ROY JONES JR. TAKES A SWING AT TYSON

THE SOURCE

THE MAGAZINE OF HIP-H[illegible]LTURE & POLITICS

NELLY
JUST CAN'T BRUSH SOME THINGS OFF HIS SHOULDERS

JAY-Z
GRACEFULLY BOWING OUT WITH *THE BLACK ALBUM?*

DMC
FINDS HIS LIFE AFTER DEATH

THE 8TH ANNUAL
POWER 30 ISSUE

PLUS

MURPHY LEE
BONE CRUSHER
WENDY WILLIAMS
BRAVEHEARTS
CHICAGO'S CABRINI-GREEN PROJECTS
WINTER FASHION

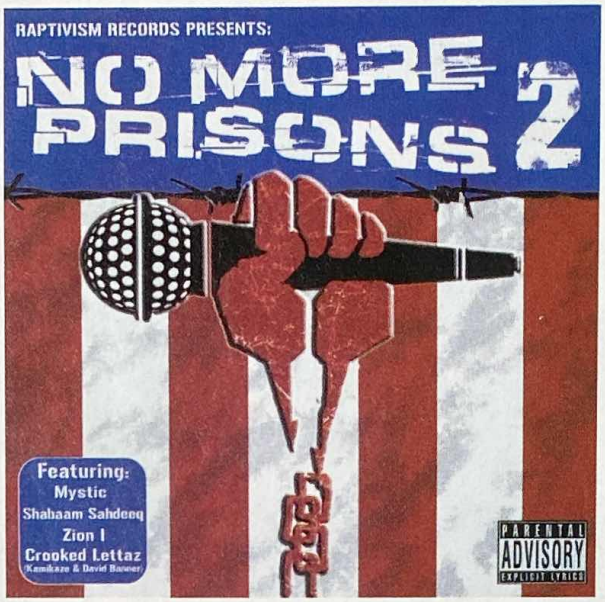
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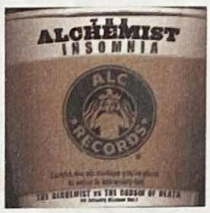
independents' day

THE CELEBRATION OF HIP-HOP'S NATIONAL UNDERGROUND SCENE



America has a problem and it's not overseas. We are at war in our own backyard and what is the solution? The people up top spend billions of taxpayers' hard-earned greenbacks to build more jails when that funding could be spent on programs and schooling. It's a business. A big business. So why don't we propose s tax bracket or charitable fund to help these brothers and sisters out? Well, the folks at Raptivism Records took that route and put together their second installment of *No More Prisons* in three years (Raptivism. com or Nomoreprisons.com). Proceeds from the 12-cut album, dedicated to raising awareness and solutions to this cancer, go to the Prison Moratorium Project, which is leading the crusade. Peep standouts cuts like Crooked Lettaz David Banner and Kamikaze's "Judas Factor," dead prez's "Behind Enemy Lines," Saigon's "Letter to Omnipotent" and Krumbsnatcha's "Hold tha Key 2," all of which are wake-up calls in the struggle. Scan below for other reps using their resources to better themselves.

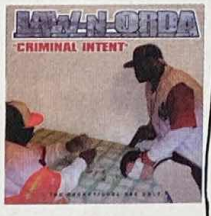
—**BOO ROSARIO**



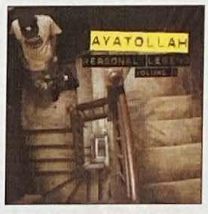
HAILING FROM THE WEST but a mainstay contributor to the Queensbridge sound, top beat provider The Alchemist delivers *Insomnia the Alchemist vs. the Cousin of Death 1st Infantry Mixtape Vol. 2,* a tuneup to his forthcoming full-length album. With contributions from Sheek Louch, Mobb Deep, Nas and others. This is a straight banger.(Alcrecords.com or Alchemistbeat.com)



VANPIRE ENTERTAINMENT is a conglomerate that packs three parts of the business, clothing, movies and now music into one coffin. Their first venture, *Attack of the Vanpires: The Album* is a 22-track opus that goes for the jugular. With its talented lineup (S.B., Reem D.O.G, Khryst, Don Blaq, Big Kap, Uneek and Rich Kid), the team is going hard for the block. (310-995-6232)



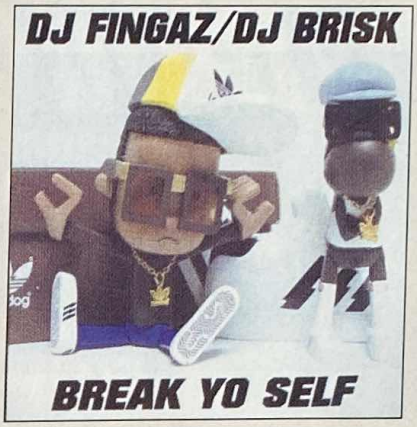
DJ PETER PARKER Presents... Law-N-Orda in *Criminal Intent.* The duo, Tank and G.Y., that reps Tompkins projects in Brooklyn's Bed-Stuy drop a 16-track freestyle session with four singles that showcase their immense talent and penchant for riding beats. Check "We Gone Ride" and the visual "Walk With Me." (spiderswebentertainment @hotmail.com or 212-592-3754)



AYATOLLAH—THE MASTERmind behind Mos Def's "Ms. Fat Booty," Pharoahe and Styles's "The Life" and countless other hits—drops an eight-cut instrumental, *Personal Legend Volume 1 (Old Negro Spirituals Music),* giving MCs a taste of what the man is made of. Pick up this piece of wax for a résumé of sorts. You won't be disappointed, trust! (Fatbeats.com OR 718-875-8191)

TALE OF THE TAPE

THIS MONTH'S HOTTEST MIXTAPES & CDs



DJ FINGAZ / DJ BRISK PRESENT... BREAK YO SELF

San Diego native Fingaz delivers 29 cuts of break beats that will take you back to a time when Hip-Hop was pure, with fat laces and linoleum carpets.

BIG MIKE RUNS THE CITY / MAX PAYNE 2 THE FALL OF BIG MIKE

Connecticut's bigger figga has been making some noise this past year something fierce. Keeping in tune, he drops another banger with exclusives from the LOX, G-Unit and Mobb Deep, to name a few.

DJ OMEGA & DJ CYNNA MIXX: NATURAL BORN MIXERS HOSTED BY: NAS & KELIS

Hip-Hop's premier couple, Nas and Kelis, link up with New York and Philly DJs Cynna Mixx and Omega to drop a joint full of freestyles and exclusives from Cam'Ron, Twista and The Clipse.

DEXTERITY... SILENT KILLER: HIP-HOP REGGAE #9

This Def Jamaica-sponsored CD contains over 30 of the hottest Reggae tracks to date. A must-have in any dancehall.

X-ECUTIONERS PRESENT... DJ BOOGIE BLIND LIVE AT THE P.J.'S HARLEM, NEW YORK

Pharoahe Monch's official spinner is a major contributor to the culture, dropping a blend CD full of old and new tracks that should rock any projects.

STRONG ARM STEADY PRESENTS: KRONDON—CRACK MUSIC HOSTED BY: WILL BLAST & DJ KHALIL

The Off the Radar alumni is doing his thing with this West Coast mixtape, proving they've always been in the game. The compilation features a slew of up-and-comers in Chace Infinite, Phil the Agony, Bad Azz and Don Crisis.

Each month in this column, we'll highlight the hottest mixtapes and CDs. DJs send tapes, CDs and contact info to: THE SOURCE—Tale of the Tape, 215 Park Ave. South, 11th Fl., New York, NY 10003. Current goods only!

#854 • December 16, 2005

Entertainment Weekly

KING KONG
Peter Jackson Directs a New Masterpiece
REVIEW ON PAGE 58

SECRETS OF NARNIA
IS DISNEY'S NEW EPIC THE NEXT 'HARRY POTTER'?



THE WOMEN OF 'GEISHA'
The Three Actresses Tell All

NARNIA's William Moseley, Tilda Swinton, and Aslan the Lion

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ska anthem "Twist and Crawl," and lesser-knowns like Islands step up and get freaky. It's a studio-geek jam session that, in terms of sonic inventiveness, nearly beats the DJ-savvy original. **B+** —*WH*

BRITNEY SPEARS

B in the Mix, The Remixes *(Jive)*



For those of you who find Ms. Spears' everyday oeuvre too cerebral and slow-paced, welcome to the remixes. Falling on the spaz continuum between disco Sprockets and a gingko-mad Tae Bo instructor, *B in the Mix* amps already-aggressive singles like "Toxic" and "Me Against the Music" to brain-popping levels of synth spiraling, and sad-eyed slow jams like "Everytime" and "Don't Let Me Be the Last to Know" into Hi-NRG bursts. This party is BYORB (Bring Your Own Red Bull); without it, you might not be able to keep up. **C** —*LG*

R. KELLY

Remix City Volume 1

(Jive/Zomba)



Not essential by any means, this collection is still pretty addictive. First the complaints: Some of these tracks are already on Kelly's studio albums, and there's at least one obvious omission—the "Fiesta" remix with now nemesis Jay-Z. As for the good stuff, there's plenty of choice hard-to-find tracks: the baby-making "Bump N' Grind—Old School Mix" and the carnal "Feelin' on Yo Booty—Hypnosis Mix," which are less radical makeovers than gentle tweaks aimed at the Cristal and club crowd. **B** —*ME*

DOWNLOAD THIS BY RYAN DOMBAL



▶ What generation gap? Canadian indie rockers the Arcade Fire enlist experimental rock progenitor and big fan **DAVID BOWIE** to lead a Web-only version of their cataclysmic sing-along "Wake Up." ITUNES.COM



▶ Gifted garage punks **THE FUTUREHEADS** show no signs of stopping the rock after jolting eardrums with last year's Clash-y debut. Spitfire single "Area" provides more pulverizing punch. EW.COM/DOWNLOAD

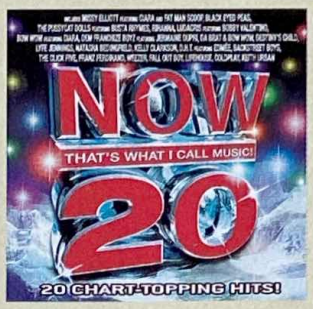


▶ With Mos Def and Rakim on his résumé, producer **AYATOLLAH** is a hip-hop vet. On his coming instrumental CD, *Now Playing*, sultry tracks like "The Devil Is Sweet" hold up even without an MC. NATURE-SOUNDS.NET



▶ Featuring the hushed harmonies of sibling-stuffed the Magic Numbers, "Close Your Eyes" is an airy family affair from **THE CHEMICAL BROTHERS**. This live electro-ballad is an online exclusive. RHAPSODY.COM

The Chart



DOWN WITH BROWN

Chris "Run It!" Brown proved a significant numbers-runner, debuting at No. 2 with 154,000 units on the heels of a single that's topped *Billboard*'s Hot 100 for several weeks...running. But No. 1 belonged to *NOW 20*, which sold another 158K in a week of calm before (the music business prays) a holiday buying storm. Shakira's English-language *Oral Fixation vol. 2* had the second-best bow, selling 128K. In decline: 50 Cent's surprisingly legless *Get Rich* soundtrack. Rising: a Johnny Cash best-of, appealing to moviegoers eager to hear just how accurately Joaq rocked.

