

Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

The Portland Observer

Rappin ...4-Tay

Since his release from prison in late-1992, Anthony Forte's objective was clear. First, he wanted to be the first playa to put San Francisco on the map. Secondly, he wanted to be able to take care of his family. Thirdly, get Off Parole. He wanted to make a positive name in the rap game for himself and his record label, Rag Top Records. 4-Tay says, "Let the record now reflect that I have been on nothin' short of a mission, with my mission objectives clear. I've always said, 'if you fail to plan, you plan to fail. I just thought it was time to listen to myself for awhile.' 'Cause there are a lot of people going around talking ' these days."



Debuting on record in 1989 as a guest on Life is ...Too Short, 4-Tay rapped with Too Short on a triple x-rated track entitled "Don't Fight The Feelin'". In 1993, 4-Tay dropped his own album, Don't Fight The Feelin' on the streets of the Bay Area, and started working his way across the nation, trying to sell his tape. 4-Tay

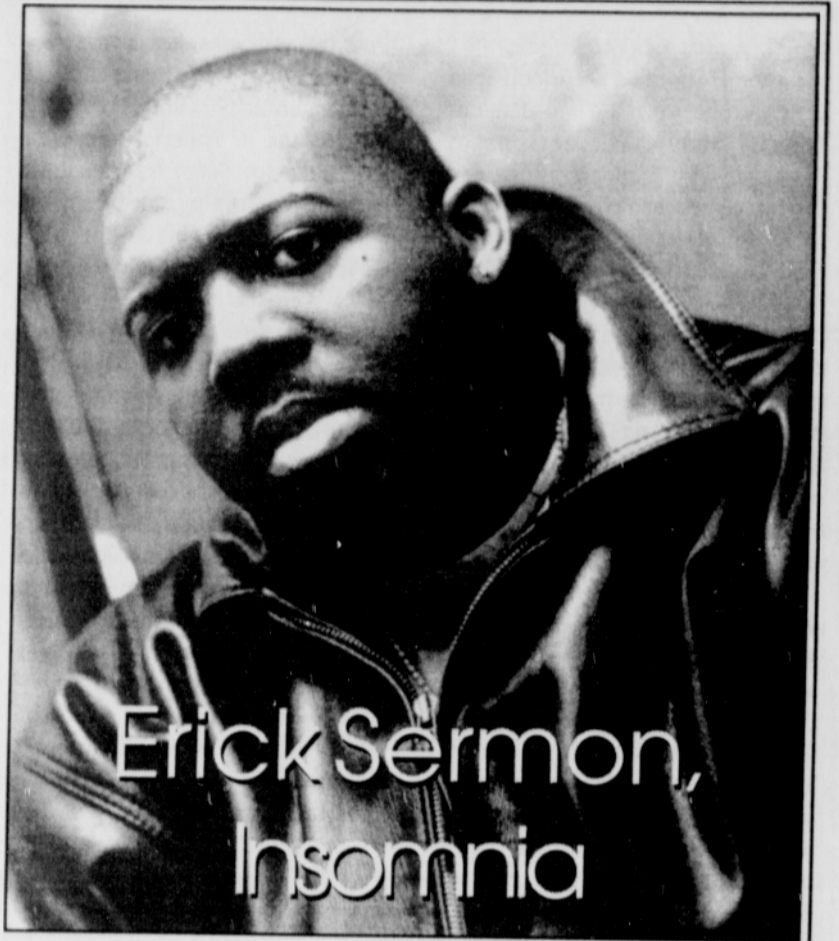
recalls, "We had a plant set-up by (label co-founders) Franky J (Frank Hudson), Fly (Gary Hudson), and myself. Since we didn't have much money, we had to put in work. The plan was to take the game a playa had and whatever else a playa could shake loose from his hustle, and put a Rappin' 4-Tay tape in every neighborhood store and then find a place in that area where I could rap. Afterwards, they'd come get the tape from the store. That was the plan, that's it and that's all."

