

## LISA LISA BIOGRAPHY

**Born Lisa Velez** in New York's Hell's Kitchen, Lisa Lisa, the youngest of 10 children dreamed of becoming a recording star, while attending Julia Richmond High School, and working at Benetton, a New York City clothing manufacturer, where she folded sweaters. After hearing that **Madonna** was discovered by top dance/pop producer **Jellybean Benitez** at The Fun House, a non-liquor serving hangout for rappers and breakdancers, she'd sneak out of the family apartment after dark, hoping to be discovered in the same way. That's where she met percussionist **Mike Hughes**, who played with **Full Force** and was a roadie for the band. He was thinking of forming a group and invited the aspiring 16 year old singer to the group's Brooklyn/Flatbush home for an audition. Lisa's older brother Raymond told him she couldn't go unless he accompanied her. One evening, the two clandestinely met without telling Raymond and took the subway en route for the **FF** audition. **Lisa Lisa and Cult Jam's** success seemed like kismet, since Full Force and their manager, **Steve Salem** had decided that they'd form a group that was also inspired by a Motown Group. In essence, since there was a "new edition" of the Jackson 5, they'd create a new edition of the Supremes. Meeting Full Force: **Paul Anthony, Bowlegged Lou, B-Fine, Baby Gerry, Shy Shy and Curt-t-t**, who were built like pro football linebackers, was quite intimidating for young Lisa who was visibly nervous. After singing some songs Hughes wrote, she sang Sheena Easton's "For Your Eyes Only". With that, Full Force was sure that they'd found the singer they were looking for. Signed to Full Force's management and production company, the group dubbed her "Lisa Lisa" and added Hughes and his friend, guitarist **Alex "Spanador" Mosely** as Cult Jam. Combining their signature beat and Lisa's vocals, the first single **FF** produced was "**I Wonder If I Take You Home**". The group was signed to a NY-based label, Personal Records. The label released the song to the European division of CBS Records for the compilation album, **Breakdancing**. Stateside club DJs began playing the single from the import LP. The US division of CBS, Columbia Records, released the record with it quickly becoming a chart topper on Billboard's Hot Dance/Disco Charts. The single went gold, crossing over to the R&B charts peaking at #6 and the Pop charts at #34 in summer of 1985. The follow-up, "**Can You Feel The Beat**" made it to #40 R&B in late '85. Their third single, the beautiful ballad, "**All Cried Out**" went gold, going to #3 R&B, #8 Pop in summer 1986. Their debut album went Platinum. Lisa Lisa and Cult Jam's next album, **Spanish Fly** went platinum, peaking at #7 Pop and included two Motown Influenced gold singles; "**Head To Toe**" and "**Lost In Emotion**", both reaching the #1 spot on both the R&B and Pop charts for 13 and 14 weeks respectively. Other hits from Spanish Fly were the ballad "**Someone To Love Me For Me** b/w "**Spanish Fly**", #7 R&B, early 1987, "**Everything will B-Fine**", #9 R&B, spring 1988 and the top notch LP track, "**Face In The Crowd**". Lisa Lisa also had a track in the **Chevy Chase** movie, **Caddyshack 2**, "**Go For Yours**", #19 R&B, summer 1988. Lisa Lisa and Cult Jam's 1989 LP, **Straight to the Sky** yielded the singles, "**Little Jackie Wants To Be a Star**", #3 R&B, #29 Pop, "**Just Git It Together**" #16 R&B and "**Kiss Your Tears Away**", fall 1989. For their next album, **Straight Outta Hell's Kitchen**, the production chores were split with **Robert Clivilles** and **David Cole** of **C&C Music Factory**. The catchy C&C produced single "**Let The Beat Hit 'Em**" hit #1 R&B, #37 Pop, going gold in summer 1991.

Lisa Lisa re-surfaced as a solo act on **Pendulem**, charting with “*Skip To My Lu*”, #38 R&B in late 1993 and “*When I Fell In Love*” in spring 1994 from the LL77 Album. The Spanish version, “*Cuando Me Enamore*” reached #16 on the Hot Latin Tracks”, and was #1 in Puerto Rico. Lisa has performed in the theatre in the role of Evita, Maria in West Side Story, Anita in West Side Story, and most recently as the lead in the **AMAS Theatre** production of *Barrio Babies*. She still tours **all over the world** to sellout audiences and remains one of the most requested artists on radio stations across the country.

**Lisa** is currently **starring** in the **Nickelodeon** show *Taina*, playing the young mom of a 14 year old girl who dreams of becoming a star. Now in it’s second season, it is the first sitcom on television depicting a Latino family. Lisa has also completed a guest lead in the 300<sup>th</sup> episode of the popular NBC series “Law & Order. Lisa remains a role model for her community, hosting events such as the **Puerto Rican Day Parade**, acting as spokesperson for the **Literacy, Pass It On** campaign, and countless other charitable and community based organizations. In 1989 Lisa was honored by **President George Bush** as **the Most Accomplished Latin American Artist, National Hispanic Heritage Presidential Tribute**.

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