POP ALBUMS

	LAST WEEK		WEEKS ON CHART
1	3	**VARIOUS ARTISTS** *NOW That's What I Call...20*, UTV	5
2	—	**CHRIS BROWN** *Chris Brown*, Jive	1
3	7	**CARRIE UNDERWOOD** *Some Hearts*, Arista	3
4	2	**KENNY CHESNEY** *The Road and the Radio*, BNA	4
5	—	**SHAKIRA** *Oral Fixation vol. 2*, Epic	1
6	8	**ENYA** *Amarantine*, Reprise	2
7	6	**MARIAH CAREY** *The Emancipation of Mimi*, Island	34
8	4	**MADONNA** *Confessions on a Dance Floor*, Warner Bros.	3
9	11	**NICKELBACK** *All the Right Reasons*, Roadrunner	9
10	1	**SYSTEM OF A DOWN** *Hypnotize*, American/Columbia	2
11	14	**BLACK EYED PEAS** *Monkey Business*, A&M	26
12	17	**KELLY CLARKSON** *Breakaway*, RCA	53
13	5	**VARIOUS ARTISTS** *Get Rich or...* Soundtrack, Interscope	4
14	18	**JOHNNY CASH** *The Legend of Johnny Cash*, Legacy/American	6
15	12	**REBA McENTIRE** *Reba #1's*, MCA Nashville	2

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SHORT TAKES

MARK LANEGAN AND ISOBEL CAMPBELL *Ramblin' Man EP* (V2) Preview of a promising full-length by the phlegmy ex-Screaming Trees frontman and the cooing ex-Belle & Sebastian siren, which offers country-bluesy covers and originals baked in a Lee Hazelwood/Nancy Sinatra style. **B** —*WH*

STUNT ROCK *This Is Stunt Rock Volume Three* (Cock Rock Disco) William Flegal throws down insane agitprop-hop on his latest sample spew, mixing Molotov cocktails from rap, Eric Bogosian, classic rock, etc. *Rock* is gonzo and stone sober, a raging slab of danceable social commentary. **A–** —*Marc Weingarten*

ULRICH SCHNAUSS *Far Away Trains Passing By* (Domino) The German techno geek makes deceptively simple stuff—a wash of synthesizers here, a gentle drum loop there—but it's absolutely blissful. Released in the U.S. for the first time, this is meditative music for frazzled club kids. **A–** —*ME*

RAY SCOTT *My Kind of Music* (Warner Bros. Nashville) Scott has an old-school baritone and classic country cockiness: He's for hard work and against government cheese, and when he dates a girl who doesn't know Kristofferson, she can kiss his ass. Separatist? Maybe. Good fun? That, too. **B** —*CW*

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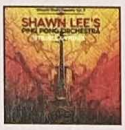
WHO IS IT? WHAT IS IT?

Kero One
Windmills of the Soul
(Plug)
★★★½



If the Mountain Brothers and Project Blowed collided and had an offspring, Kero One would be it. He nonchalantly sends his self-produced raps out to *"middle class, broke and wealthy"* and floats over jazzy beats with skill. If you've had it up to here with being hard, time to mellow out to Kero's sounds. **SFJ**

Shawn Lee's Ping Pong Orchestra
Strings & Things
(Ubiquity)
★★★



Ambient film scores are fantastic when the dramatics get crackalacking, but hearing the music for a bank heist without the dynamite and ski masks leaves things just lacking. This album is decidedly more cinematic — sitars and inclining percussion — but these cuts aren't stealing any scenes. **BP**

Maritime
We, the Vehicles
(Flame Shovel)
★★★



Maritime won't be able to distinguish themselves from others, but they have an amazing ability to create songs like "Tearing Up the Oxygen," which has a pop-play on words with a sense of realism. More importantly, each song feels like it's made for the listener, whoever that may be. **JC**

Mates of State
Bring It Back
(Barsuk)
★★★½



When this husband-and-wife team stops making airy love songs and achingly staring into each other's eyes, that, my right-wing friends, will be the apocalyptic end to the institution of marriage. *Back* is a simple pop prettiness mated with all lovie dovie. **BP**

Miwon
Pale Glitter
(City Centre Offices)
★★★★



Berlin vet Hendrik Kröz loves the odd melody, and the unexpected break as much as he does the roar of 4/4 techno. "Brother Mole" and "No Need for Sanity" possess a sweet-sad innocence, while "Semafora" and the title track are sonic burners intended to shake the walls of the club. **WW**

MOSSA
Some Eat It Raw
(Circus Company)
★★



Fractured sounds meet house beats on a dance floor in some random European city. This album features vague, curious titles like "Schmutzige Seelen" and "Parking Lot Dahlias," but unfortunately, the music is much less mysterious or new. **CM**

Music AM
Unwound From the Woods
(Quartermass)
★★★½



On their second album, genial electro-ballad fellows Music AM add a new asset to their arsenal, that being a little bit of blue-eyed soul. *Unwound From the Woods* remains gentle as a mouse, but there's an added strut to the click and chime beats and a little more sexy in the whispered voices. **JG**

Next Life
Electric Violence
(Cock Rock Disco)
★★★½



Digitized death-metal is Next Life's mission statement. A decent idea, sure, but why dig your fangs into this when you can have the real thing and not deal with a Nintendo console vocalist and dirt-cheap synth lines? Seriously, kids: Go buy an old Obituary album if you really wanna be bludgeoned bloody well. **AP**

Okai
Dekonstruktion of the Mind
(SoundChron)
★★★½



On another one-rapper, one-producer album, soulful sampler Ayatollah ("Ms. Fat Booty") teams with Flatbush MC Okai. *Dekonstruktion* is a collection of innovative street anthems, as Okai balances an Asheru-like cadence with slightly optimistic Dead Prez sensibilities. Here, one plus one equals banging. **BP**

The Pinker Tones
The Million Colour Revolution
(Nacional)
★★★



Sangria at noon and siesta an hour later, these are apparently the million colors required to start the revolution. The Tones are best when their bossa nova is more analog than laptop and more cooing than rapified. The Brian Wilson ode to piano dittying, "Pink Freud," is a puzzling but loveable stand out. **BP**

WHO IS IT? WHAT IS IT?

Polysics
Now Is the Time!
(Tofu)
★★★



Armed with keytars and stylishly functional visor fashion, Polysics — a Japanese quartet named after a Korg synth — give fun rock'n'roll mouth-to-mouth and molests its nipples. Devo crossed with the Locust, Polysics' contorted robotones are so hot they should spew from volcanoes. **TW**

Rye Coalition
Curses
(Gernblandsten)
★★★½



If the film *Dazed & Confused* were actually a new album released by a group of five guys from New Jersey, this would be it. This balls-out, hard stoner rock will get you to pump your fist in glory and dust off the ol' air guitar for a couple of raring solos. Oh, and it's also produced by Dave Grohl, if you care. **GZW**

Sayag Jazz Machine
Anachro' Mix Experiences
(Vision Alternative)
★★★★



Sayag Jazz Machine slams the cerebrum with *Anachro' Mix Experiences*, a double disc-DVD remix project offering reworked versions of songs from the French sextet's 2004 release *Anachromic*. Jungle, jazz and jive create an undeniable juice, electrifying the brain with a pleasant electric shock. **MW**

Alice Smith
For Dreamers, Lovers & Me
(Heroes/BBE)
★★★



If AM radio still existed, Alice Smith's breezy, but balling break-up ballad "Do I" would be amplitude modulation like a mug. Her debut aims to win back the soul of pretty girl pop and it's an honest effort. Where "Do I" is sulking and sad, "Woodstock"is lighter, nicer. **BP**

Termanology & DC
Out the Gate
(Showoff Records)
★★★★



Termanology teamed with producer DC to release a 19-track mash-up. Term lets loose with a wide range of lyrics. Whether detailing his life struggles ("22Years"), taking a walk down memory lane ("When We Were Kids") or simply grippin' the mic ("Takin' You With Me"), the MC excels. **KS**

Terrestial Tones
Dead Drunk
(Paw Tracks)
★★★



You have to be a special kind of sadist to truly appreciate Terrestrial Tones, a junkyard noise jam between Dave Portner (Animal Collective) and Eric Copeland (Black Dice). Unfiltered mania looped on Mini Discs, *Dead Drunk* will leave you feeling as if you sucked on an exhaust pipe and chased it with crystal meth. **AP**

Theo and the Skyscrapers
Theo and the Skyscrapers
(Morpheus)
★★★



Theo Kogan's downtown Debbie Harry meets Siouxsie Sioux bit is almost enough to let us forgive guitarist Sean Pierce's douchebag mustache and the fact that the drummer and bass player look like they decided to start dressing cool, like, yesterday. Substance barely trumping style is still a victory. **JF**

Third Sight
Symbionese Liberation Album
(Disgruntled)
★★



Bigging up Jihad with their MC's rapified pseudonym and the Symbionese Liberation Army with their album title, Third Sight isn't shying away from the controversially political. Similes run rampant and annoying like malaria happy flies, but the real problem is that there is only one banging beat. **BP**

União Black
Banda União Black
(Common Folk)
★★½



Rock'n'roll dies at 40 and apparently Brazilian funk does too. That youthful James Brown joyful rebellion momentarily reveals itself on cuts like "Africa Hot Band," but most of the time União Black's sound comes off as measured old man music. **BP**

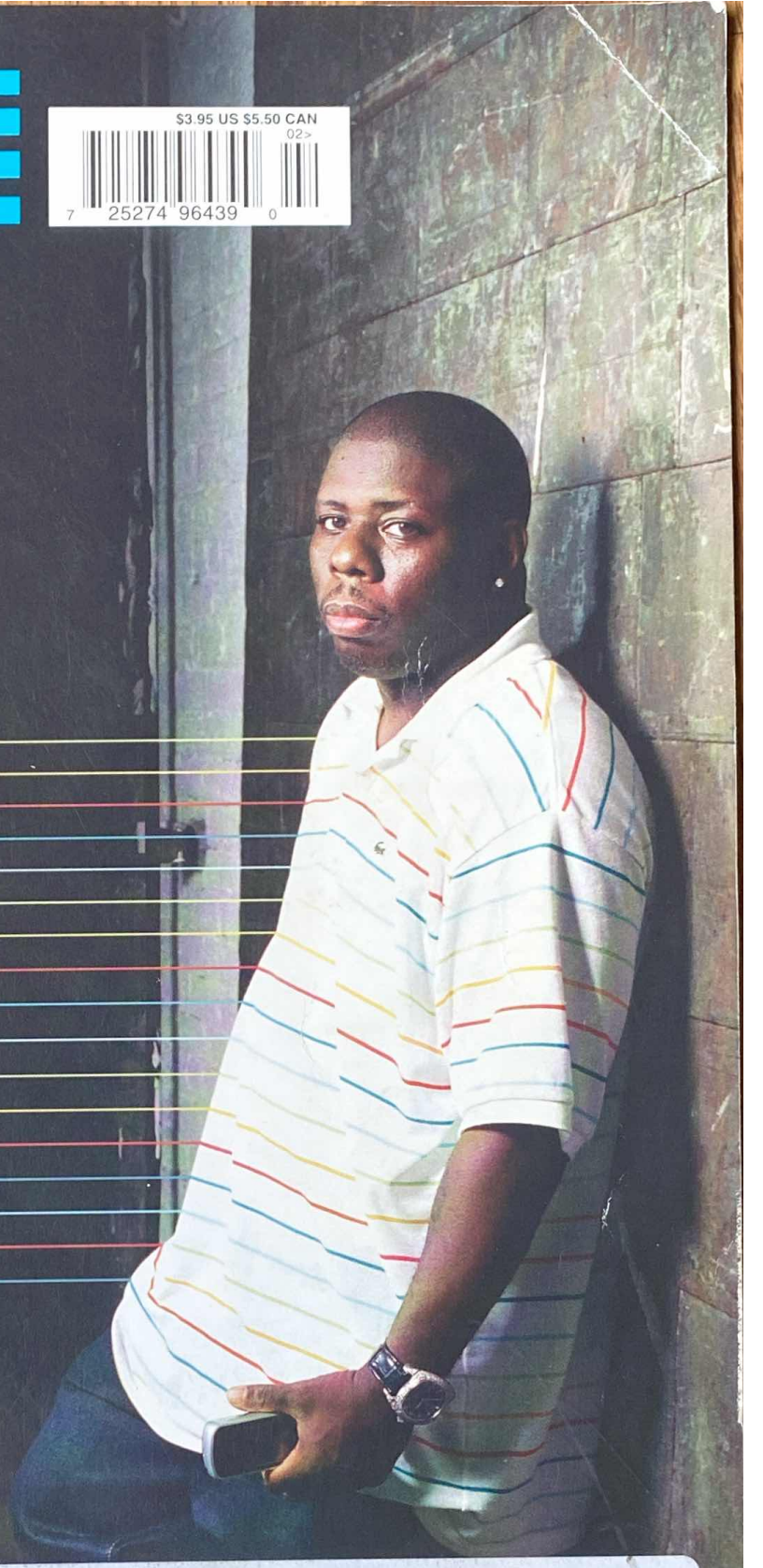
Visual
Figured It Out
(Community Service)
★★½



