

PHAROAE DE P.43

had to get them on the album."

Feeling that a load of guest appearances would sound cluttered on an Organized album, Pharoahe's solo long-player features some of hip hop's overground and underground best, including M.O.P., Talib Kweli, Canibus, Busta Rhymes and an all-star remix of "Simon Says" with Redman, Method Man, Busta, Lady Luck and Rawkus labelmate Shabaam Sahdeeq. Most special was the collab with Common, when Pharoahe "almost cried when he came to the studio."

The hype machine being what it is, it's looking like Pharoahe Monch may finally walk into the sun and get the shine he deserves.

"It seems that way, but I'm so pessimistic it's like 'whatever'," he says. "So far it's projected that the shit is gonna do really, really, really well. People have been giving me love and people have been attacking me. People just take this shit seriously. Sometimes I take it seriously, sometimes I don't. I don't think I should be the MC who's supposed to save underground hip hop."

Maybe not, but then from a fan's point of view he admits, "I rate myself in the upper echelon of MCs." Which is why I know exactly what I'm getting Bill for his birthday this year.

FRITZ EL GATO

Pharoahe's Internal Affairs featuring "Get the Fuck Up," drops October 19th on Rawkus.