



For Immediate Release

Media Contact: Ali Evans, Public Relations Manager
212.864.4500, x213
aevans@studiomuseum.org

StudioSound: THE BLACK ATLANTIC PROJECT

A musical chain letter travels back and forth across the Pond and lands at the Studio Museum

On view: July 19, 2006 through October 22, 2006



Photo: Djinji Brown

NEW YORK, NY, June 16, 2006 - DJs and turntablists on both sides of the Atlantic speak the same musical language—hip-hop—but in different dialects. *StudioSound: THE BLACK ATLANTIC PROJECT*, presented by The Studio Museum in Harlem and the British Council USA, is an innovative, collaborative sonic art project that explores black culture and music across two continents. Through a one-of-a-kind trans-Atlantic musical dialogue,

The Studio Museum in Harlem
144 W 125th Street
New York, New York 10027
T: 212.864.4500 Fax: 212.864.4800
studiomuseum.org

musicians and producers in the United States and Britain took turns interpreting and remixing an original composition, passing the results from artist to artist like a hip-hop chain letter. Each artist's mix and the final track, infused with beats from both sides of the Pond, will be presented as part of The Studio Museum in Harlem's lobby music installation, *StudioSound*.

"*THE BLACK ATLANTIC PROJECT* is concerned with communication through music and a chance for a group of eclectic producers to work together on a common musical theme," says Charlie Dark, the London-based sound artist, DJ, and writer who curated the project and composed the initial track, *Naima's Theme*, for his newborn daughter. "It's supposed to inspire and provoke conversations ... I don't think that music exists without the social consequences and influences."

Dark sent *Naima's Theme*, along with a personal "audio letter," to Djinji Brown, a musician and DJ based in Miami, for remixing and reinterpretation. In an inspired game of sonic "telephone," Brown passed his new piece and a new audio letter to vocalist Netsayi in Bristol. The ever-changing track then made its way to DJ King Britt in Philadelphia, musician Martin Iveson (also known as Atjazz) in Derby, American producer and MC Mike Ladd, and innovative Brit-hop and soul producer Tony Campbell (also known as Dobie) in London, before returning to Dark for a final remix.

Through the evolution of *THE BLACK ATLANTIC PROJECT*, a simple composition honoring a child's birth became a commentary on cultural links across the Atlantic. The project pays homage to Dr. Paul Gilroy's book *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double-Consciousness*, which theorizes that the black experience can be traced back to the shared history of the slave trade, transcending geography, nationality, culture, and gender. By exploring artistic innovation and exchange through a conversation between communities on both sides of the Atlantic, *THE BLACK ATLANTIC PROJECT* highlights contemporary music's role in deeper conversations about identity and the fertile shared heritages of British and American ideas of "blackness." And although hip-hop was born in the Bronx, it has a global presence that makes it the perfect medium for an artistic discussion of "black Atlantic" culture.

"I don't think you realize the power of hip-hop until you travel out of America," says Dark. "It's ... a huge global force."

THE BLACK ATLANTIC PROJECT will be installed just off the atrium of The Studio Museum in Harlem as part of the Museum's *StudioSound* project. Visitors to the Museum will hear the final Charlie Dark remix, and sample the collective work at each stage of its development through sound-isolating headphones. Through the personal, reflective audio letters composed by each participant, Museum visitors will also receive a guided tour of a unique collaborative artwork as it was made.

An ever-evolving sound installation at The Studio Museum in Harlem, *StudioSound* invites musicians, producers, and musical innovators to create original compositions inspired by the works on view. From Daniel Bernard Roumain's classically inspired interpretation of Chris Ofili's watercolors, to DJ Scientific's remix and reinvention of *Harlem Sounds*, to Marc Cary's piano and Fender-Rhodes tribute to abstraction, *AbSTraKT BlaK*, this commissioned project enlivens the Museum's lobby and adds a parallel dimension to the art and artists on view.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Charlie Dark (London, UK)

Founder of the revolutionary Blacktronica collective (www.blacktronica.com) and one-third of the critically acclaimed ensemble Attica Blues, Charlie Dark is a veteran of the British music scene. In addition to his work as a sound artist and musician, Dark plays a dynamic part in the United Kingdom's poetry and performance arena as a writer, producer, and DJ known for flamboyant gestures and vocal gymnastics.

His recent projects include *Freeness, Voyage* (2005), an external sound walk as part of the London River Cultures Festival, and *Depth* (2004), a site-specific soundscape in collaboration with leading architect David Adjaye, within his installation *lengthxwidthxheight*. Dark was also a music consultant for the film *Bullet Boy* (2004) and Urban Tribes's 2005 performance at the Derby Dance Centre, and has been a Poet Coach for the London Teenage Poetry Slam.

Djinji Brown (Miami, US)

Bronx native Djinji Brown grew up traveling the world with his father, avant-garde saxophonist and ethnomusicologist Marion Brown. At the same time, his everyday life in the Bronx exposed Brown to all aspects of hip-hop culture, from music to graffiti to break dancing.

Throughout his career, Brown has been intrigued with everything from hard rock (as the front man for New York hardcore band Absolution) to hip-hop (as apprentice to Public Enemy producer Eric "Vietnam" Sadler). His first major production gig was the debut album for famed freestyle MC Supernatural. He also has worked with the Jungle Brothers, David Byrne, and a variety of underground rappers and poets.

