

Hip Hop Reggaeton Duo Yo Yais Rise from the Ashes of Wu-Latino

Written by Ryan Songalia ID3430
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Web Site Exclusive: Yo Yais rise from the ashes of Wu-Latino By Ryan Songalia

The Phoenix burns fiercely and is reduced to ashes, a new, young phoenix arises. In a similar fashion, the irrepressible Yo Yais -- comprised of Fuego and N.P. Killah -- mark their return to hip hop / reggaeton glory with a fresh start in 2007.

After a deal with the ill-fated hip hop / rap / reggaeton Wu-Latino soured following a breach of contract by president Ray Roq, the Yo Yais progressed onward even without a record deal in hand.

"In the beginning, everything was beautiful colors," N.P. Killah says. "But after that they started bullshitting us. We never received our per diems. We weren't being taken seriously."

Group manager Jimmy Espinosa said that the only good times were in the beginning. "Then everything went down the drain," he says. People were like "What happened to Wu-Latino?" Nothing ever happened. If things were carried the right way, it would've been huge."

N.P. said that the group had to pay for its own recording. "They never paid for studio," he said.

The hip hop, reggaeton, rap duo Yo Yais earned their artistic freedom from Wu-Latino, but a completed album sat dormant in the vaults, unreleased and wrapped up in bureaucracy.

"It doesn't affect me in anything because I'm a writer," states N.P. Killah. "We make new music everyday. They can do whatever they want with it. We don't care about it."

"There's no legitimate reason why they're holding back the material," states Espinosa. "They always said they needed to clear it with Universal. At the end of the day, they never had a deal with Universal for distribution. That's why he wasn't releasing anything, but instead of letting

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people know he kept it in the shadows."

"I think Wu-Tang (the legendary hip hop group) never had nothing to do with Wu-Latino," N.P. Killah said. I think they never took that serious."

"It was like a tax write-off," stated Ed Rosa, former VP of Promotions and Publicity for Wu-Latino. Rosa, (well known hip hop and sports notable) attests to the self-destructive and counter-productive tendencies of Ray Roq.

"After I did so much I never was appreciated I was used", which included getting the Yo Yais airplay for their singles on New York radio stations WKTU and hip hop Power 105.1. "I was a threat to Ray. He felt I was out shining him, but I was just doing my job and doing it well. That's the mentality he has. It was to the point that I got fed up, took my belongings and left. I was always ahead of him."

"Every time I was featured in an article after I left, he would write to the publisher talking negative things about me. All they did was laugh at him."

"I believed his lies," continues Rosa, who in addition to his musical interests also represents former boxing champions Luis Collazo and Mike Anchondo. "He knows how to use people. I was warned in the beginning when he got fired from UBO (Urban Box Office) for stealing money. You would walk to his desk at UBO and all you would see were petty cash checks. When labels would call me for help, he would get upset. He doesn't deserve to represent a label or carry the Wu Tang logo on his back when he never earned it."

"When I left he said he fired me. I'm not the type to get fired. He just needed a reason, so he said I was giving inside information to other labels when we never had anything to talk about at that point. He was losing his artists, now they're gone, what now? I wish he was loyal to the point Wu-Latino could have gone real far, but he just burned to many bridges."

The mythical Phoenix was also said to regenerate when hurt or wounded by a foe, thus being almost immortal and invincible. Similarly, the resilient Yo Yais kept progressing in their musical

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endeavors immediately after ending their deal with Wu-Latino.

"[After the deal was dissolved] We started making new music with big artists like Zion, De La Getto, and Arc Angel," N.P. Killah said. The main difference in the work from the Wu-period to post-Wu? "The quality," responds Espinosa. "The Wu project was Ray Roq's dream. Now it's the artist's dream. It's just like an actor. An actor has to perform like he wants in order to give 100%."

The perpetual productivity of The Yo Yais has led to them currently being involved in 5 different projects, all with different flavors and textures. N.P. Killah expounds on these various works. "There's one project that we just finished called "The Beginning". We don't want to call it a demo, but we're actually just giving our views to the public about what material they haven't been hearing for certain reasons. That's why we call it "The Beginning", because it's just the beginning and a sample of what we do."

"We have another project coming out called "The Future". That is actually going to be the real album. After that we have an album called "Yo Yais Family", which will include the whole clique. We also have N.P Killah's "El La Legenda", my solo album coming out. We got Fuego's "The Only One Fuego" coming out too. We also have "From the Hood to Hollywood", which is like a series that is going to include a compilation cd with some of the top reggaeton artists in Puerto Rico and will include a DVD showing the recording process."

Their real deal work ethic is both a testament to their serious attitude about their craft, as well as a declaration of their ability to hang tough in a rough business. "Don't stop for nobody that's trying to get you down," states N.P. Killah. "Don't stop for no label that's trying to hold you back. Tell the record label that was trying to get you down that you ain't going down no matter what they do. They're never going to stop your dreams from coming true. The message I send to [Ray Roq] is that they're never going to stop me for nothing."

After navigating the difficult waters of the often treacherous music business, the Yo Yais' undeniable will to make it through is a portent of their dedication to their trade. "It's not for the business," asserts Jimmy Espinosa. "Ever since we've been in it, all we've been doing is investing. I'm one of the main investors in it. We've invested something like 6 digits [in Yo Yais]. It's not because we've been getting money out of it, it's because right now we're moving forward. That's what motivates us to keep on doing better things, because we love the music."

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"It's nothing personal, it's just straight business," Jimmy Espinosa concluded.