

UNCHAINED MELODIES



PRESS FOR BENDING THE BARS

- This guide will show some of the press that the “Bending the Bars” album has received.

ARTICLES & EXCERPTS

SERVICE95

Bending The Bars: How A Group Of Incarcerated Artists Turned Phone Calls From Jail Into An Album

By Hope Corrigan
September 16, 2025

Using the Community Hotline for Incarcerated People (CHIP), a prison abolitionist group based in South Florida, artists called producers on the outside, who recorded their voices and mixed the songs – often removing background noise and asking for re-records when the sound wasn’t quite right. The album, released this summer, took three years to produce, requiring both artists and producers to navigate punitive correctional regulations and bureaucratic roadblocks.

<https://www.service95.com/bending-the-bars-incarcerated-artists-album>

Bending the Bars: Hip-hop album showcases the talent at Broward County jails



WLRN Public Media | By [Carlton Gillespie](#)
Published July 9, 2025 at 1:00 PM EDT



The album is truly a collective work. No two tracks are the same. Brown says that creative freedom was paramount to the project. “They have enough restrictions inside that they don’t need for us to give them creative restriction,” he said. Prince Jooveh’s “Hands Up” is a scathing critique of the criminal justice system.



In it he hits out at his treatment by both police and corrections officers with lyrics like: Don’t offer us your protection / We don’t need none of your help / As soon as you see that we’re young and black you go reaching down to your belt.

<https://www.wlrn.org/arts-culture/2025-07-09/bending-the-bars-hip-hop-album-jail-broward>



Bending the Bars Is a Hip-Hop Album Recorded in Florida Jails

Inspired by sleepless nights in a Florida prison, Gary Field produced a hip-hop album recorded behind bars.

By Flor Franceschetti | June 27, 2025

Miami New Times: Before it was an album, it was a nightly interruption. Gary Field, who was incarcerated in the Martin Correctional Institution in Indiantown, was trying to get some sleep while awaiting trial, no easy task in a place where walls are thin, concrete echoes are loud, and impromptu rap battles break out at 1 a.m. “I didn’t want to hear it,” Field recalls in a deep, radio-worthy voice during a call from jail with New Times. “People were banging on their chests, on their bars, having these Dirty South-style rap sessions, and I couldn’t stop it. But after a while, I realized: there’s real talent in here. It just didn’t have a platform.”

<https://www.miaminewtimes.com/music/bending-the-bars-is-a-rap-album-recorded-in-florida-jails-23286855/>

"Bending the Bars" album highlights incarcerated artists



JUNE 19, 2025 · 4:04 PM ET

HEARD ON [ALL THINGS CONSIDERED](#)



Kathryn Fink

NPR: All Things Considered: A new hip-hop album takes us inside the Florida prison system – featuring fifteen artists in correctional facilities across the state.

<https://www.npr.org/2025/06/19/nx-s1-5324668/bending-the-bars-album-highlights-incarcerated-artists-in-florida>

autostraddle

Bending the Bars: New Album Showcases the Queer and Trans Resilience of Incarcerated Artists

Lauren Herold — Jun 19, 2025

SHARE SAVE COMMENT (2)

"Autostraddle: What does Black transfemme empowerment sound like? For artist Ciara Banks, AKA Chuckie Lee (Bride of Chuckie), it sounds like her pop-infused girl power hip-hop anthem "Barbie Rockstar." With Chuckie Lee's rapidfire flow and her no-holds-barred attitude, she raps: "Party Rockstar...Barbie / Everybody movin' like a fast car...Zoom / Swerving in and out of lanes that part / I came from nothing now I'm shooting to the stars."

<https://www.autostraddle.com/bending-the-bars-new-album-showcases-the-queer-and-trans-resilience-of-incarcerated-artists/>

'Helping people survive': how creating a hip-hop album supported incarcerated artists



Formerly or currently imprisoned artists in Florida came together to create an inspiring album, much of which was recorded under difficult circumstances



'There's thousands of jails in the country, and in each one, there are folks who have as much talent as the people we connected to' ... Bending the Bars artwork. Photograph: The Hayze Brand

June 4, 2025

The Guardian: The result is nearly an hour of uniquely south Floridian hip-hop and R&B, both of which are constellations of so many genres – Caribbean beats, southern bass, Deep City soul, Miami drill – poetic musings on love, loneliness and hope, and demands for systemic change to the draconian and brutal conditions of the Florida prison system

<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2025/jun/04/bending-the-bars-album-incarcerated-artists>

truthout

"Bending the Bars" Rap Album Fights Damaging Stereotypes of Incarcerated People

"Bending the Bars" rips away bipartisan propaganda by letting incarcerated artists speak their truth.