Chicago MC Visual apparently has it all figured out . . . the hip-hop lullaby! Infinite Beats (who produces most of the record) lays some lazy Casio stylings for "Come on..." and Visual tries to establish himself as conscious or something, but still street or something: *"I'm so pimp, but I don't got hoes."* C'mon, dude. **BP**

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PERCEE P

Put It On The Line/ Ox Remix/ Bx Remix

Things just aren't the same at the time share in front of Fat Beats without Percee P to give a rap fan dap on the way in and hustle the tourists on the way out. But like the pioneers, P had to go west. Before you start to lament, put this record on the turntable, you'll forget all about it. First things first, all three joints on this record are Madlib productions. I don't know how he does it, but no matter how many tracks he pumps out in a year, you never – ever – see a slip in quality. The record starts off with the original version of "Put It On The Line," something Percee P has done more than a few times in his life. Madlib's instrumental treats you to 4x kick and a gut-juggling tuba sample, followed by a naaaasty vocal sample that sounds tailor made for this cut. P takes full advantage of the banger, putting down spite as sharp as ever in his signature off kilter flow. Madlib's drum work is impeccable, throwing the real stuff at you from left and right. The invader also provides remixes for both the Ox (Oxnard) and the Bx (Bronx). The "Ox Remix" speeds things up dramatically with a percussion-based track flavored with oboe and a funky-ass bassline. The cymbals are amazing. The "Bx Remix" had to be flavor, even Madlib has to feel the pressure of trying to rep the Bronx from out west. He doesn't disappoint, with a track as noisy and unrelenting as traffic on the Cross Bronx. The choice of samples for the hook will have you open by themselves. I hate to say it, but heading west has done nothing but good for Percee P, this is one of the hottest joints I've heard from him in years.

CAGE

Hell's Winter

Special edition 7-inch blood-red vinyl from the good folks at Definitive Jux. The title track from Cage's rabidly-anticipated sophomore full-length delivers the dramatic goods as El-P provides the perfect sonic backdrop for Chris Palko's harrowing life narration.

The song starts out innocently enough with serene guitar plucks over soothing wind sounds, until Cage forces your face under water with a quick-step acapella that foreshadows El-P's score. Hard drums, crashing cymbals and eerie strings really bring out the violent brilliance of Cage's flow. You'd be hard-pressed to find a better match than these two underground legends.

I SELF DEVINE

Ice Cold/ All I Know/ Such is Life

I'm just going to go ahead and say it. I Self Devine is one of the nastiest MCs I have ever heard. Sure, I'm comparing him to some rappers who are greater than great, but compare all you want because line-for-line, verse-for-verse he creates the most powerful hip-hop you'll hear. As one half of the Micranots, he killed every song he wrote. His cadence is unmistakable and impossible to imitate without a hint of gimmick or overshowmanship. Now on his own, and launching his first solo LP, I Self is as hot as ever. "Ice Cold" starts this single off with proof as I Self launches directly into venomous lyrics over a sparse but powerful Jake One beat. For added flavor, cuts are handled by another legendary Midwest luminary, Vitamin D. Self has always been a firm believer in the MC-DJ formula, always rocking shows all live off vinyl. The formula still works. "All I Know" surprisingly slows things down a bit. Ant steps away from the Atmosphere project long enough to lace this joint with a smooth, quality track. It's a nice song, but I Self seems stronger when he's in a more "furious" mindset. "Such Is Life" is a bonus third cut, bringing Bean One to the boards for the instrumentals. Starting things off with a Kanye-esque vocal sample (yeah, that means fast), the track flows into some nice strings selections. The laid back track will lull you into thinking it's a laid back song, but Self's lyrics belie that assumption quickly, spouting off about government ills and the state of things. It's good to see the untimely break-up of the Micranots didn't slow I Self Devine down. Do yourself a favor, pick up the new album and grab the *Farward* EP at the same time (free on sandbox!).

LIL KIM

Shut Up

Kim, if you're reading this, stare at your naked cellmate for me. But while you were busy reading the gossip pages, Kim was in the lab, and something was cooking besides that chest (by the way … DING, it's done). "Shut Up" is exactly what you thought it was, a diss track aimed at all the talkers out there. Over a simple conga-based track, Kim takes her low key flow and adds strychnine, laying down nasty verses that will remind you of how she got her rep in the first place. "Shut up, bitch" takes care of the hook while you hear a montage of rumor mill material mixed in. She may be on lock for a minute, but this single is still on the streets, and it will go a long way toward keeping her rep together.

OKAI

Bout That/ Face/Off f. Planet Asia

Sometimes, a producer's beat wizardry outshines an MC's rhymes. It's as simple as that. Unfortunately for Okai, that's the case on his a-side track "Bout That." Ayatollah creates an incredible instrumental that is by far the highlight of this single. The kick-heavy drum pattern, stuttering keys and fading guitar sample are an invigorating introduction for Okai, who sounds at home on the beat. Okai picks the right partner for the b-side cut "Face/Off." Planet Asia gets second verse duties over another excellent Ayatollah production that features a slowed-down soul sample. A subdued Asia still makes caustic 16s seem simple. Okai's flow is OK, but teaming up with two of the best in their respective professions only overshadows his purpose.

J-LIVE

Harder/ Do My Thing

J-Live is an MC that doesn't have to "bring it back" to that real shit, he never stopped putting it down like that. The beat was so hot when I put the needle down I had to go back and check – no question it's Erik Krasno and his Fire Dept. crew playing it live for maximum swing. To say that J put 100% into this album would be an understatement, it's blazing. "Harder" is a raucous cut that J gets loose over. His unmistakable flow is at full blast here, bringing strong verses one after another. On the flip is "Do My Thing," a more than solid joint, but it's having a hard time after "Harder." The track comes off a little basic. But as J trades lines back and forth with the Future Classics crew you start to feel the cut more. By the way, the album is as hot as this single, bring an oven mitt.

AZ

The Come Up/ Magic Hour f. C.L. Smooth

To say that we've been waiting with baited breath for AZ to drop new material would be the understatement of the year. AZ can bring hard rhymes to the surface like nobody, but because of this and that, some heads have been sleeping. His new album will be a wake up call. "The Come Up" takes the childhood story concept and puts it down right. When it comes from the heart (and you have the skills he has), tight lyrics become effortless. His vocal choice for

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HIP-HOP GUEST REVIEWS: DJ VADIM

Russian ex-pat Vadim Peare relocated to South London and around 1992 the hip-hop enthusiast started messing around with a cheap sampler and his record collection. This culminated in Jazz Fudge, a label that would bear DJ Vadim's first single, "Abstract Hallucinating Gasses," and the album *Headz Ain't Ready.* While mid-'90s trip-hop labels like Mo' Wax and Cup of Tea chose traditional instrumental hip-hop routes, Vadim's Jazz Fudge issued beathead music that was both truly avant garde and philosophical. Three albums for Ninja Tune soon followed (*U.S.S.R. Repertoire, U.S.S.R. Life From The Other Side* and *U.S.S.R. The Art of Listening).* Having toured nearly every continent and collabo'ing with MCs like Slug, Gift of Gab and Moshun Man, Vadim now embarks on One Self, a trio project with Blu Rum 13 and Yarav Bravo. We originally asked Vads to lace us with his fave singles, but he had his own plan in mind: "I decided to talk about a couple of things that probably people in the US have never heard of or are unavailable except via the web." *Derek Grey*
www.djvadim.com

TASK FORCE BIG SMOKE Home Grown/UK/12
Task Force (a.k.a. Chester P Hackenbush) and Farmer Gilles have been causing a minor storm on the London underground. They're always poignant and on-point, whether they're rapping about social injustice, racism, drug running, inner city life or the beauty of butterflies, monsoon mountain biking and tornado skydiving. Can't quite think of any other rap group anywhere in the world who can do that. *DJ Vadim*

SOLO LOS SOLO TODO EL MUNDO LO SABES K Industria/SPN/LP
Solo Los Solo is DJ/producer Griffi and Juan Solo hailing from Barcelona. Production-wise, Griffi is one of the sickest and most slept on producers with complex, musical patterns not too dissimilar to JayDee-meets-Ammon Contact-meets-Madlib, but on another level. *DJ Vadim*

HOCUS POCUS 73 TOUCHES Onandon/FRA/LP
Hocus Pocus hails from Nantes on the west coast of France and is made up of rapper/musician 20Syl and C2C (the two-time world DMC team DJ champions). This isn't a mix of relentless madman cuts and shouting but something extremely musical and lyrical with subtle scratches, atmospheres and reflections. *DJ Vadim*



FUTURE JAZZ GUEST REVIEWS: NICKODEMUS

A man of few words and many beats, Nicholas DeSimone has established himself as America's foremost global beat fusionist. Whether he's remixing Argentian bandoneon player Astor Piazzolla or mixing it up with live musicians at the Turntables on the Hudson parties he helped co-found, Nick is usually not far from an array of conga, zither and sitar-wielding pals. Along with DJ/producer mates like Zeb, Osiris, DJ Angola and others, Nick has brought the true melting pot sounds of his native New York to listeners everywhere. His recent *Coney Island Love* CD (Wonderwheel) saw him stirring up globalized tracks by Quantic, Shantel, Zimpala and The Rootsman, while his single "Cleopatra in New York" (with Carol C) is still making the rounds in worldbeat-friendly lounges. The man moves at the Big Apple's pace–there's always a DJ gig or production session around the corner–so we were honored to pin him down for a few recommended releases. *Tomas Palermo*
www.wonderwheelrecordings.com

DUBAWARE SOUNDSYSTEM EASTERN CHILD Musicpark/US/12
My favorite beginning of the night/set the vibe right tune. When the vocals come in, there's an overwhelming feeling of peace and ease in the air. *Nickodemus*

KINNY & HORNE US ON FIRE (ORIGINAL MIX) Tru Thoughts/UK/12
A flirty love tune that flips the old "Bam Bam" horns into a nice new mid-tempo groove. Lyrics are singing: "*I return your smile/loving you in my own kind of way.*" She sounds like a bonafide cutie! *Nickodemus*

CANDELA ALLSTARS (MATTY 2 DEEP REMIX) BROBOMBIQUE Candela/PR/12
This smooth and melodic house groove has the catchiest authentic Puerto Rican vocals and percussion. A sureshot for hips worldwide! *Nickodemus*

DOOLEY-O
SOAPS
Lewis/UK/12
"*I got reservations/dinner and a limo/But your ass wanna stay home with Jay Leno/Watching re-runs of* Ricki Lake*/You'd be the first one to go on* Elimidate…" Yes, Dooley-O's talking about women who watch too much TV. And he's hungry! "*Instead of making a steak/you were* Making The Band…" It's a humorous send up with a serious side: "*The idiot box is tearing us apart.*" Take that UPN, MTV and Fox! B-side "Monday Night" is a superb battle rap that recalls classics by Kool G Rap & Polo or Big Daddy Kane. *Phil Phloe*

OKAI
BOUT THAT
Soundchron/US/12
Produced by Ayatollah, Okai's single should remind hip-hop fans of Gang Starr, Mobb Deep and Black Moon's gritty OG sound–a welcome change in this bling era. Why? 'Cause it means Okai (who reps East Flatbush) has to be as dramatic and lyrical as Ayatollah's funky beat. No monotone flow and an 808 here, son. "Face Off" features Planet Asia who informs us that he's "*comin' with force,*" which he does over a sample-filtered, low-slung groove. *Duncan Phillips*

TATE THE GREAT
TIME FOR HIP-HOP
Overground/US/12
Tate's rugged, no-nonsense working class lyrics reflect the Chicago streets he originates from. Hot production from DJ JFX, Babu (Dilated Peoples) and LA's Discrete Merchants mostly suits Tate's rapid-fire rants. In particular, "Fast Food Rap" typifies this MC's distaste for commercial rap: "*Jump up get down pump up the sound/Say fuck mainstream it's the underground.*" With strong ties to both Common and LA's Beat Junkies, Tate will make his mark soon. *Tomas Palermo*

