

**FILM BULLETIN!** The Sundance Film Festival comes to London for the first time from 26 to 29 April. Our recipe for awards success? Pick a "difficult" theme, add a dollop of melancholy and serve with a one-word title.



**Banks on it:** New Yorker Azealia - delivering the goods again with her sharp second single 'Liquorice'

## {TheMUSIC} The lyrical worker

Azealia Banks: rap's latest sound investment

**W**hen Azealia Banks released "212" last year, the track's insistent hooks and no-holds-barred lyrics proved an acclaim-winning combination. So fast has the 20-year-old New York rapper ascended, in fact, that she's already delivering jaded pastiches of her more tiresome interviewers. "How did you start rapping? What are your influences?" she says, mockingly, sitting in the Coburg Bar at London's Connaught hotel. "My favourite colour is purple and I like long walks on the beach."

Yet the buzz surrounding Banks ahead of her debut album (out in

September) shows no sign of hitting terminal velocity. Comparisons with Missy Elliott and Nicki Minaj and a possible musical hook-up with Kanye West ("The fact he will tell you he's the best, with total conviction, adds magic to his work") have positioned her as one of rap's most promising prospects. Hot on the heels of "212" comes "Liquorice" - littered, as ever, with her brand of Harlem-street-slang-derived wordplay (*skrilla*: money; *ye*: cocaine) and inspired by interracial dating. "I date lots of white guys. It's still seen as slightly taboo in African American culture, but I thought, 'Let me put this in your face and tell it how it is.'"



### LITERARY BULLETIN! Hammer

**Horror's** new publishing imprint has attracted decidedly literary authors: **Helen Dunmore, Jeanette Winterson** and **Melvin Burgess**. Whatever next? John Lanchester doing Mills & Boon?

Which could just as well be her mantra. Clearly not interested in commercial radio airplay ("212" drops the C-bomb no less than 12 times), Banks asks to be seen as the real deal. "I'm not a caricature of what my music is. Obviously I want to make money, but at the same time I want to make art. I wanted '212' to be iconic and classic."

Well, you can't fault her timing. The past year has seen something of a rap revival: Drake, Jay-Z, Kanye West and Nicki Minaj have put out some of their best work yet while the likes of A\$AP Rocky and Odd Future have breathed fresh life into the genre. But will she let her new status affect her? Not a chance.

"The minute I start feeling pressured is the minute I'm giving you journalists what you want," she says. "So I have to be three times as fierce and three times as talented." **BO**