

We invite you to join us in thinking about a particular RnB album which has formed the basis of one strand of thinking for our project: D'Angelo's 2000 *Voodoo*. In collaboration with the artist Edward George, we have been developing a 3-part commission which seeks to unpack the dynamics of performance, possession and automation as they are at work in this recording.

We therefore invite you to listen/relisten to *Voodoo*, and reflect on your listening through the framework of the following two insights associated with the making of the album.

1. A recollection made by D'Angelo in a 2000 *Vibe* magazine interview with the writer dream hampton

All his life, D'Angelo has watched the faithful become occupied by spirits—what in Haitian voodoo ceremonies is called “being mounted.” For in a sanctified church—where women aren't allowed to wear pants or makeup, male leaders are titled elders, church mothers stand alert in white nurse's uniforms prepared to revive anyone overcome with Spirit, and service is several days a week and many hours long—if there is no mounting, there is no true salvation. When D'Angelo's older brother Rodney was 9, he caught the Holy Ghost. Began speaking in ancient tongues, “I was scared,” D'Angelo admits now, “because I could see how real it was. He was taken over. Completely.” Possessed.

“I saw this one lady, she used to catch demons,” he continues. “She used to always catch' em. And one night at this revival in the mountains, she caught a demon. She was going out of her way to disrupt. She ripped the Bible apart. She was being sexual. Stripping. Foaming at the mouth. She was speaking an evil tongue. I had never heard before, but I knew it was evil. And this brother from the choir, he and the evangelist tried to get it out of her—to exorcise her. And she was screaming, ‘No! No!’ She crawled out of there on all fours. There was a graveyard out back, and she was jumping on the hoods of the cars. And the whole church went out and made a circle around her and started praying and singing. Then my grandfather laid hands on her. And it was over.” At the time, Michael D'Angelo Archer, the youngest of three sons of a sanctified preacher (himself the son of a preacher) and a “powerful” mother, was 12.

<https://www.vibe.com/features/editorial/dangelo-april-2000-cover-story-soul-man-687249/>

2. An observation made by the studio engineer for *Voodoo*, and a close collaborator with D'Angelo on the project, Russell Elevado, in a 2007 Red Bull Music Academy interview

Let me see, it may sound corny, but it was definitely my dream project, to really show people that it could be done today, that the records that sounded so amazing in the '70s, like Stevie Wonder, Marvin Gaye, James Brown, they could be done today with all the gear that's out there, look at the Neumann U47s and everything. My thing was that people were sampling James Brown and Funkadelic, all those records, so why can't we just use the same gear they used, use tape and come up with our own organic sound? It's reminiscent of the '70s, but now we have this amazing bandwidth with all this technology. That was pretty much my concept: we can do this, but make it sound even fatter, because now we have automation and super-bandwidth with CD, so now the bass can be even more incredible and each mix can be tweaked out. If Eddie Kramer had this technology back in the day, I can't even imagine how that stuff would've sounded. Now we're spoiled, because we can automate every single thing and make it perfect.

<https://www.redbullmusicacademy.com/lectures/russell-elevado-elevate-your-mind>