J RAWLS FEAT. ALOE BLACC
BAILAR
Polar/GER/12
Soul vocals, future jazz rhythms and a progressive hip-hop feel should make all kinds of fans love this Latin love jam. Aloe translates his inner emotional thoughts on in-the-club encounters over a horn-laden acoustic salsa rhythm. DJs from Jazzy Jeff to Gilles Peterson will be spinning this. *Phil Phloe*

SOUND PROVIDERS
IT'S GONNA BEE PART II
LIKWIT JUNKIES
GHETTO
ABB/US/12
Both the Sound Providers and Likwit Junkies singles prove that substance trumps style any day. With a strong current flowing to reclaim hip-hop's message from the materialistic elements that hijacked it, Defari's straightforward dialogue on "Ghetto" and "Brother" packs more reality than a PBS documentary. Babu's scratches add funky drama. Sound Providers' "sound" is the main focus of their single (featuring NY's Wee Bee Foolish), which loops upbeat xylophones, barbecue organs and jazzy piano riffs with positive results. Let the revolution begin. *Tomas Palermo*

FIVE CORNERS QUINTET
CORNERSTONES
Ricky Tick/FIN/12
The Five Corners Quintet is at the forefront of a burgeoning postmodern jazz scene in Scandinavia. The aptly titled "Straight Up" pays it forward with zeal and attitude. The vocals of Mark Murphy compliment the samba "Before We Say Goodbye," and the ballad "Blue Circles" with French chanteuse Okou's smoky vocals ends it all far too soon. *Velanche*

ALEX ATTIAS PRESENTS MUSTANG
10,000 LEAGUES DEEPER
Compost/GER/12
Belgian duo Trickski's seductive and epic Weather Report mix is like a hot tease holding back just enough to make you want more, with Bembe Segue cooing over percolating beats. F-Com honcho Laurent Garnier goes peaktime with a house mix hard and naughty enough to induce some serious marks…on the floor, that is. *Velanche*

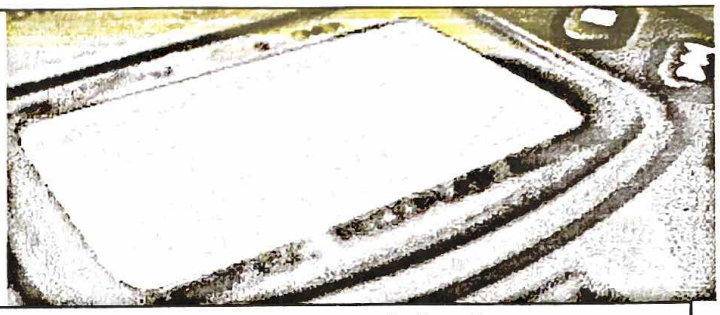
MADVILLAIN (FOUR TET & KOUSHIK REMIXES)
Stones Throw/USA/12"
'Tis a game of two halves as they say. I'm only a casual Four Tet fan; intrigued, but not a fanatic. However, after the jazz hooligan madness of "Meat Grinder" I look forward to more of the Four Tet-with-vocals formation. While Stones Throw has the balls to team-up the masked one, the mad one and Four Tt, it's unfortunate the Koushik mixes didn't score so well, missing the high standard of the originals. *Franz Carr*

AMERIE
ONE BOSSA (DON RITMO RE-EDIT)
Shoes/US/12
A mash-up of sorts, wherein Amerie's back-up vocals get grafted onto leftover Dave Brubeck-meets-Kyoto Jazz Massive bossa jazz before fading back into Rich Harrison's brilliant Meters cut-up. Not bad, but it promised more and the fact is we all know it: the original is just *that* much better. *Alexis Georgopoulos*

BAKURA
REACH THE SKY ALBUM SAMPLER
Especial/UK/12
Evolving from their Bedford, UK-based band The Collective Unconscious, Dominic "Domu" Stanton and Robert Marin's Bakura project has taken a live approach to broken boogie studio numbers. Tracks like the rude "Bada"–a speedy, spacey fusion number featuring aerobic live horn fills and jagged, locomotive beats–and the disco-funk influenced "Play That Game" and "Lately" foreshadow an emotive but party-ready collection from this dynamic duo. *Derek Grey*

SIMON GRAY
THE GALÁCTICA SUITE
Papa/UK/12
Based in Hamburg, Australian Gray is a keyboard wiz who's toured with Incognito and remixed Everything But The Girl. That experience pays off on a funky track featuring live horns from The TinMen, swirling keys and bouncy drums–a full arrangement that evokes Earth, Wind & Fire's exuberant "September" era. "The Galáctica Suite" brings the heat. *Hector Cedillo*

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LASTLY NEWS
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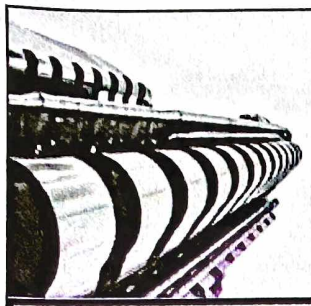
DJ'S SEND PLAYLISTS TO before 4pm every Wednesday.

ISSUE #209

[[November 28, 2005]]

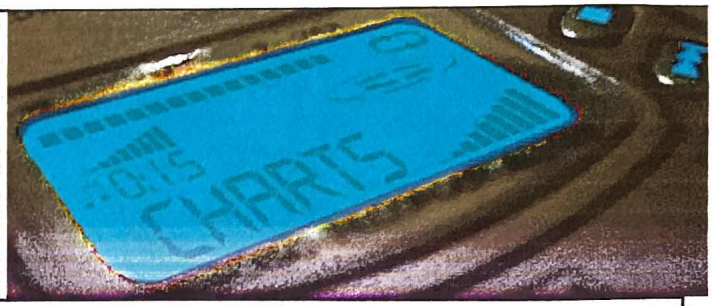
TOP 30

LW	TW	ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL
4	1	SHORT DAWG	Cruizin'	Russell Simmons Music Group
8	2	OKAI	Bout That	Sound Chron
5	3	OMNI	Daily Hustle	Ariel
27	4	OBIE TRICE	Wanna Know	Shady/Interscope
30	5	BROWN JAMES	Get It Crackin	Xtra Infinit
6	6	A-TRAK	Don't Fool With The Dips	Audio Research
7	7	THINK DIFFERENTLY F. RZA & MF DOOM	Biochemical Equation	Babygrande
22	8	KOSHA DILLZ	Chainsaw Music	Matzah 4 Yo Mouf
9	9	ALFONSO HUNTER F. FABOLOUS	Don't Stop	Romeo Entertainment
16	10	O.C.	Challenge Y'all	Hiero
11	11	THE COUP	My Favorite Mutiny	Epitaph
12	12	INTENSE	A Healthy Obsession	Defend Music
13	13	PUMPKINHEAD	Rock On	Soulspazm
14	14	DAVE GHETTO	Hey Young World Pt. 2	Counterflow
15	15	FATLIP	Writer's Block	Delicious Vinyl
17	16	T WATERS	Tears In My Eyes	Virgin
18	17	SWOLLEN MEMBERS	Black Magic	Battle Axe
19	18	M.I.A.	Galang RMX	Interscope
NEW	19	MATHEMATICS	Real Niggaz	Nature Sounds
20	20	BEYOND	Rain Sleet Hell Snow	Xtra Infinit
21	21	THIRD KIND	Everybody Knows	Sweat Box Records
26	22	BIG TONE	Come My Way	ABB
23	23	CESAR COMANCHE	Miss You	ABB
29	24	GRAFH	Ain't No Telling	Def Jam
NEW	25	PRIMERIDIAN	Trumpets Of Zion	All Natural
NEW	26	SUPASTITION	Hate My Face	Soulspazm
NEW	27	MILANO	Hope You're Listening	Beatdown Recordings
28	28	AZ	New York	U Styles/Koch
NEW	29	CANIBUS	It's No Other Than	Babygrande
NEW	30	SMIF-N-WESSUN	Tibz Do Work	Duck Down



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[[October 31, 2005]]

TOP 30

LW	TW	ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL
5	1	RAS KASS	Bars Up	Brick
6	2	SUPERNATURAL	Altitude	Coalmine
13	3	JIHADISREAL	State Of The Union	Spread Love
14	4	LYRICS BORN	Big Money	Decon
7	5	DOUJAH RAZE	Plastic World	Trilogy Records
9	6	JURASSIC 5	Red Hot	Up Above
11	7	OMEGA ONE	Body Double	Nature Sounds
8	8	DK	A Part Of History	Babygrande
10	9	ZION I	Temperature	Live Up
17	10	DANGERDOOM	Sofa King	Epitaph
NEW	11	OBIE TRICE	Wanna Know	Shady/Interscope
15	12	BUBBA SPARXXX	The Other Side	Purple Ribbon/Virgin
16	13	OKAI	Bout That	Sound Chron
1	14	LITTLE BROTHER	Lovin' It	ABB/Atlantic
24	15	THINK DIFFERENTLY F. RZA & MF DOOM	Biochemical Equation	Babygrande
4	16	ANONYMOUS TWIST	Royal Flush	Soul On Rice
19	17	BROWN JAMES	Get It Crackin	Xtra Infinit
22	18	ATMOSPHERE	Watch Out	Rhymesayers
20	19	ALFONSO HUNTER F. FABOLOUS	Don't Stop	Romeo Entertainment
21	20	ASAMOV F. MR. LIF	Supa Dynamite	6 Holes
NEW	21	OMNI	Daily Hustle	Ariel
23	22	U-GOD	Bump	Free Agency
26	23	B-LEGIT F. E-40	Guess Who's Back	SMC
27	24	SHORT DAWG	Cruizin'	Russell Simmons Music Group
NEW	25	T WATERS	Tears In My Eyes	Virgin
NEW	26	MASSPYKE	Step	ABB
NEW	27	STRONG ARM STEADY	Getcha Bars Up	Nature Sounds
29	28	A.D.O.R.	Step Up	Tru Reign
30	29	BASIC VOCAB	Sex	Counter Flow
NEW	30	TOW DOWN F. MIKE JONES	Show Me Your Tattoos	SMC



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14.12.2005

DJ Flatline mit „Boss of Bosses Pt. 3" Mixtape hosted by A.G



Nach zwei „Boss of Bosses" Mixtapes hat **DJ Flatline** nun über Milk Crate die neueste Ausgabe seiner *„Boss of Bosses"* Mixtape-Reihe herausgebracht, und dabei hat er sich niemand geringeres als das Diggin in the Crates Member A.G als Hoster ausgesucht. Gefüllt ist das Mixtape mit rund 25 Tracks von unter anderem Cormega, Raekwon, A.G, AZ, Mobb Deep, Supernatural und Nas. Die Beats kommen dabei u.a. von DJ Premier, Thew Alchemist, Marco Polo und Ayatollah

Tracklisting:
01) Milk Crate Fam featuring A.G - Intro (Produced by KendeR)
02) Notorious B.I.G featuring 2pac, Nas, Mary J Blige - Living in Pain (Produced by Just Blaze)
03) Ghostface featuring Trife Da God - Project Soap Operas (Produced by Cue Trax)
04) Cormega - Dirty Game (Produced by DJ Premier)
05) Raekwon - Kids Thats Rich (Produced by Pete Rock)
06) A.G - Come Get Me
07) AZ - Never Change (DJ Flatline Blend) (Produced by Moss)
08) Roc Marciano - Interlude
09) Teflon featuring Styles P - Married To The Game (Produced by DJ Premier)
10) Mobb Deep featuring 50 Cent - The Infamous (Produced by The Alchemist)
11) Special Teamz - Main Event (Produced by DJ Premier)
12) M.O.P - Instigator (Produced by 9th Wonder)
13) Papoose featuring Memphis Bleek - Do Or Die (Produced by MoSS)
14) Mobb Deep - Real Tight (Produced by The Alchemist)
15) Raekwon - Treasures (Produced by DJ Premier)
16) Little Vic - The Exorcist (Produced by DJ Premier)
17) Supernatural - Not That Way (Produced by Marco Polo)
18) A.G - If I Wanna (Produced by Jake One)
19) Okai - Bout That (Produced by Ayatollah)
20) Raks One - DJ Flatline Exclusive (Produced by The Alchemist)
21) Teflon featuring Krumb Snatcha - Jus Rhymin Wit Krumb (Produced by Ab)
22) A.G - Madden 06 Interlude
23) Nas - Death Anniversary
24) A.G - Outro (Produced by KendeR)
25) Big L - C-Town Tutorial

