

Defari A Mainstay in Cali's Explosive Hip Hop Scene

Written by Davey D ID2931

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Breakdown FM: West Coast MVP Defari Continues to Focus Daily by Davey D

Defari has long been a mainstay in Cali's explosive Hip Hop scene. He's not quite up there in terms of popularity like Game, Snoop and Dre, but make no mistake, this Likwit Crew Member is no slouch on the mic.

He can be best described as 'Mr Consistent'. You can always count on Defari to deliver a slamming verse and to put on a good show. You can always count on him to deliver a good album. It's that sort of steady persona that Defari, a former LA High School Teacher and UC Berkeley Grad strives for.

In this interview we talk to Defari about his long tenure in LA's Hip Hop arena and what sort of hopes he has with the release of his new album, 'Street Music'.

Here he talks about Hip Hop, politics and his experience of being a high school teacher who focused on making sure Black and Brown youngsters take education seriously the same way he took the production and his lyrical prowess on this new album.

Defari's consistent excellence and daily focus earns him our vote for West Coast MVP.

Here's a short bio on Defari

Defari's relationship with hip hop first began in 1982 as a DJ and later evolved into a new phase in 1987 when he began emceeing.

1995 marked Defari's debut on wax in the form of "Big Up", a song produced by E-Swift and featured on Immortal's Next Chapter Compilation.

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In 1997, Defari teamed with producer-emcee Evidence of Dilated Peoples and dropped two highly regarded singles, "Bionic b/w Change & Switch" and People's Choice b/w Bottom Line on ABB Records. Defari gained notoriety and built a reputation as an artist whose music transcended regional barriers. In May of 1998, Defari signed with Tommy Boy Records. In doing so, he became one of the first participants in the West Coast's Hip hop renaissance to in effect "graduate".

Following the release of his debut album, Defari co-headlined with Xzibit & Phife (A Tribe Called Quest) on The Underdawgs of Hip Hop National Tour in April & May of 1999. He wasn't a newcomer when it came to performing live. Prior to this, he toured the underground circuit for years and received rave review for being one of the most charismatic emcees to hit the stage.

His energetic and captivating performances led him to other national & international tours. Rocking a wide range of audiences with some of the major players of the game today. The most current recent N. American tour being the Anger Management Tour where he performed with Xzibit and performed his own material to 20,000 plus crowds each night. Many agree that Defari knows how to bring it like a true seasoned veteran.

It came to the point in 2000 that the fans were not going to be satisfied with just the 12 'vinyl available from Defari. With ABB Records' new initiative into the European markets, they released their first ABB Europe CD: Defari's 'LA Collexion' a collection of all Defari's vinyl only singles on ABB Records for the first time on CD. The whole pressing was sold out in France alone within 2 days!

An even more heightened profile in the US came after his featuring on Dr Dre's 'Chronic 2001' album and touring the world on the 'Up In Smoke Tour' with Dre & Eminem. With fans around the world screaming for Defari to face them one to one in shows, Defari turned to Nicci Cheeks Management in the UK to formalize a new base for his operations outside of the USA, but this time for Europe.

High Times Records signed Defari for his 2003 sophomore album 'Odds & Evens' featuring all the usual Likwit family: Dilated Peoples, Tha Liks (Tash, J-Ro & E-Swift) and the Barbershop MCs. This was an automatic VIP round trip ticket to the Amsterdam Cannabis Cup in 2002 and 2003, where Defari performed to a very packed out Melkweg every year alongside groups

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including: Tha Liks and De La Soul. The release of his new album coupled with a fantastic video for the single 'Spell My Name' gave fuel to fire for his European management. This has resulted in a 300% increase in Defari's press, radio and TV coverage (including a special feature documentary about Defari on VIVA TV's 'Mixery Raw Deluxe' show during May 2004 and ultimately his touring capabilities as a solo artist.

Listen to the interview below.

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