

## Entertainment

## De La Soul Eleven Long Years and Rising

by Michael Fournier  
Arts & Entertainment Editor

Can a legendary Hip-Hop group that debuted in 1989 and hasn't made an album since 1995 come back with an album that rap's new generation will relate to, like, and maybe most importantly, buy?

If that legendary group happens to be De la Soul and the new album happens to be Art Official Intelligence: Mosaic Thump, the answer is yes.

Throughout their career, De la has always acted in opposition to the trends within Hip-Hop culture. Now, after 11 years in the game, De la Soul has opposed their own trend of being unorthodox, and have created an album with more mainstream appeal.

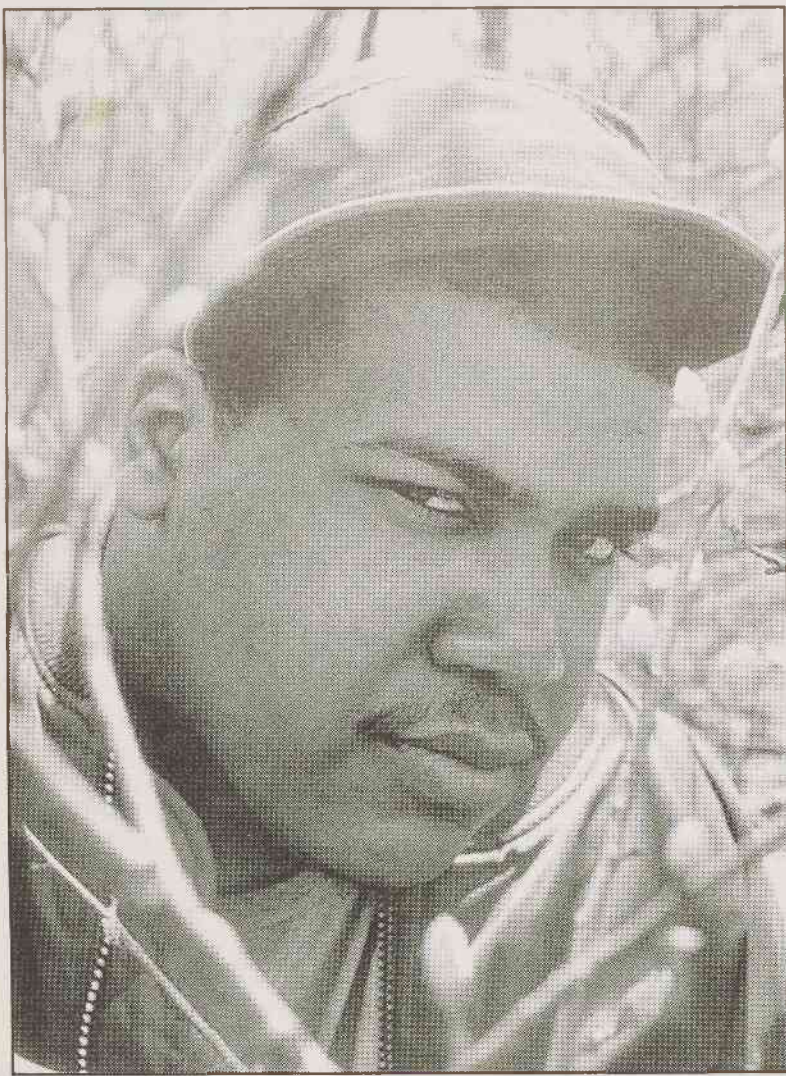
This commercial appeal is most evident in I.C. Y'all with Busta Rhymes, All Good? featuring Chaka Khan, and of course the blazin' lead single OOOH with Redman. If it seems like De la did a lot of collaborating on this project, it's because they did. J-Ro, Tash, XZIBIT, Freddie Foxxx, DV Alias Khrist, and 2/3 of The Beastie Boys are on the album. Also, a new female emcee, Indeed, drops a gem on Set the Mood (I'm checkin' for her). These collabos are no doubt an attempt to garner some support from the younger

crowd, but even without the guest spots, the tracks would be hot.

Posdnous and Dave (formerly Trugoy) still share that special something on the mic and bounce off of each other nicely through the entire album. De la's strength has always been their lyrical prowess; unfortunately, it also happens to be their biggest obstacle when trying to communicate to the masses. Their word play is extremely intricate and difficult for the average listener to follow, but again, De la Soul has never been for the average listener. As far as drawbacks to the album, besides the coded lyrics, the "n-word" is included far too many times, especially when the word "Intelligence" is in the title of the album.

Basically, there isn't a bad song on this album. You can put this tape in the deck and not have to touch the fast forward button once; however, you probably won't hit the rewind button too often either. There are fifteen great songs on this album, including the new single All Good?, but there are no club-bangers, no street anthems, and with the exception of OOOH, no number-one radio hits. But as the first installment to a planned trilogy, Art Official Intelligence: Mosaic Thump sets a nice pace for two more albums to follow.

Thank goodness that De la Soul is not dead.



—Photo by Jerome Albertini

## Amilliyon Miles To Go

by Michael Fournier  
Arts & Entertainment Editor

Just a couple of months ago, Amil's entire career in rap music was one verse on Jay-Z's Can I Get A and the chorus on Jigga's Do It Again. That's probably where she should've stopped. Amil has a new album entitled A.M.I.L. which is an acronym for All Money Is Legal; however, it should stand for All Music Is Lacking.