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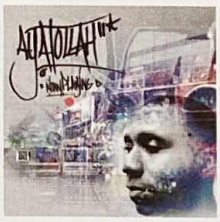
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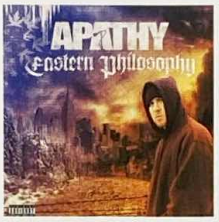




AYATOLLAH
NOW PLAYING
Nature Sounds

Assuming you started listening to hip-hop sometime before the new millennium, Ayatollah's beats will appeal right off the bat. Some of the beats on Now Playing you've no doubt heard before, so there's that pleasant surprise of "Oh, he made that?" Ayatollah has a fairly serious resume, working with Mos Def, Ghostface, Cormega, Masta Ace, etc. Putting out Now Playing, an all-instrumental album, is definitely a sign of the times, cashing in on the trend of producers earning as much or more recognition than the artists they are providing tracks for. So will Ayatollahs release make him a household name? Probably not. This is your nostalgic hip-hop. All the beats are based around well-chosen but somewhat cliché samples, and the drum patterns are nearly identical from track to track. The immediate appeal of Now Playing wears off quickly. Not for a lack of talent though, this album merely proves that Ayatollah is a dope producer who made a lot of songs you liked. A concept of some sort would have been nice and with titles like "The Movement", "Stomping Grounds" and "Who Got It", you have to wonder if any effort was put into this beyond making a playlist on iTunes.

Jimmy James



APATHY
EASTERN PHILOSOPHY
Babygrande

Apathy from the Demigodz crew has been bouncing around for that last six or so years, and looks like he's poised to truly make his mark. He signed with Atlantic and is planning to release an album titled Bearer of Bad News. In the meantime, on the indie label Babgrande, Apathy's putting out his debut album Eastern Philosophy. Don't expect kung fu samples, bamboo flutes and gongs, he means the east coast of the United States. And the title, while mildly clever, gives a good indication of what's in store. There is no crossover, deviation, genre mixing here. No Dirty South mix, no bi-coastal posse cuts, just a voice lying somewhere between NWA-era Ice Cube and Aesop Rock. Apathy's delivery is steady, witty and rough enough not to be nerdy; so he is fine in that department. The beats sound like they could have been made at any point within the last ten years. In fact, with scratch choruses in almost every song, the whole album could be from another era. A little over half the beats were done by Chum the Skrilla Guerilla and his stripped-down, dark sound definitely dominates the album. The remaining production tends to be a bit more shallow, but the rhyming usually compensates. Overall you appreciate that there is no fluff, and there are some true head nodders on here. The overall sound is a little too "classic east coast hip-hop" to make this a really exciting album, though. Apathy's rhyming doesn't stray far away enough from clever, trying to outdo you battle style to make any heartfelt connection with the listener. The more I listened, the more I liked, but there is no denying that early on, I wasn't very impressed. This is a solid album, but assuming he develops his persona and makes his sound a little more unique, Apathy has what it takes to really do something special. If Atlantic is indeed putting out his next album, it will have the requisite club songs and love songs. It will lack the purity of this Eastern Philosophy, but it may add some much needed freshness.

Jimmy James



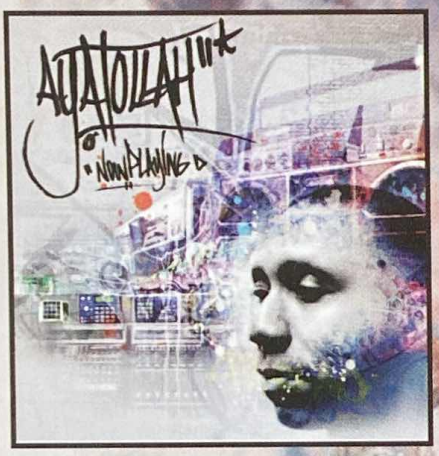
MS. JOHN SODA
NOTES AND THE LIKE
Morr Music

When a friend gave me the Notwist's Neon Golden I liked it immediately. And when I think about why, it occurs to me that it was, at least in part, because I could put the record on and be completely happy with the sounds emanating from the speakers without actually listening. For lack of a better description, it was a great ambiance album. This is not to say that the music wasn't worth paying attention to. It was among the more delicate and successful melds of traditional and electronic music I had heard.

Ms. John Soda's notes and the like is a similarly accomplished arrangement of intimate tunes, no surprise since the Notwist's Mischa Acher is involved. But the project is not a one-off, in fact, had I not known of the personnel relation, I may not have placed the two groups together. Ms. John Soda opts for a blend heavier on the electronics, and Stefanie Bohm's vocals give this quartet a much sexier sound. But the underlying appeal is the same: this is a record to put on and forget about. That is, until Bohm's alluring voice, it's whispers and confident range, draws you out of your own head and into the techno-dipped, up-tempo rhythms, and mellowed out, robotic harmonies. This album testifies to the compatibility of past and future when they meet in the company of capable musicians: it's a brave new world.

New instrumental album from

AYATOLLAH



Now Playing is the debut CD release from hip-hop production icon, **Ayatollah**. Ayatollah has produced hits for just about everyone that matters in hip-hop including **G-Unit, Ghostface, Mos Def, Rakim, Styles P, Talib Kweli, Pharoahe Monch, Inspectah Deck, Cormega, Tragedy, Black Rob, Masta Ace, Vast Aire**, and more. Ayatollah's signature soulful sound played a key part in the beat driven explosion of mid-90's hip-hop. While its clear that Ayatollah's music speaks volumes, very few have gotten a glimpse into the world of the soft spoken producer through his own eyes. Now Playing is a collection of Ayatollah's favorite compositions, many of which have never been heard before. Available on both CD and 2LP.

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Disc 1 & 2: Consists of every beat on each of the Special Herb's volumes, with beats found on releases such as: Operation:DOOMSDAY, MM..FOOD, Take Me To Your Leader, and Black Bastards. All songs are blended together into a mega-mix.

Disc 3: Consists of lost and rare instrumentals from DOOM's first group KMD. These instrumentals are not found on any of the Special Herbs volumes and were never commercially released.

IN STORES JANUARY 24, 2006

REVIEWED: M-Audio MicroTrack 24/96 • Dave Smith Poly Evolver • Numark iDJ
Vol. 8, No. 2, FEBRUARY 2006
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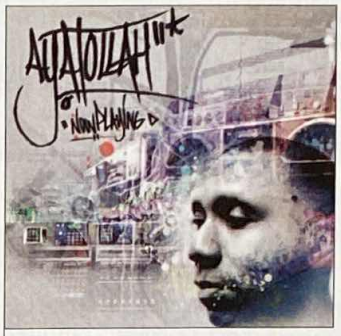
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BECK

***Guerolito* (Interscope)**
The belittling of the *Guero* gumbo
Restraint has rarely been Beck Hansen's strong suit, but it's exactly this trait that has served him well on his albums during the past decade-plus. Last year's *Guero* was a summation of his chameleon-like tendencies, absorbing punk, funk, bossa nova, blues and barrio beats filtered through the Dust Brothers' vinyl-crazed production aesthetic. The result was a beautifully unhinged tribute of sorts to the last Dust Brothers collaboration, *Odelay*.

Whether a sales gimmick or art for art's sake, Interscope offered up Beck's vocals from *Guero* for remixing. There are some nuggets here: Homelife's "Ghost Range" treatment of "E-Pro" lifts some dust off of the Dust Brothers' compression obsession, while Boards of Canada transports "Broken Drum" into deep space, and El-P's menacing street take on "Scarecrow" also works well. On the flipside, Air's version of "Missing" resembles a lost Howard Jones session, Octet's "Girl" falls far afield of the Nigel Godrich–mixed original and Diplo cops out to lift the English Beat's "Twist and Crawl" for "Go It Alone." These and others transform *Guerolito* into a car accident with appeal for only the more masochistic of Beck rubberneckers.—*Bill Murphy*
★★½☆☆



AYATOLLAH

***Now Playing* (Nature Sounds)**
MC-less NYC grit and soul
NYC beatsmith Ayatollah opts for strictly 1970s vinyl voices on this beats-only CD, and though the MC void is at times palpable on repetitive tracks, the strongest instrumentals merit centerstage. Powered by its soul-drenched female vocal sample, "Nag Champa" takes flight over layered, lush strings; horns; and a sure-footed drum kick, while "Hold U" flips a guitar-propelled rhythm nearly as infectious as Ayatollah's 1999 "Ms. Fat Booty" beat for Mos Def. "Kingston" then takes a successful stab at dancehall, flaunting agile turntable skills. No MCs, but the man's got the beats.—*Rob Kirby*
★★★½☆



BELLE & SEBASTIAN

***LateNightTales* (Azuli)**
Perfect all-night flashback
Glasgow's Belle & Sebastian show their musical card on this latest *LNT* comp, which is typically eclectic yet never hip for hipness' sake. Culled largely from the '60s and '70s, the 26 tracks flow like mad, including a dubbed-out "Ring of Fire," a gritty remake of The Meters' "Cissy Strut," Donovan's bluesy folk, modernist slabs from RJD2 and Stereolab, Brazilian tones from Gal Costa and dinosaurs from Steve Miller Band and Big Star. Sweet classic soul from Mary Love and Ramsey Lewis balance absurdity from Múm, Space Jam and Novi Singers, giving the album a resonant wholeness.—*Ken Micallef*
★★★★☆



COLLABS 3000

***Metalism* (Mute)**
Techno times two
Metalism is the first full-length release to emerge from Speedy J's 12-inch *Collabs* series. The original concept was to see what happens when Speedy J shares production duties with like-minded artists, including Adam Beyer, Literon, Chris Liebing and George Issakidis. Joining forces again on *Metalism*, Speedy J and Liebing have produced an album that comes off like a soundtrack to the apocalypse. Pulsing techno beats and creepy industrial noises equally display the talents of both producers. Particularly devastating is "Acid Trezcore," an acid-infused techno track.—*Justin Kleinfeld*
★★★½☆



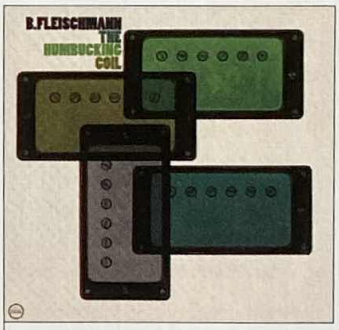
THE CRYSTAL METHOD

***London: Original Motion Picture Soundtrack* (Tiny E)**
Drugs 'n' danger soundtrack
Movie soundtracks typically give composers a chance to stretch their skills and record labels an opportunity to place lesser-known acts. *London* sticks close to formula, as do The Crystal Method. Those enamored of their throbbing synths, head-kicking beats and siren sounds will not be disappointed. *London* often sounds like The Crystal Method phoned in their tracks or threw in tunes that didn't fit on their last album. Connie Price, the Out Crowd and The Perishers offer interesting diversions from the monotony, but it's too little, too late.—*Ken Micallef*
★★☆☆☆



FRED EVERYTHING

***House of Om* (Om)**
S.F. grooves, French-Canadian flair
When it comes to climate and geography, Fred Everything's Montreal might be a long way from Om's address in San Francisco, but when it comes to music, the cities could be sisters. This series' fifth installment includes tracks by Om regulars Kaskade, Mark Farina and Everything (aka Frédéric Blais) himself. But Om's ambassador of the North also chose Magik Johnson's "Right Now" and the Troydon remix of T. Fuller's "Go"—songs that give Om's lounge-ready sound a welcome bump in tempo and energy, differentiating this mix from the generic grooves of every other bar.—*Genevieve Powers*
★★★½☆

