

ANTI-POP DE P.47

to hip hop, you kind of have to let a lot of it go.”

Just as I'm finishing up my third cup of fair-trade coffee and lighting another cigarette (having long-ago abandoned any millennial resolutions), we see Priest jump out of a cab. He pulls off his mid-length leather jacket to reveal a red gym suit. He's also rocking bright blue '70s sneakers and a pair of his own “weird” shades. As he removes his headphones, I wonder aloud what these cats listen to for inspiration. The current hit “Baby, I'm Back” by Lip-Licker Cool J, perhaps?

“I don't listen to much hip hop,” Priest counters. “It's redundant.” All of it? “Most of it.” Curious, I ask them both to empty their bags on the table, revealing stacks of mini-discs from the likes of Herbie Hancock, Storm and Stress, Company Flow, Ike and Tina Turner, Gap Band and Prince. Beans plays me a few seconds of Sonny Murray's *Sonny's Time Now* LP, introducing me to a new kind of New York state of mind. They both credit their varied tastes in music as being crucial to their current success. Over the years, in addition to rhyming, all three members have expanded their musical abilities into the instrumental world. Priest can be found playing live drums on their newer releases and Beans has established himself as an accomplished guitarist since beginning lessons back in 2000.

When asked about the Next Big Thing, Priest tells me about his current creative pathways, “music with sexual energy, more digital elements and anything processed from the aural experience of the Anti-Pop Consortium,” before giving me a hip hop hug and heading back upstairs for another full afternoon of meetings. Beans continues, “I consider myself a writer really. The word “MC” has a lot of connotations that I don't think apply to me. I have in the past called myself an MC, but for now, I consider myself an artist, a writer. I just keep moving, doing what I'm doing. In order to be more focused you have to let a lot of it go. I think *Tragic Epilogue* and everything after that reflected that. We just do our shit. We've been doing it this long and there's a lot of things