

Mingering Mike - "There's Nothing Wrong With You Baby"



Vanguard Squad is very proud to offer the first ever Mingering Mike release, "There's Nothing Wrong With You Baby (parts 1 & 2)." The name Mingering Mike is slowly seeping into the awareness of the general public. The man behind the name chooses to remain anonymous, but his art, his fake albums, his multiple musical personas, his oeuvre is revealing itself decades after his fantasies of becoming the next big soul superstar were born. And now, 38 years later, you can actually hear Mingering Mike.

As an introverted young man in Washington DC, Mike was influenced by the soul groups of the day and had dreams of becoming the next James Brown or Marvin Gaye. In place of having real albums to release, Mike started making fake records out of cardboard--something to use as a place marker until he had a real record. Mike's teenage imagination found him producing hit single after hit single, on numerous unreal record labels with a host of other imaginary stars sharing his company. After submitting his lyrics to song-poem adverts and getting burned, Mike found himself disappointed with the truth of the record industry. His imaginary world bore much more fruit than reality.

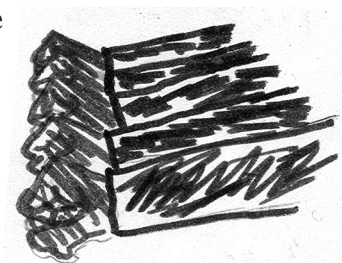
Mike continued to create fake albums through his teenage years, working primarily alone or with the help of his cousin, The Big "D." He constructed covers, labels and records from cardboard and craft paper. In addition, he wrote thousands of poems as well as lyrics, and would record himself and The Big "D" singing. When Mike was drafted for service in the military it looked like his fantasy world would be shattered. After boot camp, Mike went AWOL, hiding from the military police and the troubles of Vietnam. Living underground pushed Mike further into his imaginary world, and his art of the time reflected the new set of troubles that faced his adult life: the war, poverty and the growing rate of drugs in the African American community. Mike addressed all these issues, privately, with his albums. All the while maintaining his positive outlook and faith in humanity.



When President Carter established a program for amnesty for war resisters in 1977 Mike was free to live a regular life and come out of hiding. With his newfound freedom, adult life and a full-time job, Mike has less time for art. The fake albums, reels of recordings, and his poetry all went into storage. And there they sat for years, lost to the world. That is, until one cold winter morning in 2002.

Dori Hadar, a record collector, was pawing through stacks of stuff in a Washington DC flea market when he stumbled upon Mike's fake records, which had been dumped by the storage company after a few missed payments. Confused by their artificiality, but intrigued by their ingenuity, Dori knew he had found *something*, he just didn't know what. He bought everything and brought it home for further inspection. With the help of Frank Beyleotte, a fellow record collector, Dori realized this collection was, at worst, something to take seriously. At best, he hoped to find Mingering Mike and get a better understanding of the artist.

Fortunately Dori works as a criminal investigator in DC, so finding Mike wasn't troublesome. After a shaky start (Mike thought Dori and Frank were bill collectors from the storage company), Dori set out to help Mike realize his dream of releasing his art before the world. Acting as a liaison, to afford Mike his privacy, Dori negotiated articles in newspapers and magazines, curated shows in art galleries, and wrote a book--*Mingering Mike: The Amazing Career of an Imaginary Soul Superstar*--that contains beautiful reproductions of all the Mingering Mike covers and assorted ephemera.



It is with great honor that Vanguard Squad is pleased to release the first ever Minging Mike record. Billing themselves as The Freedom Stompers, Mike and The Big "D" recorded "There's Nothing Wrong With You Baby (parts 1 & 2)" on a reel-to-reel recorder in Mike's bedroom. The song is a tender appeal to a young woman, encouraging her to be unique and stay in school despite the jeers and ridicule of her peers. While the tapes laid dormant for 38 years, neither time nor the changing world could make the song less engaging. Mike's unique way of looking at life, his endearing optimism, and his ear for sweet soul are all apparent on this record.

Vanguard Squad considers it a privilege to release this record. And so, all profit from this recording will be a benefit to Mike. We admire his endurance and his faith in humankind. It seems only right that he should reap the full reward of his patience.

Mike's art is a result of his healthy imagination, but to label it simply "outsider" (or worse, "weird") is to do it a terrible disservice. The catalyst and necessity of his work must be understood as it existed even before it was expressed as art. The work is the result of his introversion, his surroundings, and his fantasy. Mike's art is the result of his extraordinary way of looking at the world. Hopefully, those of you that come for something "weird" will stay because of the conviction and content of the work. Mike's sincerity is far more outstanding than his eccentricity.



Peace & Power to All Man Kind,
--Bambouche of the Vanguard Squad



SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: \$7
WHOLESALE PRICE: \$6 *

* Because this is a limited edition benefit record, and a special one at that, we are offering stock to only a select few independent stores. We're sure you'll understand the unique pricing of this record, as it provides Mike with the lion's share of the profit.

Vanguardsquad.com | Mingingmike.com