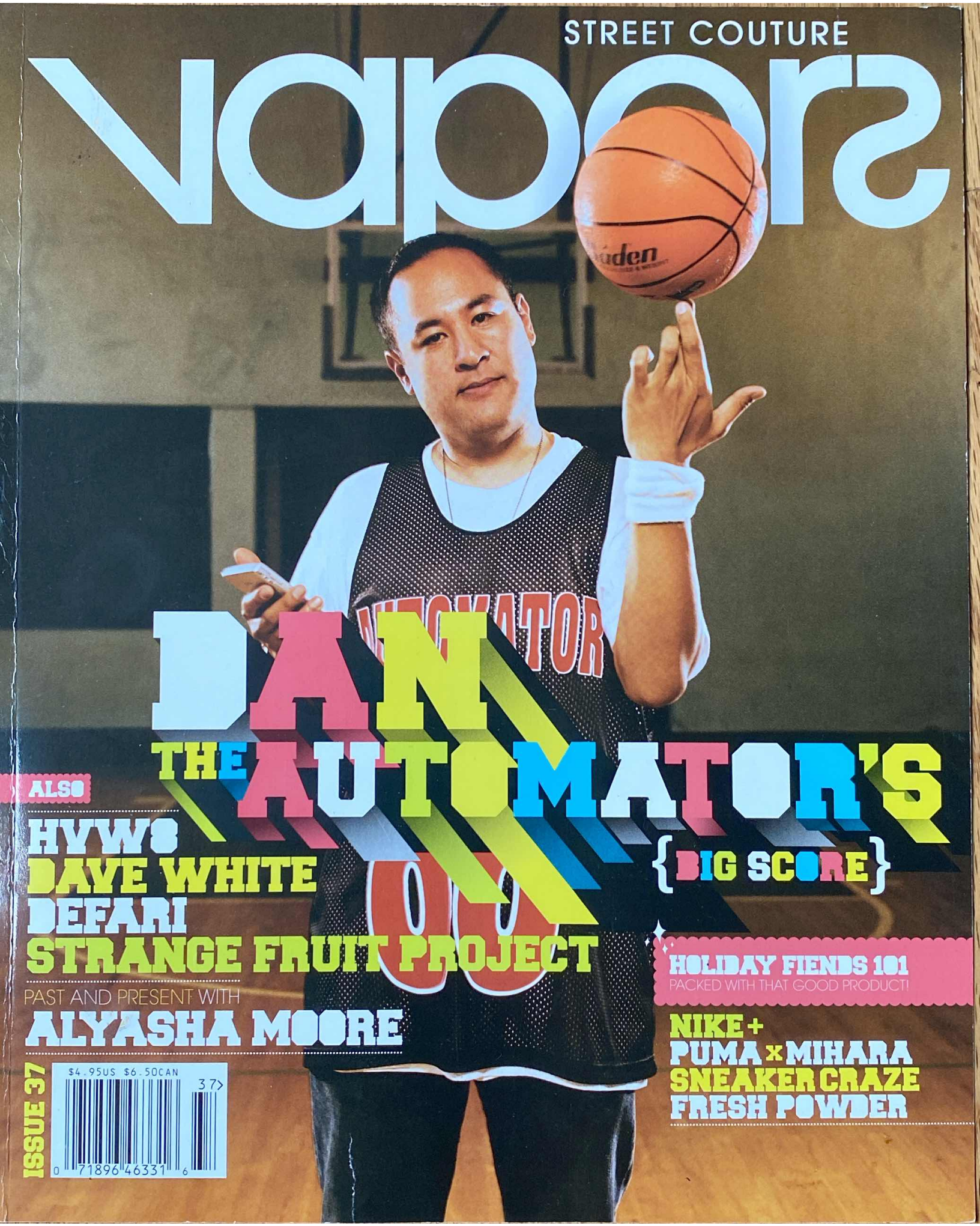


B. FLEISCHMANN

***The Humbucking Coil* (Morr)**
B. chill, yo
On this fitting tribute, Bernhard Fleischmann celebrates the dense, warm tones of a widely recognized electric guitar element. Instead of mimicking pill-addled late-Yardbirds progressions, he works in electronic/organic instrumental circles, with guest Christof Kurzmann's lethargic vocals on two tracks. "Broken Monitors" opens *Coil* in ornamental vibraphone and electric piano, with bits of slide guitar and sunny single notes. Its pleasantries only hint at the gem ahead: When some lovely clarinet graces the laptop beat and gentle daybreak hum(bucker) on "Static Crate," it's bliss.—*Dominic Umile*
★★★½☆

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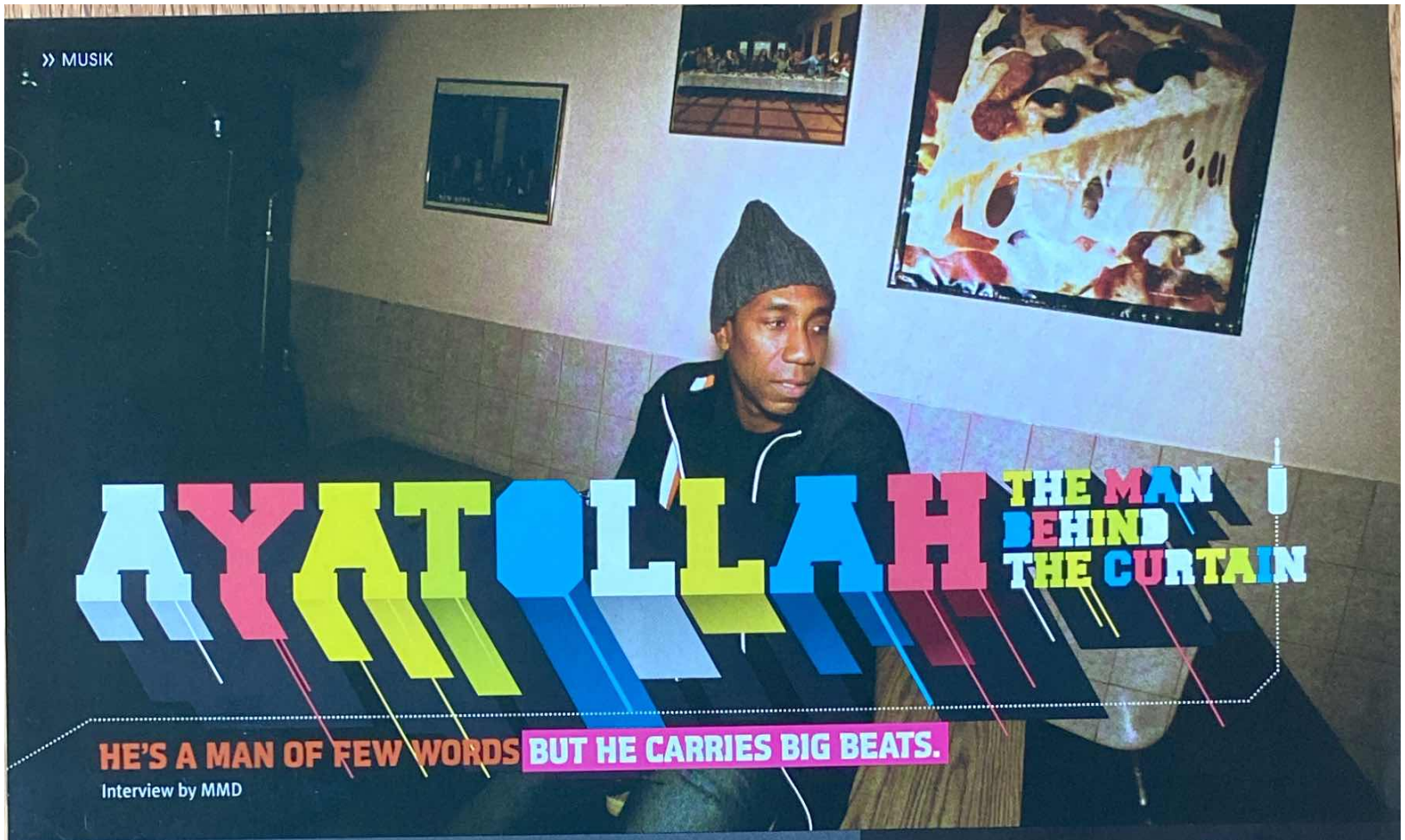
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AYATOLLAH

THE MAN BEHIND THE CURTAIN

HE'S A MAN OF FEW WORDS BUT HE CARRIES BIG BEATS.

Interview by MMD

If you haven't heard of Ayatollah don't worry about it—most people haven't. But I'm sure if you take the time to read the liner notes in some of your favorite major and underground hip-hop CDs you will see him credited as producer. What it should say is mastermind genius super-producer. His track record is full of big names who have enjoyed success from Ayatollah's signature sound: Ghostface Killah's "Odd Couple," Mos Def's "Ms. Fat Booty," Styles P feat. Pharoache Monch "The Life" and a grip of others. After a couple of missed attempts, Vapors finally got up with the man through the wonder of MySpace and asked, what's really good?

You are responsible for creating some of the best hip-hop tracks for some of the most respected emcees in hip-hop. How do you keep such a low profile?

A: I really don't keep a low profile, I'm just always trying to perfect my craft so if I'm not in the studio recording, I'm at home.

How did you get your start in beatmaking?

A: It started from me deejaying, doing a lot of parties, then from there making mixtapes, after a while I really wanted to actually create the beats that the artist rhymed to.

Is there song that you wished you made?

A: "MARLEY SCRATCH!" That's what I'm talking about! Definitely wish that I touched on that track, also I'd like to send a special shout out to MARLEY MARL...genius.

Describe your process when making a beat for a specific artist?

A: For me there is no process involved, I make the beat and that's it, I basically just do me.

You have a real signature sound. Do you feel that is important for a producer to have sound that is recognizable at first listen?

A: Indeed, it's how you make your mark on the world. I feel it's vital for an emcee as well as a producer to have a signature sound that they bring to the hip-hop table.

***Listen* reminds me of Jay-Dee's *Donuts* in a good way. Are you fan of Dilla?**

A: I met Dilla at a recording session for D'Angelo in Electric Lady Studios in Manhattan; we really got cool with one another and often played beats for each other. I have beats from Dilla nobody has heard and he had beats of mine nobody even heard...R.I.P. James.

Will we hear some lyrics for the beats on *Listen*?

A: We will have to just wait and see on that one.

Is it hard to be a fan of hip-hop and also have to know the business and what really goes on behind the scenes?

A: Not really, you just have to wear more than just one hat, be up on the business as well as the music. I will always love hip-hop at its purest forms.

How did you end up hooking up Mos Def with the "Ms. Fat Booty" track?

A: I gave my manager at the time a beat CD, he got it to Mos, after that it was history.

How do you feel about how fast music is being leaked and bootlegged?

A: The listeners of rap music will always find ways to get the music they enjoy listening to. Me personally, I don't focus on it much, I just keep creating.

Have you ever thought about scoring a movie? And if so, what movie would you have liked to score?

A: I always think about scoring movies, indie as well as major. An indie movie like *City Of God* and a major movie like *The Fish That Saved Pittsburgh*.

What do you think about people like Kevin Federline (Mr. Britney Spears) trying to make it in hip-hop?

A: Let him do his thing. I'm not mad at him. Everybody's got their own version of their story.

Just how busy are you right now?

A: Working on some upcoming projects; I'd like to keep secret for now.

Do you ever make it out west?

A: From what I understand, they want me out there in the west as well as the east.

What's in the future for Ayatollah?

A: Nothing but great things!

I don't see that as a problem.

