

CULTURE

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FALL PREVIEW

Material Girl

Eve's been itching to drop new music for two years. **Regina R. Robertson** discovers why her latest release was worth the wait

As soon as she kicks the first verse of "Shake Your Tambourine" from her new album *Here I Am*, Eve makes it clear she's at the top of her lyrical game. But the Philadelphia native, now 28, is definitely not the same MC she was five years ago.

"My ear has changed," admits Eve, who has enlisted Mary J., Robin Thicke and Sean Paul to collaborate on this, her fourth album. At its core, the music is still hip-hop, yet it gives a taste of her singing voice, which, contrary to Eve's former "pit bull in a skirt" persona, is surprisingly sweet. "Music is my first love, but I have such a big picture of myself as a woman, as a person, and I don't want to be rapping when I'm 35—but I have nothing against people who do," she says with a laugh, catching herself. "I apologize if I've offended anyone." Spoken like a true lady.

ENTERTAINMENT EDITED BY CORI MURRAY BOOKS AND ARTS EDITED BY PATRIK HENRY BASS