

Music

Da Brat is Back

CONTRIBUTED STORY  
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Don't call it a comeback. Though it's been three years since Da Brat's last album, *Anutha Tantrum*, Da Brat's been more visible than a lot of her female contemporaries. Adding her flow to Top 10 singles with the likes of Mariah Carey and Missy Elliot and featured often on MTV as a popular celebrity judge or as the host of the highly-viewed "TRL" ("Total Request Live"), the Chicago native has managed to stay in the spotlight. Who can forget the show-stopping presentation she made at last year's "Soul Train Awards" or her sassy dialogue at UPN's highly-rated "Source Awards" honoring fellow hip-hop artists? All this high-profile exposure without a current CD in roation?! Just imagine what's to come with the release of *Unrestricted*, her third CD...Da Brat's revealing everything. With a little borrowed from Millie Jackson's album of the same name (who drops a few lines on the into by the way!) not only is Da Brat



showing a tad more skin, but she's showing off lyrically as well. Though the big-shirts-baggy-jeans-and-braids look will never

completely disappear (hey that's quintessential Brat), one glance at the sexy CD cover is just a hint of what to expect in the grooves. Listen to the suggestively thirst-quenching "Pink Lemonade," featuring Debra Killings, and the flirty "What'chu Like," featuring Tyrese, to get a better X-rated, or make that R-Rated, picture. Confidence is not the only quality Da Brat's not lacking. She possesses an abundance of creativity. Though she's always written her own rhymes, on "Runnin' Out Of Time," featuring soulful songstress Kelly Price, Da Brat even penned the emotionally-charged hook. "I just thought about some of the things I'd been through, the things my friends had been through and it just came out of me." Of course her "big brother" Jermaine Dupri produced the majority of the funkified cuts on *Unrestricted* including So So Def's new theme song, "We Ready". But it's Da Brat herself who's responsible for introducing her fellow Chi-Town native, the up-

and-coming producer Aaron "The Hitman" Pittman on this project. The South Side producer is responsible for the tracks on "Breeve On Em" and "Runnin' Out Of Time." He's down with her entertainment company, Thowin' Tantrums along with 22, another Chi-town MC, who appears with Da Brat on "Breeve On Em." Though Da Brat's slowly peeling the layers off to reveal both her beauty and her talent, there's still plenty of rawness to draw fans back tot he first solo female rapper to go platinum. She's the perfect female MC still coming on hardcore while remaining undeniably feminine. "I'm still gonna be the same Brat no matter what," she says. "I'm gonna keep on paying. I'm gonna hold my head high, even if I fall on my face. I'll pick myself back up. Learn and start all over. The only thing I won't do is give up. This third album is like a kick-off album for the rest of my life." With the arrival of *Unrestricted*, life's lookin' real good for Da Brat-ta-tat-tat.

Jagged  
from page 2

through, a lot of them are close to us." Don't think for a second that Jagged Edge can't get a party started. After all, their group moniker has always symbolized their penchant for being smooth, but a li'l rough around the edges. JE Heartbreak comes equipped with some beat-driven party jams that are ripe for summer Jeep cruisin'. "Did She Say?," the premier single, busts a bumpin' Beatnuts-looped groove that could fill any dance floor, while it doesn't get any more jammin' (or jiggy) than "House, Money & the Keys to the Range." "Girl Is Mine," after a Bobby Brown-inspired intro, brings the fellas to a funk-fused '90s sound that features the gruff, streetcore mic stylings of Def Jam rapper Ja Rule. "Well, Ja, JD and Jay-Z are all tight," says Brian of how they connected with the blazin'-hot MC. "Ja's style works; that's why he's on every R&B thing right now. I ain't mad at Ja."

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