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De La Soul Isn't Dead

Lucas Elzey · Wednesday, May 10th, 2017

Back in the late 80s, when Hip Hop was booming and everyone was grooving to the many sounds of LL Cool J, NWA, and Heavy D and the Boyz, a hippy Hip Hop group from Long Island New York, came onto the scene looking to make a huge difference in music. The group formed in 1987 consisting of MC's Dave, Maseo, and Posdnuos. They formed in high school where they caught the attention of producer Prince Paul with a demo tape of the song "Plug Tunin." Posdunos sets the tone when he rhymes: "Flock to the preacher called Pos, let him be the stir to the style of your stew, sit while the kid of the plug form aroma, then grab a daisy to sip your favorite brew." De La Soul will most definitely be remembered for making an impact on hip hop and influencing others to do so as well.

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With the momentum of the song "Plug Tunin," the group released their debut album, *3 Feet High and Rising*. As soon as this album hit the shelves in 1989, it was a hit in the hip hop community. De La Soul quickly became prominent members within the Native Tongues Posse, along with other artist such as A Tribe Called Quest and Queen Latifah. From this album, the single almost everyone knows, "Me Myself and I" was very popular and quickly climbed the charts. "Right is wrong when hype is written on the Soul, De La that is, style is surely our own thing, not the false disguise of showbiz". This song very soon became a hit, further cementing the group's popularity, and also opening the minds of people around the world to a new version of hip hop they had never seen before.



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Instead of the rapping about money, drugs and women, De La Soul talked about peace and harmony. They not only wanted this in the black community, but also the world, that is why they made a difference in hip hop. The *3 Feet High and Rising* album is responsible for introducing the D.A.I.S.Y. age of hip hop. D.A.I.S.Y. (an acronym standing for "da inner sounds y'all). As a result of this accomplishment many fans were quick to label the group hippies, but this was not what the group intended. Subsequently, this stereotype agitated the group, because they wanted to be known for changing the style of rap, not being stuck with an unwanted label. The group addressed this in their song that I mentioned previously "Me Myself and I": "Now you tease my Plug One style, and my Plug One spectacles, you say Plug One and Two are hippies, no we're not that's pure Plug

bull”. Their catchy and comical lyrics made them darlings of not just the hip hop community, but the musical world at large.



De La Soul’s second album was released in 1991, focusing on the increasing violence of hip hop. This album *De La Soul is Dead* was just as good as their first. The cover featured a broken daisy flower pot symbolizing the end of the D.A.I.S.Y age. However, that certainly didn’t mean that the group was planning to slow down anytime soon. Two years later they released *Buhloone Mindstate*; this saw the group develop a brand new sound as they grew together musically. The first single from this album, “Breakadawn,” used samples from Michael Jackson’s “I Can’t Help It” and Smokey Robinson “Quiet Storm.” This was much beloved by their fans as well as hip hop fans worldwide.

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The groovy group’s fourth album, *The Stakes Is High*, was released in 1996. Although it didn’t sell much, hip hop fans just chalk it up to the declining quality of rap in the mid 90s. The album itself ironically makes that overall message and focuses on that topic throughout the tracklist. The chorus of the track “Supa Emcees” addresses this directly saying: “Hey, whatever happened to the *emcees* Times done changed for the *emcees* Every woman and man wanna *emcee* But for what, I tell you *emceeing ain’t for you!” This album also served as a launching pad for soon to be famous rapper Mos Def on the track “Big Brother.” While it did do poor sales, hip hop heads like me can say that this is one of my favorites.



De La Soul went on to inspire other artists such as Common, Mos Def, and legendary producer J Dilla, future hip hop stars of today such as Kanye West, J.Cole, and Logic.

De La Soul is still going strong and releasing new music. Their latest album, *and the Anonymous Nobody*, came out last June. De La Soul will always be remembered for changing hip hop.

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