

SAN ANTONIO CURRENT

11/28/2006

Artest for MVP

By: [M. Solis](#)

For mercurial Sacramento Kings forward Ron Artest, hailing from Queensbridge, New York, carries a lot of weight — particularly for an aspiring emcee. “I think it influenced my music a lot, just from being in the same area where guys are very successful with their music,” said Artest via telephone prior to his showdown with the Spurs in Sacramento. “Roxanne Shante, MC Shan, Marley Marl, Nas, Mobb Deep, Nature, Cormega — the list go on. It was cool because those guys are very successful and respected around the world for their music, for their beat-making. I guess that influence me, how my art is.”

Artest’s music was quietly unleashed on the masses this past Halloween — coincidentally, the opening night of the NBA season. His debut, *My World*, features contributions by Sean “Diddy” Combs, Mike Jones, Juvenile, Capone, and Big Kap, among others. Although at times inconsistent, the album’s overall quality has surprised both music critics and Artest detractors, and is easily the best rap disc ever released by an athlete. It also features the sterling couplet “David Stern! Damn, David Stern / I gotta teach you ’bout the ghetto / There’s some things you should learn.”

Artest lists Slick Rick, Special Ed, Tupac, Nas, Eminem, and Rakim as his top six emcees, and the themes explored on *My World* stick pretty close to the usual themes associated with commercial rap. Topics include strip clubs, repping one’s hood, spending cash, the pimp game, and a little social commentary with basketball references and shouts-outs to liven things up. The former Defensive Player of the Year is remarkably agile on the mic, but his production skills are clearly his strength. Artest remains optimistic about the success of the disc, yet realistic about his future goals in the industry.

“Whoever got the CD, I just hope that they like it. I really think it’s gonna put a boost on my career. It’s definitely not gonna set me back, because people that got the album understand that I can make good music. Hopefully, down the line, I’ll be able to produce other artists, but I gotta become a bit more professional, a bit more experienced with making hits. So hopefully, once I get that under my belt, I’ll be able to produce other artists.”

The NBA’s most maligned player cites Dwyane Wade, Steve Nash, Kenyon Martin, and Dwight Howard as his favorite players in the league and is, surprisingly, a Spurs fan — at least when it comes to *NBA Live*. “I pick them because I like Tim Duncan,” admits Artest. “I don’t play Bruce Bowen ’cause he really don’t do nothing in the game. I keep Ginobili, Finley, and I like Brent Barry as a point guard, ’cause he can shoot right over the guards. I keep Robert Horry so he can shoot, and then Tim Duncan. All the teams get a beating when I got that lineup.”

Although absent from Artest’s virtual squad, Tony Parker, San Antonio’s resident baller/emcee, has finally put the finishing touches on his own music product. His first single, now tentatively titled “Shake,” is slated to drop this Christmas through Universal Europe, and his European full-length album will follow in February. Parker’s American debut is scheduled for release sometime this June and will feature new tracks with the likes of Paul Wall, Bun B, and R&B crooner Nayo.

On the hardwood, Artest has high hopes for the Kings despite the departures of head coach Rick Adelman and wingman Bonzi Wells. Kings fans expect another trip to the playoffs, and another Defensive Player of the Year award for Artest would be a bonus. Artest also has aspirations to compete professionally in the boxing arena once he steps away from basketball. When asked his thoughts on the NBA’s recently levied lifelong Pistons-home-game ban of John Green, the guy who threw a cup at Artest in Detroit and sparked “the brawl,” Artest responds somewhat somberly, yet defiantly.

“I don’t care about that punishment, I just care about the punishment I’ve been through. I think they were too harsh on me. I don’t think it was two wrongs: They banned him for life but they still took six million dollars from me. So it’s like, if he was wrong, then how was I wrong? That just don’t make no sense, so somebody owe me some money.”

Ron Artest will appear at the Medusa Lounge with DJ Double R on Friday, December 1st.

©San Antonio Current 2006