By Nicholas Powers, TRUTHOUT
May 24, 2025

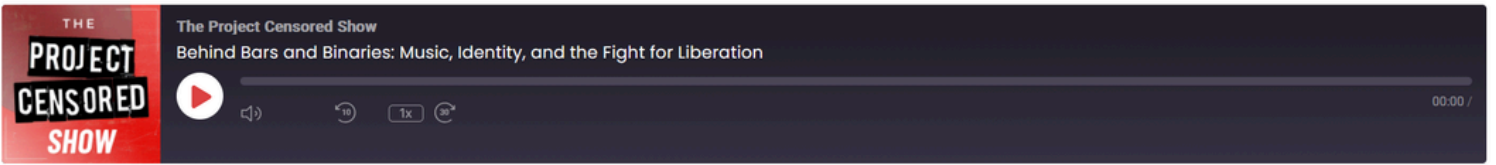
Here is the truth: Art rescues us from oppression. Bending the Bars is one thread in a long quilt, woven by voices over the centuries, and one sorely needed now....Trump has long used racist stereotypes and fearmongering about incarcerated people to push a right-wing authoritarian takeover. Now he is extending that fearmongering to dissidents and political enemies – and next, could be you. This is why we need to see artists like Prince Jooveh, who says he rediscovered himself in music. "I got to see myself as an artist," he said in an interview after he was released in February. "I got a job. I'm looking for a recording studio." He was breathless on the phone. "I saw the effect my song had on people. It was electrifying."

<https://truthout.org/articles/bending-the-bars-rap-album-fights-damaging-stereotypes-of-incarcerated-people/>

Behind Bars and Binaries: Music, Identity, and the Fight for Liberation

Featuring Nikki Morse, Noam Brown, Prince Jooveh, and Jen Deerinwater

Published: May 12, 2025 | Updated: May 15, 2025



Nikki Morse, Noam Brown and Prince Jooveh talk about the album *Bending the Bars*, a project created via makeshift jail phone setups in order to uplift and amplify the voices of incarcerated musicians. Our guests discuss the myriad powers of music, from therapy to frontline reporting to bridges between rival gangs and political perspectives. They dive into the barriers and indeed the freedom in creating an album without the support or collaboration of the carceral system.

<https://www.projectcensored.org/bars-binaries-music-identity-liberation/>

ROOTS OF RESISTANCE HUB SFL

Beats of the Month: From Community Jail Hotline to an Album of Original Music by Incarcerated Artists

On April 5, 2020, a group of South Florida abolitionists were doing a noise demo in solidarity with prisoners and, as part of the Incarcerated Workers' Organizing Committee's nationwide efforts to establish jail hotlines, decided to share a phone number with people inside. From that moment, organizers began to receive calls as the number was shared inside South Florida jails. Over the next week or two, organizers used noise demos to spread the number to other jails and formed the COVID-19 Hotline for Incarcerated People.

<https://rootsofresistancehubsfl.substack.com/p/mayday-mayday>



May 14, 2025



Recording an Album from Behind Bars Isn't Easy; They Did It Anyway

MARCH 26, 2025 | 6 MINS READ | 110 VIEWS



.At the core of *Bending the Bars* are universal messages of self-compassion and hope; and an appeal for systemic change. With over 3,000 county jails in the U.S., *Bending the Bars* serves as a replicable model for using music to empower, rehabilitate, and connect incarcerated individuals with opportunities that extend far beyond prison walls. The upcoming documentary will further provide a roadmap for expanding access to creative platforms nationwide. *Bending the Bars* is proof that talent, creativity, and resilience can thrive even in the most unlikely places. It's an invitation for others to follow suit, to create platforms for the incarcerated, and to recognize the abundant artistry that exists behind bars and razor wire.

<https://thewestsidegazette.com/recording-an-album-from-behind-bars-isnt-easy-they-did-it-anyway/>

SPECIFIC QUOTES ABOUT THE ALBUM

Head of Research, The Yuva Ekta Foundation
RIJUL KATARIA



This album bends the bars around conversations about marginality, about music itself.


Autostraddle
LAUREN HEROLD



The wisdom shared in the album is more necessary than ever.

Truthout
NICHOLAS POWERS

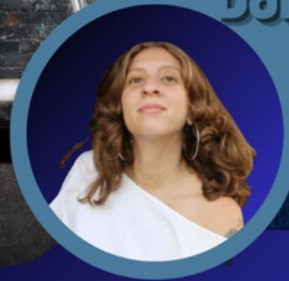
Bending the Bars



Here is the truth: art rescues us from oppression. Bending the Bars is one thread in a long quilt, woven by voices over the centuries, and one sorely needed now.

The Guardian
MONICA USZEROWICZ

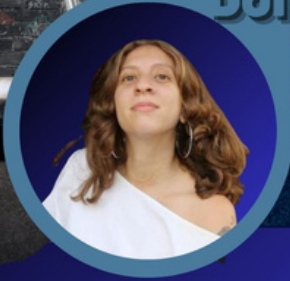
Bending the Bars



Uniquely south Floridian hip-hop and R&B...poetic musings on love, loneliness and hope, and demands for systemic change.

The Guardian
MONICA USZEROWICZ

Bending the Bars



Bending the Bars is polished and clear, an accomplishment owed partly to its production and mostly to the ingenuity of its artists.

author of *Breaking Out in Prison*
RABITA PATEL

Bending the Bars



These songs carry the weight of lived experience and the fire of resilience. These voices remind us that creativity cannot be caged.



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