

Mp3 Kokayi - The New Grease



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Hip Hop music to live and breathe by. 8 MP3 Songs HIP HOP/RAP: Hip Hop, ELECTRONIC: Breakbeat/Breaks Details: Artist, producer, and Hip Hop Ambassador, Kokayi was raised in the Southeast quadrant of the nation's capitol. Though fans and music peers believe that his voice is nothing short of a gift, Kokayi cites that his study of music (and specifically improvisation) began at his father's feet beside stacks of vinyl and a dusty piano. From his parents' record player he soaked in such greats as Dizzy, Miles, Coltrane, Irakere, Shorty Rodriguez, Tito Puente, James Brown, Parliament and many others. His late night excursions into the stacks of 45's under the bar lead to a further discovery of Richard Pryor, Led Zeppelin, Journey and Kiss (his older brother's favorite). But it was in the 80's when hip hop invaded his life by way of his brother bringing home the Profile record jacket containing the most important single of his life; Run DMC's Raising Hell. The Rick Rubin produced classic captured Kokayi and sent him in search of his life's passion to grace the stage and master the ceremony. Since that moment ever Kokayi which is Swahili for "summon the people" has redefined himself and held true to the spirit of hip hop: innovation. In the 90's Kokayi's study of the art of rhyme took over his electrical engineering studies at the University of Maryland. Kokayi spent many an evening in ciphers along Washington DC's famed U street in such spots as the Kaffa House, but it was at the 8rock in Southeast, Washington where his phenomenal freestyle ability earned him a spot on the board of the Freestyle Union, a DC organization dedicated to the art of hip-hop. At one cipher, Kokayi along two other freestyle union members Black Indian and long-time friend Sub-Z were chosen by polyrhythmic saxophonist Steve Coleman to go on tour as part of the Coleman's new project The Metrics. Kokayi toured, for the next 5 years, to over 13 countries with Coleman and appeared on four albums. While on tour, Kokayi also facilitated workshops on Freestyle and the art of vocal improvisation as it relates to Jazz and Hip Hop. Kokayi has taught in Cuba, at CalArts, Stanford,

SFSU, NYU, George Mason and is a faculty member with SIM (the School of Improvisational Music) in NY. In 1997 Kokayi ,along with longtime friend and Metrics alum Sub-Z, formed their own group Opus Akoben. The group released two records in Europe under French Labels (BMG/France-Art of War and Label-Bleu-Raw Life). In between touring with Opus, Kokayi still found time to record and tour with pianist Andy Milne's Dapp Theory. Milne described Kokayi as a "vocalist of unparalleled intelligence and musician-ship". Kokayi's stage performance stands on its own. He's a noted force onstage and has been known to move the most reserved crowds. His audiences and fans come from every walk of life. Kokayi never limits himself in anything he does. "I love the challenge. If I can move people that say they don't like hip hop, then I know my job is done." Kokayi has moved audiences from open mics to colleges to the Kennedy Center and throughout the world. Kokayi has also collaborated with or has been a featured artist on releases by Ralph Alessi, Bruce Cockburn, producer/film scorer Hugh Marsh, the Poemcees(Def Poetry Jam), Storm the Unpredictable, Priest the Nomad, Adia, Wayna, Steve Coleman, Andy Milne, and Thaione Davis. In February 2006 Kokayi along with Opus Akoben toured the Middle East as part of the "Rhythm Roads" program where they performed their music and facilitated workshops in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt, Israel and Palestine, as Hip Hop Ambassadors. This June, the group travels to China and Mongolia. Currently Kokayi is in the studio working on the next Opus project as well as his long-awaited solo effort, tentatively entitled, :Mass Instructions. He's also collaborating with DJ/Producer Sharkey (Babygrand Records) and MTV Makes Crayz Walz for their release "Monster Maker", (in which he appears most notably on "This Old Twisted World" and other gems.) He's also busy producing for artists such as Tamara Wellons (Ocha Records) and Vinia Mojica. As the 2006 Voices on Blast Winner hosted by Bolt and the Hip Hop Theater Festival, Kokayi gets to audition for Russell Simmon's Def Poetry Jam. Kokayi's song , ActOut was chosen for it's strong political content and delivery according to the judges. "His community based-socially involved work ethic appeals to HHTF and he's also an amazing writer."-Khamilah Forbes (HHTF). Kokayi is an artist who plans to continue to push the envelope, amaze audiences and summon all the people.

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