

Dave Hollister Talks New Album The MANuscript, Prince & Tupac (Interview)



Dave Hollister is one of the last soul singers alive in the midst of a super-pop landscape that keeps most music sonically related to Ray Charles semi-invisible. Hollister's voice became the definition of '90's soul when he led Teddy Riley's BLACKstreet on the seminal "No Diggity." After two years in BLACKStreet the Chicago native left the group and established

his solo career with hits like “Baby Mama Drama” and “One Woman Man.” His success was marred by a never fatal car accident in 2004 which took him back into the gospel world only to emerge later like Al Green with the realization that he did not have to sing one genre. It’s been two years since his *Chicago Winds...The Saga Continues* and he is currently prepping for the release of his ninth studio album, *The MANuscript*. Hollister talked to Kickmag about *The MANuscript*, Prince, the state of R&B and Tupac.

“We gotta get back to love”

Why did you call it *The MANuscript*?

This album is like a guide for men, like I just want to hand it to them and I wanted to call it *The MANuscript*.

What are some of the things you experienced that made *The MANuscript* an album about relationships?

When people buy my current record people say, you can tell where Dave is in his life it’s very true. What I go through is what I write about what I sing about and what I see is missing is basically love. We gotta get back to love. Like one of my favorite songs and not just because I like the content, I like the mood of the song. I love that song “Planez” by Jeremih but the content of it is basically let me hit it on an airplane. That ain’t love that’s sex. I don’t knock what nobody’s doing but we have gotten away from love. We need to bring love back into the music. And just the realness of relationships. So you know I have married for the second time I know she is the one. The first time wasn’t the one you know a lot of times we do that when we don’t see God for our mate. I feel like this one, the one that I’m with now my wife she really really completes me. She’s what I needed for my life, she’s not a pushover. I didn’t need someone who

didn't come to the table with something. My first wife came to the table with nothing. My wife now, she was with me in my down and out times I wasn't doing anything I took a break from music therefore, I wasn't working so I really didn't have nothing so it wasn't about the money with her. She was like baby I got you I got this we a team type situation that just made me fall even more. The long and short of it is, what made me write this album is I'm in love.Â

When did you get married again?

We got married December of 2008.

Do you have children together?

Yes, we have a daughter together, she is five-years old and the love of my life. I tell you that baby, I have three other kids and I love my kids but this baby she is my heart.

[youtube id="X1suk-eiFKw"]

Was it the Chicago connection that got LisaRaye to become your co-star for your "Definition Of A Woman" video?

LisaRaye is definitely my homegirl, and once we went to her about it, she was game to do it, of course, the Chicago connection. But what made me think of LisaRaye is she was the first person and the only person who came to mind. I didn't have anybody else that I thought about there was no second place because I just wanted LisaRaye. She to me epitomizes the bomb so I was hoping and praying she was available to do it. She had to check her schedule and move some things around she was like yes especially because we're from Chicago. We don't really stick together like other states and she was like we gotta start doing that, we gotta look out for our own.

I know in the past you have taken a break from R&B to pursue gospel, how were you able to come back to R&B?

Because I'm an artist. I'm not an R&B artist, I'm not a

gospel artist, Iâ€™m a messenger. God has really allowed me the grace to be able to do whatever I want to do I donâ€™t boast in that, I donâ€™t take pride in it, I just feel blessed, that God allows me to do whatever it is in my heart. So you know I donâ€™t label myself so therefore I donâ€™t let anybody else label me.

Do you think R&B is dead?

I think right now it is but I think thereâ€™s a revival an undercurrent but the state of it now, yes. Because whatâ€™s out here now is senseless, thereâ€™s no thought to it, itâ€™s just people getting on the mic opening their mouth saying whatever they want to say and itâ€™s a hit. I attribute it to the mentality of the people thatâ€™s listening. If itâ€™s easy to sing it, they donâ€™t care because most people sound like the people on the radio now. They canâ€™t sing, thereâ€™s no substance, so thatâ€™s whatâ€™s selling. I bet you if I disguised my voice and made up some ignorance itâ€™ll go to the top but I just canâ€™t do that, I have to be true to who I am. I remember, God rest his soul, I get so emotional even for me to talk about it now. I remember when I just left BLACKstreet and I was getting ready to release my first solo album, it was on EMI right before EMI shut down and Prince was on the label. I walked into the label that day in California and he was sitting with the president and the CEO at the time. Â I was coming in to meet with him and the meeting had run over. Â The CEO and Prince was listening to my album and when I walked in Prince with that voice said, â€œThere he is.â€ And it startled me and I was like hey how are you doing and he was like stop it. He looked at the CEO and said, â€œMan yaâ€™ll are going to have to get my stuff out of the way because heâ€™s getting ready to be the new R&B king.â€ I had the biggest smile on my face to hear him say that and I kind of bowed down to him he was like, stop it, stop it. We talked a little bit and I said â€œMan, I would love your advice if there is anything, Iâ€™m afraid because I was a part of a