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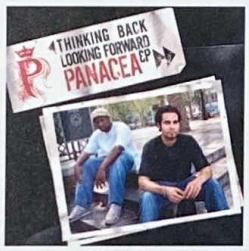
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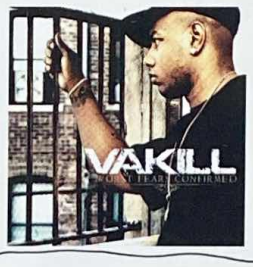
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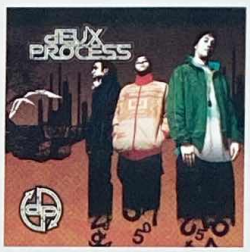
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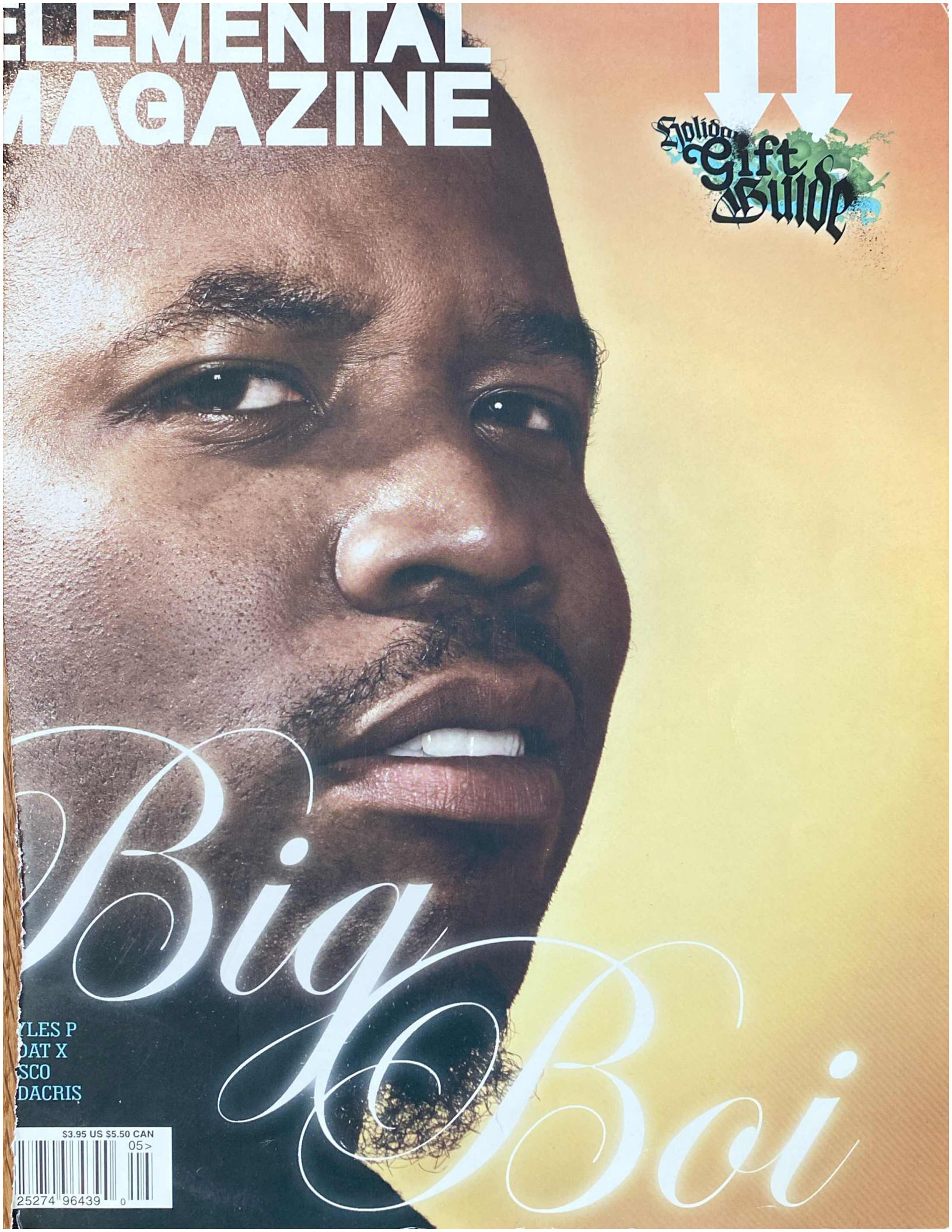


AYATOLLAH
Now Playing (Nature Sounds)
Rating: 3/5
Though he has yet to really reach star status, Queens producer Ayatollah has been putting in work for a long time now, concocting choice beatscapes for a wide assortment of New York's hip-hop luminaries. His lengthy discography includes joints with vets like Rakim and Masta Ace, QB soldiers Cormega and Screwball, the Wu's Ghost and Deck, plus G-Unit capo Lloyd Banks. He is also the man responsible for "Ms. Fat Booty," arguably Mos Def's biggest hit. On *Now Playing*, he looks to prove that his music can shine in its own right, without assistance from an MC. On some songs this theory holds up, on others, not so much. Unlike instrumentalist composers like DJ Shadow, Ayatollah doesn't really trip about too many layers and textures. His tracks here are generally straight forward; a few nice loops, vocal snippets, hard-hitting drums, and some bass or synth squiggles thrown in for good measure. Most selections rock the intro/verse/chorus/verse/chorus formula, which is ideal for rappers, but a bit repetitive when it's just the tunes. To be sure, a lot of these beats are great. "NAG Champa (the intro)" is built around some warm female vocals, with sweeping strings, a touch of the horns, and a nice skittering beat. "The Devil Is Sweet" sports similar vox loops and does it quite well, while "Kingston" is an outstanding reggae chop with swaggering sax riffs and short bursts of scratches. The earthy pianos and dusty snares of "This Song Is Over" are exceptional, and the chime-infused "Who Got It?" is also on point.
As solid as the album's beginning and ending is, the middle section tends to drag a bit. "Go For It" comes off somewhat jumbled, and the chamber music/operatic vibe of "Highway To Heaven" can get very grating, very quickly. Luckily its running time is pretty brief. There is also a bonus track entitled "Intimate Connection," the only track with actual rhymes on it. It's a vivid tale about a guy fresh from the bing re-adjusting to life on the streets, and seeing as no guest is credited, one can only assume it's Ayatollah himself. The moody lyrics and contemplative beat are both decent, but the delivery and flow seems a bit tentative, as if he's just not quite sure of himself on the mic.
Some of these beats you've probably heard before and others are previously unreleased, but there's no doubt Ayatollah knows how to create a banger. It should also be noted that he's one of the few producers left who still knocks them out the old fashioned way, preferring an MPC-60 over today's more computerized approach. Whether you're an aspiring MC or just want some cool background music, this album does the trick. Though none of these songs really elicit an "oh shit!" response, *Now Playing* is a good look from an underrated NY street maestro.
– Brolin Winning

PANACEA
Thinking Back, Looking Forward
(Glow-in-the-Dark Records)
Rating: 3.5/5
Coming out of Washington D.C., Panacea includes Raw Poetic on the mic and K-Murdock on the beats. Signed to GITD Records (home to true school trio Time Machine), this is their first official release, a five-song EP to whet appetites for their upcoming full-length *Ink Is My Drink*. Despite their upstart status and unusual name, with a record like this you can be sure they'll be around for a minute.
Things kick off with "Birdfeather," which is undoubtedly the best song on here and a stellar first single. Watery synth lines and rigorously deep bass tones (kind of reminiscent of Zion I's Amp Live) set the stage for punchy drums and quick-tongued verses, intersecting with some truly freakish intergalactic keyboards. "Colorful Storms" slows things down considerably, but still bumps with proper low-end, while Bilal Stevens provides the smoothed-out R&B chorus.
Mellow thumb pianos, gentle guitars, and jazzy drums come into play for "Freedom Theory," which sports only brief rhymes before delving into an extended piano/bass/feedback session that sounds like an *Electric Ladyland* outtake, then ending with another quick lyrical blast. Any Mobb Deep fan will instantly recognize the beat from "The Great Escape," which reinvents a Queensbridge gat-clap classic into a feel-good, coming-of-age jam highlighted by wah-wah fretwork, sax clips, and more male crooning. The ride ends with "Limitless Pages," a contemplative, autobiographical number about life, love, and music, supported by Guaraldi-

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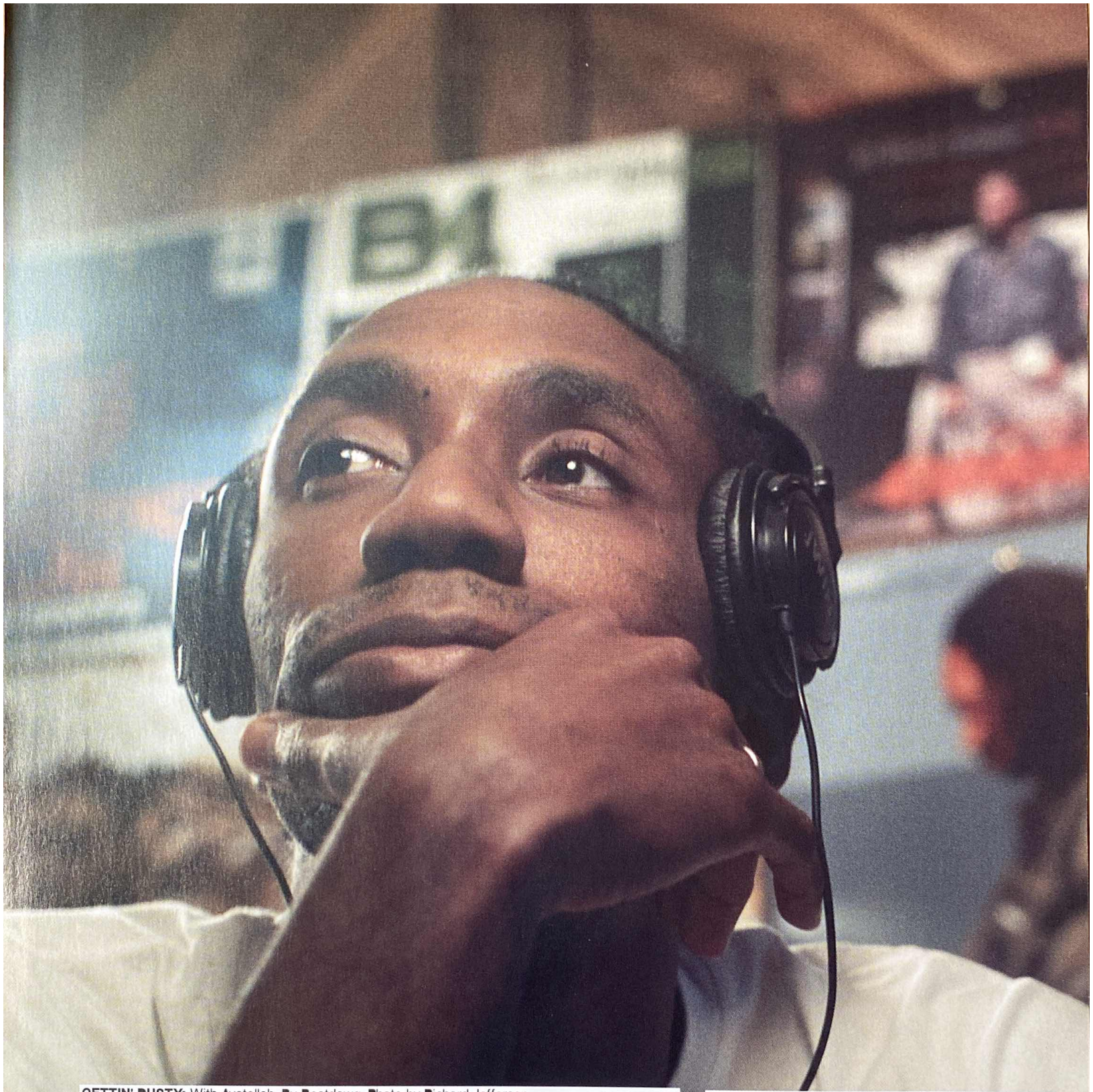
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GETTIN' DUSTY: With Ayatollah. By Beatdawg. Photo by Richard Jefferson.

The borough of Queens has held a successful track record for launching the careers of some of the most innovative hip-hop producers of our time. Back in the day it was Marley Marl and Hurby "Luv Bug" Azor. In the '90s, super producers Large Professor, the Beatnuts, Q-Tip and Havoc emerged.

In the year 2000 Ayatollah entered. Echoing the tradition of hardcore Queens producers of the past, the man bounced onto the scene kicking off his career with a smash underground hit titled "Ms. Fat Booty" courtesy of the Mighty Mos Def.

