

Throwback: Mos Def - Zimzallabim

Dante Smith is an actor but when he raps he becomes Mos Def. He debuted as a rapper with The Thermo Dynamics and appeared on albums by De La Soul and Da Bush Babees. He and his siblings D.c.Q. and Ces comprised the group that was signed to Payday Records and only released two singles. Their first album [*Manifest Destiny*](#) was not released until 2004. He put out the single [“Universal Magnetic”](#) in 1997 that appeared on the [*Soundbombing Volume One*](#) project. But it was when he formed Blackstar with Talib Kweli and they released *Mos Def And Talib Kweli Are Blackstar* in 1998 that people began to notice his mic skills. The album became a staple listen by underground some say backpack rap fans and gave [Rawkus Records](#) an identity, direction and shine. Ohio born Hi-Tek was the producer on this album from the Brooklyn natives that delivered the exceptional singles [“Respiration”](#) and [“Definition.”](#) The following year Mos released what most fans think is his great work *Black On Both Sides*. [“Ms. Fat Booty”](#) was the only single from Black but the whole album was a strong artistic achievement. “Zimzallabim” comes from his second album 2004’s *The New Danger*. Mos Def’s interest in popular forms sprung from the blues such as jazz, rock, hip-hop and blues itself produced another atmosphere of a fierce sneer of uncompromised creative fun. Musicians and producers Bernie Worrell, Doug Wimbish, Will Calhoun, Kanye West, 88 Keys and Dr. Know participated in the project that contained material from his rock outfit Black Jack Johnson that toured but never had an actual album. At the end of 2006 he gave the public [True Magic](#) which received the least amount of attention despite the consistent quality and his ability to still make a socially conscious song [“Murder Of A Teenage Life”](#) appealing.

This year Mos released *The Ecstatic* which is named after the novel of the same name by Victor LaValle. The cover art is taken from Charles Burnett's 1977 film "Killer Of Sheep." ["Roses"](#) with Georgia Anne Muldrow is perhaps the best song on the album that also has collaborations with Talib Kweli and Slick Rick. He has also appeared on songs this year with K'naan and Stephen Marley. There are two Converse sneakers he designed and were put in Footlocker stores in limited amounts. A fashion line called UNDRCRWN that will be sold in select stores and on the company's website.