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"A community that works together in unity will thrive!"

# LL Cool J Keeps it Real after 2 Decades

## Credits 50 Cent with helping him stay fresh

(AP) — With his latest CD, LL Cool J is readying his exit and preparing for his future at the same time.

"Exit 13" is his 13th CD and final official album for Def Jam records, which has been his label home for 23 years. But LL is hardly about to leave the music industry, despite his success in film and other areas.

The 40-year-old says he feels rejuvenated and credits fellow Queens rapper 50 Cent, who is a producer on the album, with teaching him a new way to approach his music.

In a recent interview, LL talked about his new album, staying fresh after more than two decades in the business, and his impact on the genre.

What's different about "Exit 13" compared to your past 12 records?

LL Cool J: As far as the difference between this record and the last couple of albums, it's light years away. The last couple of albums, I was making those records in two or three months. This record took two years. I don't know if people can really grasp how big of a difference that is. ... It's like the idea of training for a fight for two weeks, or training for a fight for six months. It's that kind of a difference. And I think that musically it reflects that.

Did 50 Cent produce this record?

LL Cool J: I actually ended up executive producing "Exit 13," but 50 did executive

produce an album for me; I have a whole album I did with 50. I only used like three or four songs for this album. Working with 50 was inspiring. You have to realize I had no reason to be hungry. When you're the best at something for a long time, and you make albums in a couple months and they're still going gold or selling a million records ... and you're making a living in films and stuff, it



LL Cool J performs as part of Nissan Live Sets on Yahoo! Music in Los Angeles.

affects the music. But watching 50 crouch over that notebook and seeing him bounce back and forth in the studio, that inspired me and made me hungry again.

You've been in the game for about 25 years. What do you think your contributions are to hip-hop?

LL Cool J: First of all, I am the first solo rap artist period in the world to really blow up in hip-hop on the whole planet; that's

one contribution, that's a starting point. I took my shirt off too, that's another starting point, but Melle Mel might have beat me to that (laughs). I introduced the big gold chains, the Champagne, the models, the diamonds, the (Mercedes) Benzs — I did all that on (1989's) "Walking With a Panther" and got eaten alive for the same things that they celebrate everybody for now.

You were critical of Jay-Z's tenure as president of Def Jam. As you release "Exit 13," he is no longer in charge. How has that impacted the release of this album?

LL Cool J: As far as him leaving, it's not really relevant because I was already working on my record anyway. It was nothing he would have been able to do to stop it. It would have been what it was going to be either way. And I don't think he would have wanted to stop it.

You've covered a lot of ground in your career, what else is there to do?

LL Cool J: I just want to do it bigger, bigger and bigger, and show people that anything is possible. I'm in a funny position because I'm the first guy that has to show people that hip-hop can keep going. The guys that people call veterans in hip-hop are like new guys to me. Let's take a guy like Nas. I love Nas; I respect Nas. He's from Queens and I love him, but Nas is like a new cat to me. You know what I'm saying? It's incredible to me, but I respect him as a legend and I respect him as a man. ... I want to give people hot music, and I just have to lead the way.

## ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

**Let's Play Cards** -- Reflections Coffeehouse, 446 N.E. Killingsworth St., hosts its Third Friday Let's Play Cards event, Sept. 19, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Games include bid whist, spades, dominoes, chess and more. Fried fish will be available for \$4.

**Poetry at Miracles** -- Local and national artists and musicians share an evening of spoken word and music at the Miracles Club, 4069 N.E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, each Wednesday's, between 7:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.

**Saturday Market Place** -- Me'Rae's Multi-cultural Full Service Salon, 5842 N.E. 42nd Ave., hosts a Saturday Market Place, Sept. 20 from noon to 6 p.m. Twenty-five vendors to include food, clothing, sister locks, realtors, skin care produce, hand crafted jewelry and much more.

**Diversity Film Festival** -- The first diversity film festival at the Vancouver campus of Washington State University, 14204 N.E. Salmon Creek Ave., takes place through Oct. 14 at various afternoon and evening times in the college's administration building, room 110. All films are free and open to the public.

**Art Museum Books** -- More than 1,000 new and used books will be on sale during a book sale at the Portland Art Museum, Saturday, Sept. 20 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday, Sept. 21 from noon to 5 p.m.