group, Iâ€™m a bigger guy, what advice would you give me.â€”
He said, â€œDave Iâ€™m going to tell you like this donâ€™t let these people change you.â€” He pointed right at the CEO, he said, â€œYou be your true authentic self and itâ€™s going to shine through the music cause people know when youâ€™re fake. They know when itâ€™s not real so donâ€™t let these people change you. If you do this right here, youâ€™ll be fine.â€” I tell you that meant the world to me and every since that day when I take my live band out I always close my show with â€œPurple Rain.â€” I tell the audience that story just that part of it and I say that I want to dedicate this song to the man that gave me hope and they start â€œPurple Rainâ€” and the crowd will go crazy. I was doing â€œPurple Rainâ€” while he was still living. I know thereâ€™s going to be an influx of people doing â€œPurple Rainâ€” and Prince songs, Iâ€™m going to still do it because I did it while he was living. I just went around the corner to tell you that music is senseless right now itâ€™s not real R&B.

â€œYou be your true authentic self and itâ€™s going to shine through the music cause people know when youâ€™re fake”- Prince

What got things to this point and what do you think will take get it back on track?

Thatâ€™s a really good question that I donâ€™t have an answer for because the music industry itself is going to pot. Itâ€™s like itâ€™s going to hell with the record sales that really arenâ€™t, streaming where you canâ€™t really make any money itâ€™s going to hell. I donâ€™t even know if thereâ€™s any help for it all I know is Iâ€™m going to keep doing what Iâ€™m doing. And the few people who are trying to stand up, the true soldiers, weâ€™re going to do all we can to try and save it.

But I really don't see any salvation in sight.

You started your career singing on a Tupac song, why do you think he still means so much to the culture?

Because he was a real person he was a renegade. You know we did "Brenda's Got A Baby" first and then "Keep Your Head Up" came a couple years later. When we were living together is when we did "Brenda's Got A Baby." Pac, who he portrayed himself to be in public was not him. Pac knew how to sell records, Pac knew how to sell himself, he was a true actor went to school for it. He went to a performing arts high school and he was a true actor so he knew how to sell himself and people brought into that. Even in his music he was a socially conscious person. See the stuff that he used to do when we shared an apartment together was all about the Black Lives and the Blackness. He was the president of the junior Panthers out here in Oakland. He was a radical but he really knew how to sell records. I think like Prince said, if you're true to yourself it's going to shine through, he knew how to sell records so he knew how to make people love him. And still to this day they love him because what they perceived him to be is what a lot of people wanted to be. He said what a lot of people are scared to say and I think that's why he's still relevant.

Speaking of God and faith, do you still think about your 2004 car accident every day?

I would be lying to say that I don't think about it everyday but I think about it often. The most craziest times when I'm about to go off the deep end it's like God reels me back in with that, because it was such a time where everything was dark for me, I didn't like certain situations I was in It was just a dark time for me. It was just dark, you know the drugs and the alcohol was just spiraling out of control and whenever I think about that time I can't ever go back there. I believe it's ever-present before me as a

reminder I definitely don't forget about it

What's the story behind "Receipts"?

That is a true story I'm in court right now for my ex-wife lying saying that I owe back child support. She said I didn't pay anything from the years 2004-2010 when we went on record with the court to the sum of \$43,000. But the government, half of that is interest so the \$18,000, \$19,000 from those years is what they say I owe. Well I found \$17,000 worth of receipts so that kind of sparked the song. The prime writer on the album, I told him the story and he penned it. I gave him the information and he wrote the song.

You and Angie Stone sound very good together, it's always nice to hear the male and female voices complement each other.

It's funny that you would say that because one of my best friends out of Chicago, he said the same thing to me yesterday. He said "You and Angie fit together like a glove." Because he's heard me do duets with other female artists like recently I did a duet with Syleena Johnson that record was so beautiful she just didn't get the legs from the label it was her second single it started making noise something happened with the company but it was a beautiful song. It's on her latest album *Couples Therapy*. He was telling me out of everyone you have sung with, you and Angie are a perfect match. I love the song as well and then we did a song on Angie's album called "Begin Again."



I don't know you may have a duet album in the making one day.

We would say in church you're being prophetic because that's what me and Angie are going to do that's why the set-up was first her album and then mine. We're definitely getting ready to do that. Angie is incredible, her mind, she's so soulful. I just love watching Angie onstage a lot of people underestimate her but you're not going to be following her onstage especially with her band that's going to be hard to do because she shuts it down.

What are you doing now before the album release?

I'm still touring with BLACKstreet, I'm actually getting ready to do a stage play called [Baby Hold On To Me](#) it's the life of Gerald Levert and I'm playing Gerald which is going to be incredible because he was my best friend. Gerald Levert was my best friend and it's so surreal to even be getting ready to do this job. I kind of ran away from it for a minute but I had to do it. We're actually going to be in D.C. the 24th and the 25th of June so I'm kind of looking forward to that. The album comes out September 9th we're gearing up for that. I'm really excited about that.

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