

# STILL BURNIN'

## THE ARSONISTS PUT A MATCH UNDER NEW YORK CITY

by **FRITZ LE CHAT**

The Arsonists are one of the best (and hardest working) hip-hop groups currently in existence. No question. With only three independently-released singles, they've managed to draw the world's attention, they play shows across the US, are aiming at a European tour this summer, have two albums' worth of material recorded already, have appeared in almost every magazine dealing with hip-hop around the world, and this is only the beginning. I caught up with MC Q-Unique in New York to kick it about the crew.

"The whole thing about the Arsonists is that back in the day when you was battling somebody you wanted to burn your competition or burn the mic. So that's what we're all about, you know? We're burning everything."

The crew started like so many others do, just a neighborhood group of people get-

ting together, and ours was the most-requested demo on the Stretch Armstrong Show."

The "Session" b/w "Halloween" quickly became one of Fondle 'Em's most popular releases, but the work was just beginning, since the label "doesn't do shit!" Q laughs, referring to Bobbito's "no promotions or publicity" stance with the label. "We hustle. That's the thing that people have to understand. You gotta believe no matter what the fuck people say. You gotta believe in your product so much and just be like, 'It's phat' and get on stage, get on the radio, and work yourself. Go out there and make your stickers, make your t-shirts, and bless the fans. When you get that on your side man... and there's a lot of Fondle 'Em artists, and we're amongst the top-selling - and possibly among the most famous - it feels good, you know."

Part of the Arsonists' suc-

cess has been the fan support. I was at a seminar and this cat was talking about how punk rock groups have their own union. That bugged me out. I never knew that. And they get along perfectly when it comes to finance. For us it's a difficult road man, a lot of people are stressed out. Look at groups like the Cure, Depeche Mode, they all have cult followings, but their followings are millions, millions of people. They have their foundation, they'll be here forever. I'd rather be here forever than to be like Hammer. Where's Hammer? Vanilla Ice? Or even Big Daddy Kane? All flashes in the pan. To me, it's long-term success verses short-term greed. Puffy: how long could he possibly last? Another year at the most. That formula doesn't last forever."

So how do the Arsonists plan last forever? With the success of the three singles, is there an album on the way?