

GET THE FUCK OUT!

Organized Konfusion's Pharoahe Monch Gives Hip Hop a Wake Up Call



IN GRADE NINE I USED TO GO to my friend Bill's house every day after school to watch *Rap City*. Hip hop radio shows being non-existent at that time in Toronto, it was one of our few sources for new musical information to guide us in our Friday evening trips to Dr. Disc. Picking up all the albums we'd seen on TV with limited funds wasn't possible, so a few things fell through the cracks. Organized Konfusion was almost one of those groups. Fortunately for me, Bill bought their self-titled first album for my birthday one year and began my now close to ten year listening relationship with Prince Poetry and Pharoahe Monch. It's too bad everyone didn't have a friend like Bill; maybe O.K. wouldn't have been so criminally slept on. After stepping back from the scene for a minute to get his thoughts together, Monch is back to paint the whole picture on his fourth album, his solo debut

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Internal Affairs.

"It's an interpretation of the personal shit I've gone through, from a reality perspective," he says. "There's some ill conceptual shit on the album, but most of it deals with my emotions and feelings, from a thought-provoking standpoint still, but more raw."

A lot has changed since the days of "Fudge Pudge" and "Releasing

Hypnotical Gasses": labels (Hollywood Basic to Priority to "indie" juggernaut Rawkus); weight (from 260 down to 189 and back up a little bit); the status of the group.

"It's not over," says Monch. "It's not in existence right now either. It's in hiatus. I just need to really get some of these things out, before I can evaluate. I owe it to Organized fans to try and do the best Organized shit I possibly could do, if I was to do it again, and not have interior or exterior things interfering with our focus."

FOR A MAN WHO JUST WANT-

ed to put out a record he thought Kool G. Rap might like, Monch quickly found many sides to the prism, some of which didn't reflect light in the most complementary way. First of all, "there's two sides to this shit. When I actually got into the midst of everything, it's like some dog

eat dog shit. It's even worse the higher up the echelon you go. It's bullshit."

There's also the catch-22 of not selling any records, but feeling pressured by your small core group of fans not to experiment with new ways of expression.

"We have to balance out the perspective of hip hop," says Monch. "Shit has to be supported. I've seen Organized albums, and albums that were better than

Organized albums, try all this shit and then where's the support at? It's bugged, the split between underground and what's not underground. I want to become an artist who can put out a song with Common that's deep and then put out [a record like] "I'll Bee Dat". I was asking some other MCs if they felt as much pressure as I did, and they were like, 'you just gotta make records.' It just feels like the Organized fan, the Pharoahe fan, is more tedious, more tight."

Kinda makes you want to quit, eh? "You get discouraged. After the last situation, last label, I was like 'you're not shit, fuck all the accolades and praise. Go back in and make some more songs.' I felt I had something personal to say."

What he was saying quickly caught the ears of many in the industry and offers for his solo material started coming in from MCA, Loud, Interscope and more. Rawkus offered the same things with a better contract. Also, Pharoahe knew he'd get the attention and respect he deserved on a smaller label with a smaller roster. The result is an album that stands as Monch's testament to himself and the world of hip hop music. What may surprise many of his O.K. fans are the collaborations.

"[I always thought] if I ever was to do a solo album, I wanted to do it on my own on some MC pride shit," says Monch. "But over the years I've been influenced by and admired a lot of artists and I just

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