

Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

Queen Latifah

She's a television and film actress. A soon-to-be talk show host. A label president. An artist manager. An author and an entrepreneur, blessed with style, substance and mad skills. Queen Latifah has blossomed into a one-woman entertainment conglomerate, heralded by the press and the industry as a force to be reckoned with and a talent to be watched. She has, quite simply, done it all and shows no sign of slowing down. Yet with all of her accomplishments and all of her acclaim, it has been a long, long time since Queen Latifah has made an album.

After more than four years the wait is over. **Order In The Court** marks the return of the premiere female microphone artist and the maiden release on Queen Latifah's own Flavor Unit Records, a label deal recently inked with Motown Records.

As far as Queen Latifah is concerned, though she's about stepping back into the arena after a lengthy hiatus, she is typically confident and self-assured. "It's not like I haven't been highly visible since **Black Reign** (which went gold) came out. My name and image have certainly been out there, but when it comes to being back in the rap game, well" Queen Latifah smiles, "I just gotta go get them. That's my attitude. The main thing is that the music is right. And you know I made sure of that!"

And then some. Helping Latifah make it right, make it funky and make it sound so good are an elite crew of hip hop and R&B artists, among them Dru Hill, Faith Evans, Pras (of the Fugees) and Apache, who guests on the explosive first single, "Bananas." With production from Kay Gee, Diamond D, DJ Clark Kent and Queen Latifah herself, **Order In The Court** is more than just another hip hop album—it's the strongest album of Queen Latifah's already impressive career. "I'm really pleased with this CD because it really reflects 100% of Queen Latifah. I have a lot of different qualities on various levels and I hope that people hearing **Order In The Court** will pick up on that."

The first peck at one of Queen Latifah's different qualities is "Bananas." Ask Latifah to describe the track, which she co-wrote, and she says, "It's the professional side of the somewhat hard-core MC that's in me. It's an in-your-face kind of record. I knew that I didn't want my first single in all these years to some sappy kind of song. Or something that would just go straight pop. I want to represent for the hip hop community, first and foremost. So 'Bananas' is for them, and whatever audiences wanna come and join in on the party—great! But that track is dedicated to those who truly love hip hop." Latifah smiles. "As we go along with other singles, it will



give me a chance to display my versatility."

Such versatility is evident on songs like "Paper," which boasts edgy grooves and sultry singing from the Queen; the lip smacking "Turn U On," produced by Chad "Dr. Cuss" Elliot & Al West; the emotionally direct "Life," which

deals with the frustrations of day-to-day life and the need not to give up hope. "I mean, Tupac and me were close and his death and Biggie's really affected me. I truly believe that there's something in life worth going after, even if it's just being on the mike, making a record."

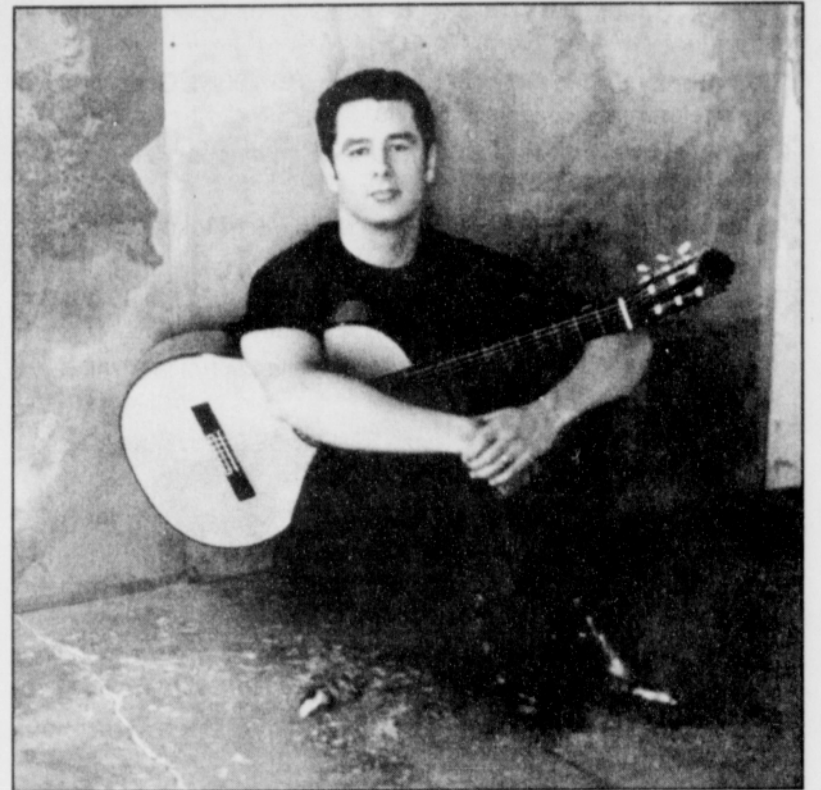
Marc Antoine-Madrid

A true gypsy by lineage and lifestyle, Marc Antoine is like a musical sponge, soaking in everything around him at all times. "If I'm walking in New York," he says, "and I hear a salsa band in a club nearby, I get in that mood and immediately start thinking of writing a tune in that style." His goal every year is simply to travel everywhere and anywhere his wanderlust and muse take him. For now, that ongoing journey stops graciously on the spirited, romantic streets of **Madrid**, his third and sure to be his biggest recording to date.

Madrid is Antoine's first release under the new joint venture agreement between the GRP Recording Company and NYC Music Group.

A few years ago, based on the extraordinary success of Antoine's first two albums **Classical Soul** and **Urban Gypsy**, leading industry publication Radio & Records boldly declared that the guitarist is the "future of the format." Considering that so much of what we hear on contemporary jazz radio these days features Antoine's kind of cross-cultural influences—intertwining tasty flavor mixes of classical, Latin and Brazilian music with thick, machine-generated urban hip-hop rhythms—such a statement seems highly prophetic.

It's been a few years since his debut and its hit single "Unity" earned Marc the distinction of Contemporary Jazz Radio's Best New Artist 1995 (and it's follow up **Urban Gypsy** hit the Top Ten on Billboard's contemporary Jazz Chart in 1996), and now he's back with more exotic traveling—this time to Madrid, the city in which he lives half the year and where he met his soon-to-be bride.



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