**DJ Anjali and the Incredible Kid** -- Portland rappers DJ Anjali and the Incredible Kid take over the Sometown Lounge, 125 N.W. Fifth Ave., for a dance party night of Bollywood music on Friday, Sept. 19 from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. with a \$5 cover.

**Hip Hop to Native Americans** -- Andrew Morrison draws on his Native American culture, hip-hop and street art in a cutting

edge, exciting and unique exhibit on display in the artists gallery in the administration building on the Vancouver campus of Washington State University through Thursday, Sept. 18.

**Politically Charged Art** -- Multi-ethnic portraits mix more than color in Gwenn Seemel's politically-charged exhibit "Apple Pie," on display through Saturday, Sept. 20 at the Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center, 5340 N. Interstate Ave.



**Asian American Drum Performances** -- Portland Taiko's fall concert in the Footsteps of Our Ancestors takes place Friday, Sept. 19 and Saturday, Sept. 20 at 8 p.m. and Sunday, Sept. 21 at 2 p.m. at Newmark Theatre, 1111 S.W. Broadway. A children's matinee by Taiko of Little Feet, Big Drums takes place Saturday, Sept. 20 at 2 p.m., also at the Newmark.

**OMSI \$2 Days** -- The first Sunday of every month can spark your passion for science at the OMSI when admission is just \$2. For more information, visit OMSI.edu.

**Sunday Night Jazz** -- Jazz enthusiasts can enjoy listening to the cool sounds of Mel Brown, in the Rogue River Room at Chinook Winds Casino Resort in Lincoln City. No cover charge.

**Music Millennium Free Shows** -- The Music Millennium, 3158 E Burnside, host many in-house live performances. Enjoy free music and the opportunity to meet local artists. Call 503-231-8926 for a schedule.

**Forest Center Senior Day** -- The World Forestry Center presents its first annual Senior Day on Tuesday, Oct. 7 from 10 a.m. to

5 p.m. with a discounted admission price of \$3.50. Seniors can explore the hands-on, interactive museum and learn about the forests of the Pacific Northeast and around the world.

**Live Jazz** -- Every Friday and Saturday from 8 p.m. to 11 p.m., the Third Degrees Lounge at the RiverPlace Hotel, 1510 S.W. Harbor Way, will host the ongoing weekend series featuring Portland's rich jazz scene with no cover or minimum purchase. For more information, visit pdxjazz.com.

**Open Mic Night** -- Every Wednesday night at 7 p.m., Proper Eats Market and Café, 8638 N. Lombard St., host open mic night.



**Sliders Grill** -- Sliders Grill, 3011 N. Lombard, features an eclectic assortment of performers on the main stage, accompanied by delicious food. Call 503-459-4488 for more information.

**First Thursday Art Gallery Opening** -- Every first Thursday in the Pearl, meet the artists and join the street party for gallery receptions and openings introducing the works of many artists; this is a free event.

**Free First Friday Nights** -- The Portland Children's Museum has partnered with Target to provide free admission to everyone on the first Friday of each month from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.

**Oregon Zoo Buck Tuesdays** -- On the 2nd Tuesday of every month, the zoo hosts 2-Buck Tuesdays when guests can tour the zoo during regular zoo hours for the discounted price of \$2 per person!




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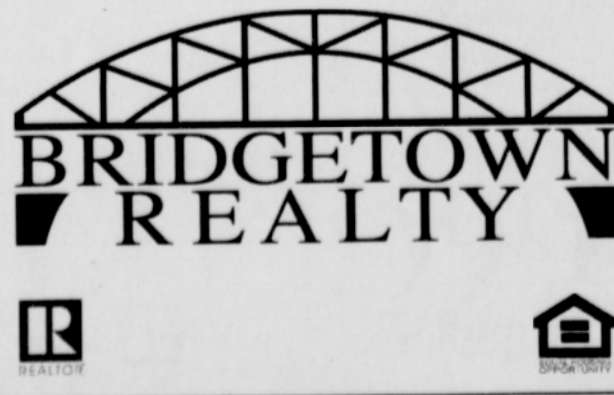


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