

What's Your Problem?



Helping D.C.'s Arts Scene Talk Through Its Many Issues

By [Amanda Hess](#)

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The Afflicted: Lindsey Christian, 25-year-old Silver Spring resident and director of [Jazz in the Diamond District](#), a film about two District-bred sisters who fall into the city's go-go scene.

Diagnosis: Track twisting. "There are issues with producing urban films in general," says Christian, "and this is an untested type of urban film." Beyond its female-centric story and indie sensibilities, District also has an urban soundtrack that's unfamiliar to non-locals. "While the music pulls the film in the urban direction, it also pulls it away because it's go-go instead of the straight-up hip-hop," says Christian.

Symptoms: Out-of-Pocket Expenses. Christian has found that some aspects of D.C.'s music scene don't translate to out-of-towners. In New York and Los Angeles, "the lingo and the clothes" need a little more explanation. Christian hopes that the film—shot at local haunts like Ben's Chili Bowl, Fur, and the Duke Ellington School of the Arts (Christian's alma mater)—will provide outsiders a "window into D.C. culture." First, they'll have to know what "go-go" means; when dropping the G-word, says Christian, "a lot of people don't know what you're talking about."

Treatment: Wake them up before you go-go. Christian and company are working on a companion documentary to the film that will detail the genre's history. "Part of our goal is to help educate people about go-go," says Christian, who's found that dropping names doesn't hurt. "Usually if you say 'Chuck Brown,' people will get it," she says. In the meantime, Christian hopes to help District denizens learn more about Hollywood's offerings. "I've seen a lot of people doing indie films and documentaries [in D.C.], but not too many urban films," says Christian. "I'm hoping that will change."

Artist with a problem? E-mail problem@washingtontcitypaper.com.