

## Roster | APSCI



Husband-and-wife hip-hop alchemists APSCI (for "applied science") took a break from their lab to discuss derailing expectations without train-wrecking the groove – the aim of their transcontinental art – at the Five Spot, a favorite soul food haunt in the leafy brownstone Clinton Hill section of Brooklyn where the couple has temporarily stowed their sm58s.

These genre-busters are waiting to ink a deal with Quannum Projects for a global 2005 release of their full-length debut *Get It Twisted*, a collection of space-age, splatter-paint beats and backpacker trip-hop buoyed by the netherworld stylings of Philippine-born, classically trained chanteuse Dana Diaz-Tutaan and the moody rhymes of former Vitapup bass player turned underground MC/producer Raphael LaMotta.

*Twisted* is full of sonic risk-taking, the culmination of an eight-country odyssey of mobile recording, demo-pushing and gigging, and the m.o. of a couple who've embraced edgy incongruities since they first met freestyling in the cipher circles at joints like the Nuyorican.

In 1998, Diaz-Tutaan came to New York from Australia, where she was once beaten with a featherduster by nuns for doing a backspin in the toilet of an all-girl Catholic school.

Diaz-Tutaan said of APSCI's do-it-yourself, laptop hip-hop: "We don't do predictable shit." The goal, LaMotta says, is to try and avoid what he calls the "hip-hop Lenny Kravitz" syndrome in what is an otherwise boundless underground.

Look for a 12-inch this fall, plus new *Twisted* collaborations – perhaps with Quannum artists like Blackalicious – alongside guests already featured on APSCI's 2003 Australian release *Elefant Traks*, which includes TV on the Radio's Tunde Adebimpe and Antibalas' Martín Perna.

By Shane Kite. Photo By Caitlin Mitchell.

## Roster | Airborn Audio

Exploding out of the last fragment of their artistic continuum, the revolutionary Anti-Pop Consortium, come M. Sayyid and High Priest, a duo of producer/MCs so down-to-earth you almost forget they're two of the most gifted musical cosmonauts the Milky Way has in its stable. On the eve of their debut release *Good Fortune*, the New York-based innovators, both 33 years wise and recently signed to Ninja Tune, have spent the last 18 months listening, experimenting, recording, and perfecting their new live show. Their musical path, while constantly evolving, remains rooted in the foundations built over the last half-decade.

Their musical approach has evolved considerably since the release of APC's *Tragic Epilogue* five years ago. M. Sayyid maintains that his agenda is still "makin' forward-thinking music, a.k.a. 'progressive' hip-hop, for lack of a better term, but my confidence definitely has grown."

Their new record and live show encompass lyrical hip-hop that is still raw as ever, but more musically ambitious. Their show alter-



High Priest (L), M. Sayyid (R)

nates between a sound factory in progress, with both Sayyid and HP making music on the spot using MPCs, CD-turntables, old drum machines and samples, and a classic New York rap duo routine. Sayyid's exuberant MC skills are almost a show unto themselves, requiring no musical backing. HP, the baritone intellectual, has one of the most distinctive, underrated vocal approaches in hip-hop. (Sophisticastlerap? Did he just dungeon-laugh?) Collating new and old city-sounds, the group creates electronic layers of minimal hip-hop with

some distinctively British features.

"We have had to be fans again, and observe the subtle nuances of what we enjoy listening to. From there, we were better able inject those elements into our music. The main difference between now and then has more to do with the changes in the times, with relation to the recording industry. The gap between what is considered

underground and what is commercial has widened," High Priest explains.

And if it were even necessary to refute rumors that Airborn is going for a commercial sound, Sayyid declares his independence. "It's all without the worry of what people are gonna think, cause they pay me not to give a fuck about the status quo, just to kill it on some next shit but stay in the pocket, and keep heads bobbin'."

By g-blud. Photo courtesy of Airborn Audio.