

# Afro-Punk Star Tamar-kali talks Black Rock Music w/ NPR, Wall Street Journal & Dr. Michael Eric Dyson



(Los Angeles, California â€” September 29, 2010) Tamar-kaliâ€™s hard-rocking brand of outsider art leaped from every track on her 2005 solo EP, *Geechee Goddess Hardcore Warrior Soul*, enchanting listeners with its melody, while delivering a swift kick to the gut with its incisive emotional core. Five years later her first full-length release, *Black Bottom*, packs an even harder punch as audiences are invited to gaze deeper into the mind of a woman who refers to her music as â€œclassical experimentalâ€ and â€œaggressive melodic rock.â€ She says, â€œI believe that the â€œBlack Rockâ€ label is another obstacle for artists like myself. For all intents and purposes it continues to marginalize black artists to a group defined by race as opposed to genre.â€

Appropriately named after the Hindu goddess of war and death there is a darkness in Tamar-kaliâ€™s music that could be attributed to deft handling of NYC's tough underground music scene or 13 years of Catholic school, the listeners can decide, but one thing is for sure – the dramatic intensity of her music defies any traditional genre. Her tales of

revolution and love may seem contradictory, but the two worlds are inextricably linked by a powerful artist who grasps for the truth in both ideals.

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Tamar-kali's influences are secondary to the punk and soul creation borne from her seemingly endless well of ingenuity. Though she's graced stages from Brooklyn Academy of Music to Lincoln Center to pay tribute to luminaries such as Nina Simone, Betty Davis and Odetta, Tamar-kali re-invents everything that came before her, confidently answering the call for new, fresh music. She can be the silky smooth songstress in her Psychochamber Ensemble or Pseudoacoustic Siren Song outfit, using her unique vocals to weave torch songs about love lost or gained. Or she can be the bandanna-wearing, gypsy woman leading her 5-piece band of rebels to sin or salvation, depending on her mood. Through it all, whether composing the strings of a cello or strumming the strings of a guitar, Tamar-kali's unique voice and politically-tinged lyrics command attention.



## Hey Ladies: Pop Stars Vs. Role Models

Categories: Hey Ladies, Being A Woman Musician Today

by NEENA ULASTY

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The do-it-yourself ethos of punk music naturally tapped into Tamar-kali's Gullah nature (a manifestation of her family's deep roots on the islands off South Carolina mixed with West African customs passed down by generation despite slavery.) "I come from roots people who invented themselves. They took what little memories were left of their pasts and forged their own destiny." The uninitiated may have discovered Tamar-kali when she appeared in James Spooner's award-winning Afro-Punk documentary, with clips of her incendiary performances putting the world on notice to her unsung talent. Others saw her dynamic energy support artists like Fishbone and Outkast on the group's acclaimed sophomore album, ATLiens.

## THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

NY CULTURE

### Brooklyn Songstress Grows Into a Label-Crossing Punk

By MARTIN JOHNSON



Read article in [WSJ](#)

Tamar-kali travels a lonely road of independence that finds many artists of her caliber overworked and underappreciated. Her album title is no mere piece of alliteration, but a reflection of where she found herself after a particularly disheartening period. "I was in the 'Bottom.' I felt like a shark with no teeth." But after some soul-searching, she came to a pivotal realization, "I don't have to fight for a right to exist – I do exist." From there, the piercing Black Bottom sprang forth and each track drips with the frustration, passion and conviction of an artist on a mission. Her longevity proves that she has what it takes to appeal to hipsters, punks, hip-hop heads and soul/jazz aficionados without compromising her individuality to kowtow to anyone's expectations. A whole new audience feels her full force as Black Bottom's first single, "Pearl," hits the streets with a remix featuring east coast rapper Jean Grae.

The cathartic, orgasmic emotion Tamar-kali brings with every song leaves her peerless above or underground. One thing to remember with Tamar-kali's sound is, as with any good piece of drama, there's a twist. Nothing is exactly as it appears and by the time you discover the trickery, you're uncontrollably writhing your hips and pumping your fists in the air. How can anyone be ready for the aural assault Tamar-kali brings? For warriors and lovers alike, the thrill of the unexpected makes her music all the more necessary.