

Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

The Portland Observer

D

KNOWLEDGE

How do you spell Poet

He walked out onto the Apollo stage in New York City. Leaned his body on history, poured his tongue into a whirlwind of words and color. He said Remember. And we did. And he grew large, suddenly, like a fire in the wind, and his words burst into flames, igniting us all with sanctified nods of Amen. Brother. Yeah. Brother-man. Tell it like tis. Word.

When did this young man called D-Knowledge learn to sail his masculine words on our sequestered memories until our heads jerked back in recognition? How did he pull us from our unremembered youth, our past ago activism in the midst of these historical times? How do you spell Poet in these pseudo-poetical times?

You spell him D-Knowledge, a name given to him by his peers at the University of California in Berkeley, where he began to read two books a week, moving his arms, hands and eyes on a mission of knowledge as he came out of his incubation, cracking his shell and our skulls in the process. D-Knowledge. Liberating name.

You spell him PH.D. Candidate Man in sociology at the University of California at Los Angeles, where he reads and interprets and analyzes the origins and history of human society. Yeah. Cuz is all that.

You spell him African-American Poet Man on a mission, more interested in challenging and teaching us all with his commentary and humor than hitting skins. You call him Poet. In The Tradition.

Do you remember the first time you were home? At peace with yourself? Yes. Something like a first love. Holier than even that. D-Knowledge was home as he surrounded himself with poets, musicians, and artists from Leimert Park, as he read writers like June Jordan, Amiri Baraka and Gil Scott-Heron. He knew he was finally home as he began the practiced step of poetry, with its inevitable rhythm and beat.



D Knowledge

And he followed that ancestral beat home to where words became women and men, where flesh walked upright. Finally. And his poetry asked no favors. Took no prisoners.

And Hamilton Cloud, in 1993, at the NAACP Image Awards Program, saw and heard all that and more. He began talking and negotiating with the young wordsmith who had electrified the audience that night. Hamilton Cloud and Ramon Hervey began the work of bringing this unique poet to a larger audience.

Within months, D-Knowledge had a guest appearance in John Singleton's next film, Higher Learning. He wrote a poem for the movie;

Next he appeared in Mario Van Peebles' film, The Panthers;

Then a shot on Arsenio Hall's show that showed the country the power of this young poet's words;

And finally, he signed with Qwest Records, Quincy Jones' label, to do an album. All That And A Bag

Of Words was released in February, 1995.

From the impulse of teacher, he has become the name and namer of his poems. And a mighty sound is heard in the land. He cajoles the young to be drug free, gun free, macho free, baby free, nigger free. He has asked us to conquer any fears that hold us back. He asks us to continue to learn and study and read and resist. Resist anything that keeps us from being human.

From the impulse of the lover, he implores us to love ourselves, our big and thin lips, our wide and narrow noses, our Black and fair skins, our nappy, curly and straight hair. He tells us to stay deep and focused on ourselves so we can begin the beginning work of loving ourselves and our people and then we will be capable of loving others.

His words will put meat on your bones. Money is all that!

SONIA SANCHEZ

Linda Hornbuckle With No Delay

Tackling Artetha is a ballsy move for a self-professed soul diva, but for her first selection on soul diva Meets The Blues Monsters Linda Hornbuckle delivers a full-bodied and funky version "Baby I love You." Backed by her band No Delay--prose who have toured or recorded with Anita Baker, Martha Reeves, Terry Evans, Paul deLay, The Coasters and many others--Hornbuckle proves a phenomenal vocalist who could hold her own against Franklin or Natalie Cole, whom Hornbuckle strongly resembles when singing in her jazzy upper register.

Hers is a soulful, smoky, gospel-drenched voice confidently navigating unusual arrangements of such over-covered covers as "Hound Dog," "I Can't Stand The Rain," and, even, "Amazing Grace." The band is tight and snappy, sounding a lot like James Brown's funky 1970s ensembles.

It's a shame, though, to hear a voice this world class and a band this polished work such gimmicky arrangements as the version of "I Can't Stand The Rain," which opens with irritating high-pitched tones intended, one assumes, to evoke raindrops, or the ultra-funk version of "Hound Dog," which sometimes sounds like Prince's "Kiss."

All the arrangements are extremely well-performed, but folks this talent should forego oldies in favor of creating some classics of their own, because they are certainly capable of doing so. With shining originals, Hornbuckle and No Delay could break out of Portland, Oregon,



Linda Hornbuckle

into adult contemporary radio-land.

Portland will no doubt be sorry to see them go, however, having awarded Hornbuckle Portland Music Association's coveted Crystal Award for Artist of the year in 1992. She and her guitarist, Peter Dammann, also took best female vocalist and best guitarist, respectively, at the Cascade Blues Association Muddy Awards in 1992 before heading into the studio to record soul Diva.

Live, Linda Hornbuckle must really be something, if her awards and the opening segment of "don't Let Temptation Turn you Around," which was recorded live at the 1993 Portland Waterfront Blues Festival, are any indication. This is a lady

who's electric in front of an audience. She radiated joyous soul, telling the cheering audience, "It's time to bring you into my world...doing the gospel thang, that's my world." Yet, on the second half of the song, recorded in the studio, she was a bit restrained. This is one performer who should seriously consider making her next recording a live one.

Soul Diva closes with a powerful "Amazing Grace" supported by Louis Pain's dramatic piano comping before the entire band kicks in. This was the one song on the CD that benefitted from an unusual arrangement. It was a fittingly restrained take on a song that is too often raved through the roof.

Monqui Presents

If all that you know of this artist is the A-side, then you've got something coming to you. For the past five years, he has released a score of hit singles, several with B-sides never included on any album. Couple those with six amazing remixes of his classic tracks and a pair of sensational new songs, and you have Bootlegs & B-Sides, this artist's latest album history with his 1992 release The predator by debuting at #1 on both Billboard's top 200 and R&B album charts and turning Platinum in just four days, but he is also a regular on the big screen with a number of movies, soundtracks and even screenplays under his belt. Please welcome a true performer and a front man in the world of Rap. Priority Recording Artist.

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Where: La Luna *215 SE Ninth (at Pine) *Portland, OR * 97214

Tickets: \$18.50 in Advance * On sale Friday, March 10th at 9:00 m

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