

pause

Bobby Valentino

Give Me Five Reasons to Hit Pause...

- 1.** If there is any reason to check out Mr. Valentino, it has got to be that this dude is the first crooner on Luda's label, Disturbing The Peace.
- 2.** Just like his boss, Bobby's a low-down-and-dirty Atlanta native. This doesn't mean, however, that he's going to jump on the crunk 'n b bandwagon — this dude's got soul.
- 3.** At age 13, Bobby was a member of Organized Noize's teen R&B heartthrob group Mista. Though the group didn't last, he learned quite a few things. "Being in a group was definitely a learning experience," he says. "It shows how you can be here one day and gone tomorrow."
- 4.** They're calling his debut a "testament to young adult relationships from a man's point of view." Just like the R&B singers he idolizes, this early-20s vocalist's lyrics are saturated in songs about commitment and love both lost and found. "I really believe this album will set me apart from other male vocalists, especially since I hold females in high esteem," he admits. "My parents, who are still together, are my inspiration for the type of music I make."
- 5.** With *Disturbing The Peace Presents: Bobby Valentino* the world is going to learn that this cat is an old soul. "I grew up listening to Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder and Prince, and I utilized my musical influences on this album," he says. When you hear his falsetto, you'll swear you took a trip back in time to the '70s.


What Else Should I Know Before I Hit Play?

One thing you rarely hear in this day and age is that an artist is also a scholar. Valentino earned his degree in Mass Communications from Clark Atlanta University, where he studied film editing and speech. If his R&B career ever goes sour, he's always got that degree to fall back on. See kiddies, not everybody's a college dropout!



LaToya London

Give Me Five Reasons to Hit Pause...

-  **1.** LaToya was a top contender on the 2004 season of *American Idol*. Simon Cowell had her picked as the hands-down favorite to win the competition. Unfortunately, we all know her story by now. Despite the favorable odds, the celebrity judges were left with their jaws on the floor, shocked that Ms. London was voted off the show by fans.
- 2.** Born in San Francisco and raised in East Oakland, she underwent a healthy regimen of choir singing. Growing up she was a member of Youth Choir at Allen Temple, the Oakland Youth Chorus and Skyline Gospel Choir.
- 3.** At only 25-years-old, she's already performed with a number of superstar artists including Elton John, Whoopi Goldberg, Barry Manilow, Gladys Knight, Nancy Wilson, Chaka Khan, Rachel Farrell, Goapele and Burt Bacharach.
- 4.** She was featured on the *American Idol Season 3: Greatest Soul Hits* album and participated with Andre 3000 and Christina Aguilera in the Declare Yourself campaign during the last presidential election. On top of all that, she's been studying with acting coaches in Hollywood.
- 5.** Despite her unfortunate outcome on *American Idol*, LaToya was given a record deal in a heartbeat. Her debut album promises to be a collection of timeless and original R&B and soul classic written by a woman who doesn't need a win on *American Idol* to prove she's a true talent.

What Else Should I Know Before I Hit Play?

Aside from musical talent, LaToya's got a connection to the late, great Ray Charles. Following her unsuccessful stint on *American Idol*, she was instantly signed to Peak Records, a partnership with Concord Records. For those of you not in the know, Concord was the final record label of the legendary Mr. Charles.

Lina

Give Me Five Reasons to Hit Pause...

1. You remember Lina's hit singles "It's Alright," "Playa No Mo'" and "I'm Not the Enemy" off her debut album *Stranger On Earth*. Since then you've been hungry for more of her unique blend of R&B, jazz, hip-hop and swing.

2. Her popularity grew with fans of all genres as she toured with the likes of UK soul singer Craig David, Gang Starr's Guru and even contemporary rocker Joan Osborne.

3. This proud Texan has doubled her duties as an artist and began writing songs for other established artists such as Tyrese, whose song "Ain't Nothin' Like a Jones" was penned by Lina. "It's really about sharing the gift that you're blessed with," she says. "I just want to make people's load a little lighter. Music is an escape."

4. Following all the acclaim of her debut, Lina continues to stick to what she knows best, meaning the creative variations of life's many facets: love, happiness, growth, pain and wisdom.

5. People are lovin' her sophomore effort *Inner Beauty*. She wrote all of the songs and even co-produced most of them. On it she plays a little with reggae and also delivers a duet with the blazing hot Anthony Hamilton.

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Lina has grown tired of the soulless, empty R&B that currently populates radio and television. It's become one of her primary duties to put the soul back into music. "We've had to put up with so much music lately that's not necessarily feeding our souls," she says. "It's not triggering anything in our beings. When I write, it's what I'm feeling that day. Every song is an experience, some wisdom or knowledge gained; a musical lesson."



The TrakStarz

Give Me Five Reasons to Hit Pause...

1. If the name doesn't ring a bell, you might better know this duo as the dudes who had you doin' the chicken dance right thurr as the producer's of Chingy's gargantuan hit single.

2. As a production tag team, Alonzo "Zo" Lee Jr. (26) and Shamar "Sham" Daugherty have been together for at least seven years now. Before joining forces Sham says that Zo was honing his skills playing in various funk and reggae bands and using his keyboards to create tracks for local rappers. Sham was in a group called Out of Order. They came together when Zo produced a few tracks for the group.

3. Chingy's success led to the TrakStarz being called upon by huge names in the game, such as 50 Cent. It also gave them the liberty to start up their own TrakStarz Productions, which we'll soon be hearing a lot from.

4. Putting their popularity to work, they've scouted St. Louis for its hottest talent to add to their roster. Already on their line-up is 16-year-old rapper Louis V, female R&B group STL, rap duo 2 Deep, male R&B singer JuJu and rapper Star 47.

5. Their debut album is set to exploit all aspects of their talent. While they will showcase their various protégés, as well as currently established artists such as David Banner, Twista and Juvenile, the TrakStarz will reveal that they're more than just skilled producers. "Sham is kind of the TrakStarz secret weapon," confesses Zo. "He's a full-fledged artist [and] we're going to unleash him." Turns out, these boys can spit too.

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When working on Chingy's first solo album, Zo and Sham turned a two-bedroom apartment into their home and recording studio. "We had a two-bedroom apartment in University City, Missouri where one room had a Pro-Tools set up, a bunch of keyboards and a microphone, the main room was for sleeping," recalls Zo. "We all just ended up crashing there and that grew into a roommate situation where all three of us shared an apartment." Sounds like an episode of *Real World: St. Louis*. **BB**

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