

Wax Poetics' Michael Gonzales Remembers Aaliyah's Musical Legacy and Examines Her "Eternal Soul"



New York, NY – July 14, 2014 – As Hollywood reshuffles the casting deck for a posthumous bio-pic on R&B star Aaliyah, the summer issue of Wax Poetics delves into the singer's background and career as it celebrates the 20th anniversary of her debut album *Age Ain't Nothing But A Number* (Jive Records, 1994). In his cover story "Eternal Soul," veteran journalist Michael A. Gonzales fuses exclusive content from interviews with the late singer with recent recollections of those who guided her career, to reveal fresh insights into her short life.

Gonzales lays claim to being the first print journalist to interview the vocalist, just as her professional career was taking off. Having first met the singer at a Motor City Sheraton back in 1994, Gonzales says, "Aaliyah was a sweet, shy young lady. But I could tell immediately that she was serious about her art." After going on to achieve fame as a singer and actress, Aaliyah died on August 25, 2001 at the age of 22 in a plane crash that also killed the pilot and eight other passengers.

Gonzales has a storied career as a journalist, having covered popular culture for more than 20 years and interviewing countless R&B legends, including Barry White, Curtis Mayfield and Sade. "When I first heard the R. Kelly-produced *Age Ain't Nothing But a Number*, I was already comparing Aaliyah to pop legends Diana Ross, Dionne Warwick, Marilyn McCoo and Janet Jackson. She had a soothing and slightly-reserved soprano that

was pop while still being soulful.”

Featuring stunning images shot by celebrity photographer Jonathan Mannion (Nicki Minaj, Jay-Z), “Eternal Soul” largely focuses on the singer’s musical legacy while briefly touching upon the sex scandal surrounding Aaliyah and her musical mentor R. Kelly. Covering the time-period between her first two albums Age Ain’t Nothing But a Number and the groundbreaking One in a Million, the article was culled from interviews Gonzales conducted from 1995 to 2005 with the late singer as well as R. Kelly, Wayne Williams, Timbaland, Missy Elliott, and Kelly’s former music teacher Lena McLin.

The chorus of voices Gonzales interviewed to compose “Eternal Soul” also includes Michael J. Powell, who produced Aaliyah’s earliest demos and is also best known for Anita Baker’s Rapture album; Jeff Sledge, former Jive Records A&R man, photographer Terrence A. Reese, who shot the Age Ain’t Nothing But A Number album cover; engineer Jimmy Douglass who has worked with producer Timbaland since the beginning of his career; Jason King, inaugural and founding faculty member of The Clive Davis Institute of Recorded Music; fledgling artist/singer Courtney Noelle, the first lady of Wiz Khalifa’s Taylor Gang; Bill Banfield, composer and professor at the Berklee College of Music and pop journalist Elon Johnson.

Wax Poetics is a quarterly American music magazine dedicated to vintage and contemporary jazz, funk, soul, Latin, hip-hop, reggae, blues, and R&B in the crate-digger tradition. Wax Poetics #59 can purchased through their online store beginning August 5th.

“Eternal Soul” by Michael A. Gonzales

<http://www.waxpoetics.com/magazine>

<http://blackadelicpop.blogspot.com>