For Chuck D, the poignant and charismatic front man for the revolutionary hip-hop group, Public Enemy, the rebel is still without a pause.

The group, along with X-Clan, Monie Love, Schoolly D, Leaders of the New School – most likely minus former member, Busta Rhymes-- and Wise Intelligent of Poor Righteous Teachers will perform on Thursday, Dec. 6 at First Avenue, 701 1st Ave. N, Minneapolis.

Twenty-five years after the group's debut, Chuck D, born Carlton Douglas Ridenhour, and the group are still going strong, touring and putting out new music. The group's most recent releases, "Most of My Heroes Still Don't Appear on No Stamp" and "The Evil Empire of Everything" dropped on the dubious date of Nov. 6 – Election Day (though both were available for download prior to that date).

"Not at all, that date had no significance (to the election)," said the still feisty front man. "What it said was that we as artists control our distribution, not a record company, not the industry. That's why we released the digital product before the physical one."

Chuck D, who said he was a pioneer in digital music – offering songs for download via his company as early as 2004 – said physical retailers feared artists releasing music via digital methods.

When it comes to Public Enemy's fiery brand of hip-hop and changing political times, Chuck D said the players may have changed but the game remains the same.

"Things ain't changed much over the last 25 years," said Chuck D, who briefly paused the interview to take a phone call from his wife. "In the world of politics, 25 years is not a long time at all. In the world of music it is, but not in politics. The things we were talking about 25 years ago, we're still talking about today – poverty, homelessness, the prison industrial complex; all these things are still in place."

Initially, Public Enemy was considered a controversial band and drew the ire of many whites – especially older whites and those in the political establishment. The group talked of police brutality, racial injustice, alluded to government-sanctioned murder of African-Americans and

introduced its legion of fans to the words of Nation of Islam minister, the Hon. Louis Farrakhan. But in somewhat of an irony, one could see just as many white faces at a Public Enemy concert as those of color.

"That's because there's an honesty in our music and a respect for the art form," said Chuck D in explaining the group's mass appeal. "We come from a love of music and records and people respect that. Music is a universal language. We understand that we don't own the art form, we are just contributors. That's our mission – our purpose."

As much as Public Enemy is known for its in-your-face brand on hip-hop, mostly delivered through the authoritative voice of Chuck D, it's also known for its over-the-top hype man and fellow emcee, Flava Flav.

Though hip-hop purists know Flava Flav, born William Drayton, as an important component of Public Enemy with such contributions as "911 Is a Joke," younger fans know Flav for his outrageous VH 1 reality series, "Flava of Love." The series featured droves of attractive young women vying for the "love" of Flava Flav, a nontraditional heartthrob.

Chuck D admonishes fans of the show from discounting Flava's contributions to Public Enemy and to hip-hop.

"People have to do their research," said Chuck D. "Flava Flav's reality TV life is a very small speck of him. It's almost like O.J. (Simpson). There are people who only think he's a murderer and never knew he was a football player. People need to do research. Everyone has a smartphone – the answer's right there in their hands. Just do the research."

The group, which also features the outspoken Professor Griff, DJ Lord (who replaced Terminator X in 1999) and the S1Ws – a sort of Fruit of Islam type ensemble – has been nominated for induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. That honor does not seem to faze Chuck D.

"When you are nominated it says you've been in music for 25 years and people look at your first few years. We feel our last 10 years have been as important as our first five years."

In speaking on the group's more recent music, Chuck D has high praise for a group of Minneapolis artists he has befriended.

On "Most of My Heroes Still Don't Appear on No Stamp" Rhymesayer emcee, Brother Ali, delivers a powerful verse on the song, "Get Up Stand Up." Chuck D said Ali is not only a great artist, but a family friend.

"We met on a panel in Minneapolis and we were able to build a relationship," said Chuck D. "Our friendship is very close. His music is 150-percent truth. I have great respect for Rhymesayers – Slug and Atmosphere. I have to do something for Slug and Atmosphere. I owe Slug one."

Chuck D has another Minneapolis connection in the form of Lizz Winstead. The two, along with MSNBC host, Rachel Maddow, previously hosted a show, "Unfiltered" on Air America.

Radio K presents Public Enemy Hip-Hop Gods Tour
Thursday, Dec. 6
First Avenue, 701 1st Ave. N, Minneapolis
8 p.m.
Admission: $25