This year's featured performers are the legendary rap icons De La Soul, Pete Rock & CL Smooth, Jeru tha Damaja, Special Ed, DJ Mick Boogie, and the 2012 Akron Hip-hop Showcase online talent search winner – Ashtabula Ohio's own Ali tha Prince. Doors will open at 7 p.m.

By FELICIA C. HANEY

AKRON – This Labor Day weekend will mark the 5th Anniversary of the Akron Hip-hop Showcase, the brainchild of Keepers of the Art Inc. who has produced the event since its inception. Held at the Akron Civic – a different venue than the previous four years – this year's featured performers are the legendary rap icons De La Soul, Pete Rock & CL Smooth, Jeru tha Damaja, Special Ed, DJ Mick Boogie, and the 2012 Akron Hip-hop Showcase online talent search winner – Ashtabula Ohio's own Ali tha Prince. Doors will open at 7 p.m. The show begins promptly at 8. Tickets are $15 and $20. The official Showcase after-party will take place upstairs in the Civic immediately after the concert. After-party tickets must be purchased along with concert tickets.

"We are very proud to present De La Soul and Pete Rock & CL Smooth to the city," said Ismail Al-Amin, executive director of Keepers of the Art. "This year's Showcase will feature two of the most influential hip-hop groups of all time – De La Soul and Pete Rock & CL Smooth. Neither group has ever played Akron before, but many, many people here have been and continue to

be influenced by their music."

In reference to the longevity the event has been fortunate to have Al-Amin said "we are very thankful to be five years deep into bringing original cutting-edge entertainment to the city of Akron. When we approached city officials six years ago with the idea, we needed them to understand that we were only interested in the 'true school' expression of the music. Meaning, that we only wanted to showcase those artists who helped lay the foundation for the culture, which is peace, love, unity and having fun, plus those current artists who are carrying on the tradition of the true-school."

Even more fortunate for Al-Amin and his cohorts who make up Keepers of the Art, was the city's ability to value their vision and willingness to preserve the art of true-school hip-hop. "We are very appreciative for the opportunity that the city of Akron has provided us by making sure we have the resources to put on the best show possible," said Al-Amin. "We are also very appreciative for the Akron Community Foundation and the Knight Foundation for their generous support as well. Because of all of their support we have been able to expand the event in breadth and width over the last three years." Previous years have welcomed artists such as KRS-One, Whodini, Brand Nubian, Slum Village, Rakim, MC Lyte, Ohio's own Stalley and more.

Tickets for this event are available at Ticketmaster.com

For more information about the concert, please visit www.keepersoftheart.com , or (330) 990-1178.