In the fall of 2002, Brown released his debut album, *Sirround Sound*, through Seven Heads Entertainment. An eclectic mix of hip-hop, Afro, Latin, Caribbean, dub, house, and drum-n-bass influences, the album is a throwback to the days of early hip-hop parks jams in the 1970s.

(Sources: All Music Guide, www.mtv.com)

Netsayi (Bristol, UK)

Netsayi's earliest memories are those of a refugee in London, and her music mediates the dilemmas of current British, African, and black identity. Born in Camden during the Zimbabwean war of liberation, Netsayi combines the rich traditions of her Zimbabwean upbringing with music of the diaspora. Her music has been classified as everything from R&B/jazz to blues, broken beat to world, and slides smoothly between both multiple genres and language (English and Shona, her native tongue).

Hailed as one of the United Kingdom's most exciting new talents, Netsayi has performed at most of the United Kingdom's premier music venues including the Royal Albert Hall, the Festival Hall, the Barbican, the London Jazz Festival, the ICA, the Hammersmith Apollo, and WOMAD. Her debut album, *Chimurenga Soul*, was released in July 2006.

(Sources: www.netsayi.com, www.patrickneate.com)

King Britt (US)

King Britt launched his career as a DJ in 1992 as part of the Grammy- winning Digable Planets, the quartet that changed the face of modern hip-hop. Two years later, the Philadelphia native founded the Sylk130 collective, an ensemble of outstanding local performers including Ursula Rucker, Alma Horton, and Alison Croquette. The group collaborated to create a tribute to the Philadelphia of the 1970s and, in 1996, released the full-length album *When the Funk Hits the Fan*.

Britt's eclectic music portfolio includes deep house, hip-hop, broken beat, nu-jazz, funk, and Afro-tech. His *Re-Members Only* was released in 2001 by Six Degrees and pays homage to dance music from the 1980s.

As a remix producer, Britt has worked with artists ranging from Macy Gray and Tori Amos to Yoko Ono and Femi Kuti. His recent remix of breakthrough artist Josh One's *Contemplation*, released by 5.1 Entertainment, was nominated for the Dancestar Remix of the Year award. Currently, he is curating an album of original material for Japanese label Handcut Records, and continues to deliver performances as a house, hip-hop, funk, and even 80s DJ.

(Source: www.kingbritt.com/kingbritt_bio.php)

Atjazz (Derby, UK)

In 1991, Atjazz (Martin Iverson) moved to Derby from his home in northeastern England to become the in-house musician for fledgling video game company Core Design, where he contributed most of the music and sound effects to what would become the company's internationally successful *Tomb Raider* series of games.

Not content with soundtracking one of the world's biggest computer games, Atjazz set up his own studio in Derby and partnered with record-store manager Andy Mac to launch Mantis Recordings. He released his first single, *Story*, in 1996; his second album, *Labfunk*, was released in June 2001.

Iverson composed the music for the latest *Tomb Raider* game, which was performed and recorded with The London Symphony Orchestra at Abbey Road. He also has released tracks on Compost (Germany), as well as *Labresults*, a remix album of *Labfunk*. Other recent projects include a remix of Jazzanova and an interpretation of Henry Mancini's *Pink Panther*.

(Source: www.mantis-recordings.com)

Mike Ladd (Paris, FR, via Bronx, NY)

Born in Cambridge, Mass., Ladd started his career in music in high school by playing bass or drums in a variety of garage bands. However, his roots lie in poetry and performance, with close ties to largely spoken-word artists such as Saul Williams or Carl Hancock Rux, as well as underground rap maestros such as El-P or New Flesh.

Ladd is the winner of the Nuyorican Poets Café Slam and his writing was published in the 1996 protest tome *In Defense of Mumia*. He released his first album, *Easy Listening 4 Armageddon*, in 1997; its success led to a deal between his Likemadd label and Ozone Music for 2000's *Welcome to the Afterfuture* and the following year's *Vernacular Homicide EP*.

In 1998, Ladd recorded a single for top British underground label Big Dada, and he returned there for his third full-length album, 2000's *Gun Hill Road*. The first in a trilogy of underground full-length albums staging a battle between the forces of good and evil (in hip-hop), it was followed by the second in the trilogy, *Beauty Party*, in 2003.

(Sources: All Music Guide, www.mtv.com)

Dobie (London, UK)

Known for his innovative “Brit-hop” and space-thumping soul, Dobie (Tony Campbell) has worked with and remixed ground-breaking artists ranging from Björk, Massive Attack, Tricky, and Gangstarr, to London Posse, Wookie, Les Negresses Vertes, Roots Manuva, and Rodney P.

Based in East London, Dobie first started making music when he was in college in the 1980s. Though hip-hop was his first love, punk, rock, and electronica have always played a part in his musical career. He worked with the legendary Soul II Soul on their first two albums, earning respect as a producer, remixer, and DJ. His first album, *The Sound of One Hand Clapping*, was recently re-released on the BBE label. Dobie has since partnered with BBE to establish his own label and imprint, Magnificent 7. He is also an accomplished photographer.

###