Well, alright, not the entire album is bad—just the parts that you haven't heard yet. We've all heard I Got That, and without question that track is hot. It's getting much play on radio, in video, and in the clubs. I Got That is a bonafide hit. So is the B-side to that single, "4 Da Fam, which includes guest appearances from the rest of the Roc-A-Fella dynasty, Jay-Z, Memphis Bleek and Beanie Sigel. With an introduction like this, the album must be on point, right?

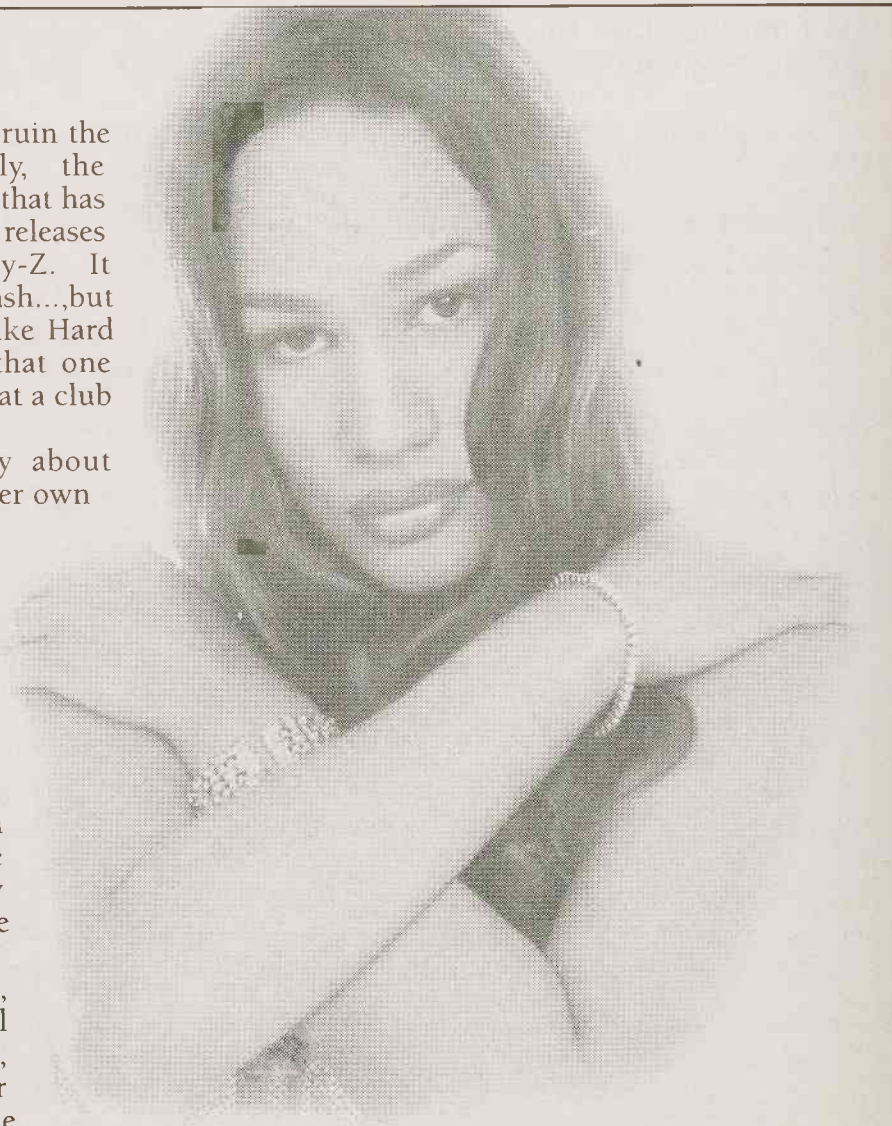
Unfortunately, the rest of Amil's material does not even come close to the caliber of those two songs. The new single Girlfriend is getting some spins on the radio, but look for it to fade fast. The flow and the beat are extremely monotonous. Actually, the beat doesn't change at all, minus a few bars, and without any singing, sampling, or scratching, an otherwise decent song just becomes too repetitive to listen to. Likewise, Quarrels featuring Carl Thomas could have been an alright song; the song contains some of her deepest lyrics, but the beat hinders the listening process greatly.

Most of the album is like this. There are bits and pieces of shining potential in each song, but

the other pieces just flat out ruin the entire song and consequently, the entire album. The only song that has any potential besides the two releases is That's Right featuring Jay-Z. It sounds a lot like Money, Cash..., but Anything sounded exactly like Hard Knock Life and he pulled that one off, so check for That's Right at a club near you.

The best thing I can say about A.M.I.L. is that Amil writes her own lyrics—well, at least she says she does. So if Amil can keep cranking out decent rhymes, which she did on this album by the way, she'll just need to hook up with the right producers to put out a better album next time. If she can stay away from materialistic topics in those rhymes, which she didn't do on this album by the way, that sophomore project would be even better.

As for now though, somebody needs to tell Amil that All Money Isn't Legal, because if she takes your \$15.99 at the record store, she could get locked up for petty larceny.



—Photo courtesy of Columbia/Sony Music