

QUEEN LATIFAH Biography

Queen Latifah. She's a television and a film actress. A soon-to-be talk show host. A label president, An artist manager. An author and an entrepreneur.

Blessed with style, substance and mad skills, Queen Latifah has blossomed into a one-woman entertainment conglomerate, heralded by the press and the industry as a force to be reckoned with and a talent to be watched. She has, quite simply, done it all and shows no sign of slowing down.

Yet with all of her accomplishments and all of her acclaim, it has been a long time since Queen Latifah has made an album.

After more than four years the wait is over. ORDER IN THE COURT marks the return of the premiere female microphone artist and the maiden release on Queen Latifah's own Flavor Unit Records, a label deal recently inked with Motown Records.

As far as Queen Latifah is concerned, although she is about to step back into the arena after a lengthy hiatus, she is typically confident and self-assured. "It's not like I haven't been highly visible since BLACK REIGN (which went gold) came out. My name and image have certainly been out there, but when it comes to being back in the rap game, well," Queen Latifah smiles, "I just gotta go get them. That's my attitude. The main thing is that the music is right. And you know I made sure of that!"

And then some. Helping Latifah make it right, make it funky, and make it sound so good are an elite crew of hip hop and R&B artists, among them Dru Hill, Faith Evans, Pras (of the Fugees) and Apache, who guests on the explosive first single "Bananas."

With production from Kay Gee, Diamond D, DJ Clark Kent and Queen Latifah herself, ORDER IN THE COURT is more than just another hip hop album: it is the strongest album of Queen Latifah's already impressive career.

"I'm really pleased with this CD because it really reflects 100 percent of Queen Latifah. I have a lot of different qualities on various levels and I hope that people hearing ORDER IN THE COURT will pick up on that."

The first peek at one of Queen Latifah's different qualities is "Bananas." Ask Latifah to describe the track, which she co-wrote, and she says, "It's the professional side of the somewhat hard-core MC that's in me. It's an in-your-face kind of record. I knew that I didn't want my first single in all these years to be some sappy kind of song. Or something that would just go straight pop. I want to represent for hip hop community, first and foremost. So, "Bananas" is for them first, and whatever audiences wanna come and join in on the party... great! But that track is dedicated to those who truly love hip-hop." Latifah smiles, "As we go along with other singles, it will give a chance to display my versatility."

Such versatility is evident on songs like "Paper," which boasts edgy grooves and sultry singing from the Queen; the lip smacking "Turn U On," produced by Chad "Dr Cuess" Elliot & Al West; the emotionally direct "Life," which deals with the frustrations of day-to-day life and the need not to give up hope.

"I mean, Tupac and me were close and his death and Biggie's really affected me, I truly believe that there's something in life worth going after, even if it's just being on the mike, making a record."

Perhaps the most personal track is "What You Gonna Do," one of several that Latifah co-wrote and co-produced. "What You Gonna Do" deals, as did 1994's "Winkie's Theme," with the tragic death of Latifah's beloved brother, Lance. "I think it will become a trademark of me to include a song about my brother on every album. This song brings it all back to God, which is where I think it should all end up. I think things like this are what make me different from other rappers. It's not about me trying to make records that I

know are gonna hit. I kinda like to push the envelope and be more creative and bring something new to listen to.”

Latifah’ s dedication to both her craft and her audience shouldn’ t come as a surprise to anyone who has been even a casual observer of Queen Latifah’ s spectacular reign. From her ground-breaking 1989 debut ALL HAIL THE QUEEN, which all but set the visual and contextual standard for female rappers to her bold foray into R&B on hit albums like 1991’ s NATURE OF A SISTA and 1994’ s BLACK REIGNB, which became the very first CD from a female rap artist to go Gold; to her best rap solo Grammy in 1994 for the anthemic U.N.I.T.Y., Latifah has been redefining what a woman in the hip hop game can and should say and be.

And as anyone who owns a TV set or goes to movies can attest to, Latifah’ s refusal to play by some pre-conceived rules has helped make her one of Hollywood’ s fastest rising young stars. Her first TV series, Fox’ s “Living Single” was a huge success and is currently in syndication. From the small screen Latifah made the leap to film.

After a few years of bit parts, Latifah’ s star turned in SET IT OFF created an audible critical buzz. Fans of sci-fi thrilled to Latifah’ s performance in the Warner Brothers’ film SPHERE, co-starring Sharon Stone and Dustin Hoffman.

Then, there’ s Flavor Unit Entertainment, the 8-year-old company owned and operated by Latifah and her partner Sha-Kim Compere. The company, based in New Jersey, manages some of the biggest names in music like LL Cool J, Outkast and the hot new singing group N.E.X.T. Flavor Unit Entertainment is also the home of Flavor Unit Records.

Actor. Host. Manager. Executive. Entrepreneur. Label owner. Author. Rapper. All rise. Court’ s in session and the honorable and inimitable Queen Latifah is ready to state her case.