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Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

'Distant Relatives' Unite Cultures

Marley gets Nas out of comfort zone

(AP) -- Nas and Damian Marley had one goal in mind when they announced their collaborative album two years ago — finishing it. So they stopped work on their

own solo projects, and built a chart to assess the progress of their work while discussing topics like poverty, ancestry and leadership.

sue with this album ... and nobody's excluded when we say 'Distant Relatives.' We're talking about everybody — white, black, Asian, Indian, whatever you are, you're our family with this one," Nas said.



Recording artists Nas (left) and Damian Marley pose for a photograph in New York. (AP photo)

"It just meant so much to me," Nas said of the CD.

The result is "Distant Relatives," released this week. It's a socially conscious, African-themed record that was produced entirely by Damian and Stephen Marley. Nas, 36, said working on an album without his usual suspects got him out of his comfort zone.

"To change it up so kind of drastically from when you talk about hip-hop producers who only do hip-hop, and then go to work with D, it's like a whole new experience and I was just excited for the challenge."

Marley, 31, said the process taught him "how to do production for an artist other than myself."

Nas, who's released nine of his own CDs, said he trusted Marley's vision for the project.

"I'd be done with my work for the day and then come back the next day and then hear something else added and be like, 'Wow, that's perfect right there,'" he recalled.

The performers hope the disc — which features Lil Wayne, Joss Stone and Somali-born rapper K'naan — will unite cultures and inform listeners of their African roots.

"We're dealing with a family is-

"If you can accept the truth, once and for all, that can help to kind of cure you of your sickness, you know, with your racism and your corrupt politics, and your greed. You think about people for a change, and you think of those people as your family. And it's a good time right now to talk about that," he continued.

Marley and Nas, who will begin an international tour this month to support "Distant Relatives," are also interested in creating a sophomore album as a duo.

Nas, who debuted in 1994 and is known as one of hip-hop's top lyricists, says he's sometimes unsure about his future in music.

"When we think that we're just starting to get a name in the game, they're artists that have been around a lot longer than us who are in their 60s and 70s, who have huge tours and do great humanitarian work. I look at them and (ask), 'What will I do?'" he wondered.

"I remember thinking, 'Oh man, I won't be rapping forever.' But the reality of it is ..."

Marley interjects with a laugh and said: "You just might be."

Added Nas: "There's a good chance."

Natural Gardening Workshops

The third in a series of no-cost gardening workshops sponsored by SnowCap Community Charities will feature tips on natural gardening, soil amendments and fertilizing.

The session will be Thursday, June 3 from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the SnowCap community garden located behind the Rockwood United Methodist Church at 17805 S.E. Stark St.

"The garden classes are de-

signed to help families and individuals offset high food prices and improve their diets with nutritious food," says Kari James, SnowCap special projects coordinator.

Several other workshops have been scheduled through the summer months.

For more information and workshop signups, call Kari James at SnowCap at 503-674-8785, extension 37 or email kari@snowcap.org.



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