

**By Alexzenia Davis**

He has intricately perused his way through the ever-changing music industry; adapting, yet always remaining true to his desire for authenticity. His resume speaks to a fearless pursuance of musical brilliance, while his journey and accolades point to the intensity with which he has matched his dreams.

The poise with which **Salaam Remi** seamlessly bares each of his titles is indicative of the fact that he was *born* to do this. A Grammy-nominated producer, instrumentalist, artist and executive, Remi has had a hand in cultivating the careers of many of today's respected, and legendary, artists (Nas, The Fugees, and Amy Winehouse). His film credits are equally impressive: he has served as music producer for 2012's *Sparkle*; *Sex and The City 1 and 2*; and *Rush Hour 3*. Now, in addition to his position as Executive Vice President of A&R at **Sony Music**, Remi runs his own imprint, **Louder Than Life**, which features two sub-labels: **RemiFa** and **Flying Buddha**.

Hailing from Queens, NY—and son of music producer Van Gibbs—Remi's life has long been infused with musical undertones; not to mention, he's had hip hop's roots at his fingertips. His involvement in the industry dates back to the 1986 release of fellow New Yorker and hip hop pioneer, Kurtis Blow's "Kingdom Blow." Ever versatile, his production credits have since expanded in range: from hip hop and R&B to reggae and jazz.

The time spent molding raw talent into leading industry contenders has allowed Remi to decipher what he seeks most in an artist: *a great voice* and *a great perspective*. His interest particularly piqued by those with a unique outlook, he seeks a depth which he knows will resonate. "Those are the two things that really do it for me," says Remi. "There are a lot of people who have great voices who can sing the big stage show songs, but they don't have any perspective, so it's hard for them to write from a particular place."

He attributes his A&R savvy to his joint understanding of both the production process itself and the music business. And in 2012, when Remi met with Doug Morris, CEO of **Sony Music**, to solidify his new position as EVP of A&R, it was that very grasp which helped to sweeten the deal. The move included the introduction of Remi's label, **Louder Than Life**, as well as a producer title. It was the perfect opportunity for Remi who was both eager to learn from Morris while retaining a sense of creative freedom.

Under **Louder Than Life**, Remi established **RemiFa** and **Flying Buddha**; each label catering to different genres. **Flying Buddha**—home to Liam Bailey, Hiatus Kaiyote, and Remi himself—features more of the jazzy, soulful tunes that fall in line with its partner division **Sony Masterworks**. **RemiFa**, on the other hand, serves as an outlet for Remi's more urban production. He likens the structure of his labels to that of a venue: each night focusing on a different crowd while still filtering through the eyes of the owner.

In the fall of 2013, Remi combined his entire skillset to once again make waves; this time with the release of his own album, **Salaam Remi One: In the Chamber**. An eclectic mix of practically every genre imaginable—with features by Corinne Bailey Rae, Akon, Lemar, and more—the self-written and produced record is a journey through Remi's melodic soul. The project, a collection of all that he has conceptualized throughout the years, earned him a Grammy nomination in the category of Best Urban Contemporary Album. Of the four 2014 Grammy nominations he received, it is the one that thrills him the most.

Perhaps it is how Remi words his thoughts on the current state of the industry that most proves why he is vital. His belief in good music and the knowledge that there is "no shortage of talent," drives him to continuously seek excellence. He has found that following his conscience, if at times risky, has proven to be most successful—both personally and commercially. And of his two-plus decades in the music industry, there is only one challenge that he can readily cite: "I think trying to find my challenge has been my greatest challenge. I'm a very optimistic person, so it's hard for me to look at something as impossible."