I've been having trouble sleeping lately, but it's all gravy baby, because I know it's all due to a little Insomnia caused by Erick Sermon's phat compilation album featuring 11 butter tracks produced by the funklord himself on Bandit/Interscope Records. "I titled it Insomnia because the album is a funky station that stays on 24 hours a day, 7 days a week...it never stops," states Sermon.

Never stopping is something Erick Sermon's accustomed to since 1987, when he and Parrish Smith broke in to the rap game with their flavorful debut single "It's My Thing/You're A Customer." The duo went on to record countless Hip-Hop classics such as "You Gots To Chill," "So What Cha Saying," "Rampage," and "Crossover." After the group's split, Erick went on to release a solo debut album entitled No Pressure, which reached gold status as well.

This project was put together by Erick's long desire to own a record label in the recording industry. A driving force in the successful careers of Redman and Keith Murray with solid funky production skills and an unmatched experience in the do's and don'ts of the business, as well as working with an immense group of unsigned Hip-Hop and R&B talent cemented his decision to hit heads with something different now. He explains the reason of combining all the hype unknown artists in one package. "Rather than working with one artist at one time, I decided to piggy-back them and let the world choose who they wanted first, and then do an album on them."

The Insomnia attack began with



Erick Sermon, Insomnia

88.9 WFDS radio hostess Cheir Martinez representing lovely on the airwaves immediately followed by "Funkorama," from the funkadelic relic Redman. A jam firmly stamped in Def Squad tradition, produced by Redman, Erick proudly describes it as "the heaviest of the funk."

Dedicating the track to his "peoples on lock down and on the street," Keith Murray covers all lyrical bases on the joint accurately titled "It's That Hit," which is sure to be a summertime anthem. When asked to comment on Murray's cut, the funklord breaks out with a wide grin and states, "You know how he gets

down, he's just sick with his." However, the Redman and Murray cuts are far from being the only hype ammo on Insomnia. The hard hitting winna of "I Feel It," features Keith's Central Islip homeboys, L.O.D. also getting in ya' with the rugged lingo and borrowing the chorus from the classic "Jamaica Funk." "This cut reminds me of 'Hostile back when me and Murray did it," he states.

Judging by my inability to get some sleep from playing his brand new funk constantly, Erick's got the ability to put No-Doz out of business.

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"The King and I" Winner at Broadway's Tony Awards

Rodgers & Hammerstein's "The King and I" was the only show to take Broadway's coveted Triple Crown at last night's 50th Anniversary Tony Awards, winning Best Musical revival —adding to the Best Musical awards the acclaimed new production received from the Outer Critics Circle and Drama Desk last month.

The new staging of the beloved classic musical won four coveted Tony Awards, tying with newcomers "Rent" and "Bring in 'Da Noise, Bring in 'Da Funk" to win the most accolades during a highly-charged ceremony broadcast from Broadway's Majestic Theatre.

Broadway favorite Donna Murphy once again won the Best Actress in a Musical Tony Award for her performance as Mrs. Anna in "The King and I" against such strong competition as Julie Andrews

("Victor, Victoria"), Christa Moore ("Big") and Daphne Rubin-Vega ("Rent"). In 1994 Murphy won the Best Actress Tony for her performance in Stephen Sondheim's "Passion."

Produced by Dodger Productions, The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, James M. Nederlander, Perseus Productions with John Frost and the Adelaide Festival Centre in association with The Rodgers and Hammerstein Organization, "The King and I," starring Donna Murphy and Lou Diamond Phillips, is playing to packed houses at Broadway's Neil Simon Theatre. A new company is scheduled to go out on a National Tour, concurrently with the Broadway

production, in the spring of 1997. Four Australians won 1996 Tony Awards. Two of the designers of "The King and I," Roger Kirk (Best Costumes) and Brian Thomson (Best Sets) took home the prize, as did "King and I" producer John Frost, along with Zoe Caldwell who won Best Actress in a Play for her performance in "Master Class."

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