

Run-DMC Releases Catalogue

Kings of Rock release six old albums through new deal with Arista



They are the Kings from Queens who brought their street-sound to the cul-de-sacs of suburbia. With their first three albums hitting gold, platinum and multi-platinum respectively, rap revolutionaries Run-D.M.C. re-defined popular culture, paving the road for both politically conscious rap outfits like Public Enemy and gangster rap stars like N.W.A. Now seven albums and nearly two decades later, they've sold over 25 million albums and singles worldwide.

Many of those records have been previously hard-to-find or out-of-print. But on June 1, their back-catalog hit record store shelves. With the recent acquisition of pioneering hip-hop label Profile, Arista Records has re-released six albums on their new Arista/Profile imprint: *Run-D.M.C.* (1984), *King of Rock* (1985), *Raising Hell* (1986), *Tougher Than Leather* (1988), *Back From Hell* (1990) and *Down With the King* (1993).

Back in the 80s, partners-in-rhyme Joseph Simmons (Run) and Daryl McDaniell (D.M.C.) along with scratch artist Jason Mizell (Jam Master Jay) made music history as the first rappers to appear on *American Bandstand* and *Saturday Night Live*. Their self-titled album debuted in 1984, produced by Russell Simmons and Larry Smith, featuring the classic tracks "It's Like That" and "Sucker M.C.'s," with "Rock Box" becoming the first video by a rap artist to air on MTV. Run-D.M.C. was the first black rap act to grace the cover of Rolling Stone. As New York Newsday put it, "They were the first rap group that really mattered."

Their breakthrough album came in 1986, with the release of *Raising Hell*, which skyrocketed to No. 3 on the Billboard Pop Chart and was certified triple platinum. The album, produced by Rick Rubin (who later worked on the Beastie Boys' 1986 hit, *Licensed to Ill*) featured the first rock/hip-hop collaboration. This stint with Aerosmith delivered a hit single, "Walk This Way," and a tour that featured up-and-coming artists Public Enemy, LL Cool J, and the Beastie Boys.

Their 1988 release, *Tougher Than Leather*, climbed to No. 9 on the charts, but fans were left disappointed two years later with *Back from Hell*, and their 1993 comeback *Down With the King*. Run-D.M.C. is currently in the studio finishing their eighth album, *Crown Royal*, due for release later this year. *Crown Royal* will feature guest appearances by Slick Rick, Fat Joe, Nas, Lord Finesse, and Method Man. Future plans include a collaboration with Rick Rubin and Aerosmith to remake "It's Tricky," and a new version of "Here We Go Again" featuring Sugar Ray. - *Holiday Dmitri*