslines, ripped-off pop samples and triple X-rated lyrics, Baltimore bass makes hip-hop seem like mom-n-pop rap music by comparison.

It was this sound that first captured M.I.A.'s ears as the artist/producer sought collaborators for the follow-up to her own breakthrough album *Arular*. Working in Baltimore with DJ Blaqstarr she soon met his 16 year-old dancing/rapping protégé; after Rye Rye's signature vocals on the Blaqstarr production "Shake It To The Ground" helped the track become one of the first Baltimore records heard outside the city's limits—blowing up around the US underground as well as in Europe and Japan—MIA took Rye Rye on tour with her. Soon after that the two started work on tracks that would become *Go Pop Bang* for release on the MIA Interscope imprint NEET—even as Rye Rye returned home to finish high school, where all the kids knew about her burgeoning buzz and boys rapped her lyrics in the hallways.