From there he went on to make other large contributions with the likes of Talib Kweli, Pharoahe Monch and Styles P, offering up a distinct Queens sound often labeled "grimy."

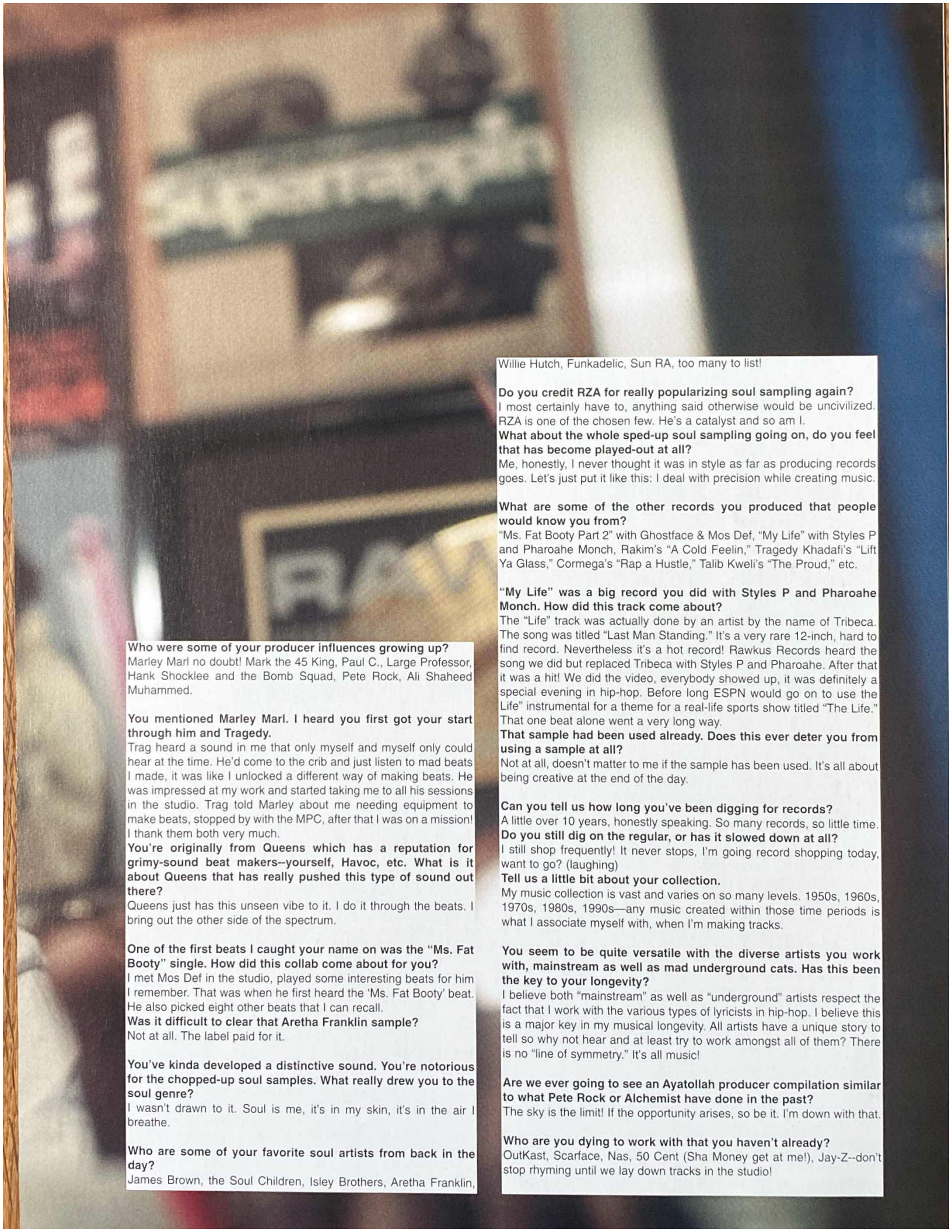
Elemental caught up with the man busy in the studio digging through his vaults for the next "grimy" masterpiece. Read on...

Can you tell us some of the history behind Ayatollah?

Well I was born in New York City in the '70s an inner-city child; had a huge family, four sisters and three brothers. Each of us was into something different, I just happened to be the one that chose to pursue a career in music. I'm fortunate to have a family that is in my corner 200%. I was first introduced to hip-hop music by my oldest brother Eddie. He would take me to all of the block parties in the neighborhood and it was there where I first heard some of the most incredible sounds and lyrics—it was rap music!

A lot of hip-hop producers started off as DJs, gradually making a transition into beats. Is this how it happened for Ayatollah?

Indeed. As soon as I could buy the DJ equipment I did, then doing crazy amounts of parties, making mixtapes before it was the "in" thing to do, also competing in DJ competitions, and making a name for myself which didn't come easy. I'd have to say that I was DJing far before beats.



Who were some of your producer influences growing up?
Marley Marl no doubt! Mark the 45 King, Paul C., Large Professor, Hank Shocklee and the Bomb Squad, Pete Rock, Ali Shaheed Muhammed.

You mentioned Marley Marl. I heard you first got your start through him and Tragedy.
Trag heard a sound in me that only myself and myself only could hear at the time. He'd come to the crib and just listen to mad beats I made, it was like I unlocked a different way of making beats. He was impressed at my work and started taking me to all his sessions in the studio. Trag told Marley about me needing equipment to make beats, stopped by with the MPC, after that I was on a mission! I thank them both very much.
You're originally from Queens which has a reputation for grimy-sound beat makers--yourself, Havoc, etc. What is it about Queens that has really pushed this type of sound out there?
Queens just has this unseen vibe to it. I do it through the beats. I bring out the other side of the spectrum.

One of the first beats I caught your name on was the "Ms. Fat Booty" single. How did this collab come about for you?
I met Mos Def in the studio, played some interesting beats for him I remember. That was when he first heard the 'Ms. Fat Booty' beat. He also picked eight other beats that I can recall.
Was it difficult to clear that Aretha Franklin sample?
Not at all. The label paid for it.

You've kinda developed a distinctive sound. You're notorious for the chopped-up soul samples. What really drew you to the soul genre?
I wasn't drawn to it. Soul is me, it's in my skin, it's in the air I breathe.

Who are some of your favorite soul artists from back in the day?
James Brown, the Soul Children, Isley Brothers, Aretha Franklin, Willie Hutch, Funkadelic, Sun RA, too many to list!

Do you credit RZA for really popularizing soul sampling again?
I most certainly have to, anything said otherwise would be uncivilized. RZA is one of the chosen few. He's a catalyst and so am I.
What about the whole sped-up soul sampling going on, do you feel that has become played-out at all?
Me, honestly, I never thought it was in style as far as producing records goes. Let's just put it like this: I deal with precision while creating music.

What are some of the other records you produced that people would know you from?
"Ms. Fat Booty Part 2" with Ghostface & Mos Def, "My Life" with Styles P and Pharoahe Monch, Rakim's "A Cold Feelin," Tragedy Khadafi's "Lift Ya Glass," Cormega's "Rap a Hustle," Talib Kweli's "The Proud," etc.

"My Life" was a big record you did with Styles P and Pharoahe Monch. How did this track come about?
The "Life" track was actually done by an artist by the name of Tribeca. The song was titled "Last Man Standing." It's a very rare 12-inch, hard to find record. Nevertheless it's a hot record! Rawkus Records heard the song we did but replaced Tribeca with Styles P and Pharoahe. After that it was a hit! We did the video, everybody showed up, it was definitely a special evening in hip-hop. Before long ESPN would go on to use the Life" instrumental for a theme for a real-life sports show titled "The Life." That one beat alone went a very long way.
That sample had been used already. Does this ever deter you from using a sample at all?
Not at all, doesn't matter to me if the sample has been used. It's all about being creative at the end of the day.

Can you tell us how long you've been digging for records?
A little over 10 years, honestly speaking. So many records, so little time.
Do you still dig on the regular, or has it slowed down at all?
I still shop frequently! It never stops, I'm going record shopping today, want to go? (laughing)
Tell us a little bit about your collection.
My music collection is vast and varies on so many levels. 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, 1990s—any music created within those time periods is what I associate myself with, when I'm making tracks.

You seem to be quite versatile with the diverse artists you work with, mainstream as well as mad underground cats. Has this been the key to your longevity?
I believe both "mainstream" as well as "underground" artists respect the fact that I work with the various types of lyricists in hip-hop. I believe this is a major key in my musical longevity. All artists have a unique story to tell so why not hear and at least try to work amongst all of them? There is no "line of symmetry." It's all music!

Are we ever going to see an Ayatollah producer compilation similar to what Pete Rock or Alchemist have done in the past?
The sky is the limit! If the opportunity arises, so be it. I'm down with that.

Who are you dying to work with that you haven't already?
OutKast, Scarface, Nas, 50 Cent (Sha Money get at me!), Jay-Z--don't stop rhyming until we lay down tracks in the studio!


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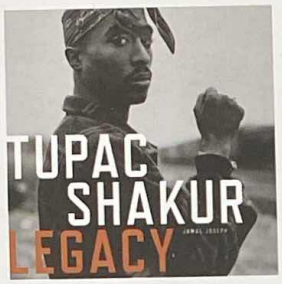


HEAVY WEIGHT

New Flesh

A record that incorporates every flippin' urban sound from reggae, grime and UK garage to hip hop, funk, dance and what-have-you can result in audio overload at times. But imaginative trio New Flesh refuse to put it down any other way. "New Flesh just wants to make music to reflect the multicultural environment we live in. Put it this way—we wouldn't be happy to just dabble with one particular sound," says Keith Hopewell aka Part 2, the UK producer and graff artist. His recent re-joining of forces with fellow "dabblers," MCs Juice Aleem and Toastie Tailor, for the *Universally Dirty* album proves inclusive of all that, a bag of chips and much more. From the dub-stuffed "Trouble" to the tinges of Spanish hip hop that show up in the final track "Come Again", it's clear that the New Flesh dudes won't be satisfied until they beat their own wide-ranging path. "I guess we're just hardwired now," explains Keith. *www.bigdada.com*

–BM

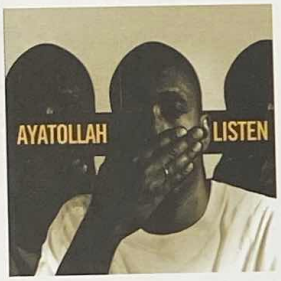


STILL DOWN?

Tupac Shakur Legacy

"How long will they mourn me?" Tupac asked years before his tragic death in 1996. A decade later, author Jamel Joseph pays homage to Tupac's life in *Tupac Shakur Legacy*, an incredible document of the icon's life. A poet, producer and Columbia professor, Joseph began his creative life during a stint in jail, a background that gives him a unique understanding of the famously conflicted rapper. More than just a biography, *Legacy* includes exclusive pictures of an unforgettable life with rare facsimile reproductions of memorabilia. Handwritten poems and lyrics, business documents, set lists, even pages from his *Gridlock'd* script are re-created in this intimate collection. Set for release this month, the legend will live on. *www.simonsays.com*

–Ashley Kershaw



SOUL SCIENCE

Ayatollah

Sure, the hip hop world tends to glorify MCs, but don't forget the more spotlight-shy beatsmiths. Imagine Nas' masterpiece *Illmatic* without the grimy, genius beats by DJ Premier. Or Aaliyah without Timbaland. Soulful producer Ayatollah has been the catalyst for the sounds of artists like Mos Def, Talib Kweli and Pharoahe Monch. His latest, *Listen*, is an 11-track instrumental album that combines soul samples and serious drum patterns. For the past 10 years, the underground beat miner has had hip hop fans rocking outta the palm of his hand and produced some of the hottest tracks to date, from "Ms. Fat Booty" to Ghostface and Cappadonna's "The Odd Couple". If this album doesn't bring the freestyle MC out of you, post up against the wall and just listen.

–AK

www.soundchron.com





REDEFINITION

Converse by Mos Def

Beyond his gift for impromptu wordplay and the slickest Brooklyn-speak, you have to recognize Mos Def's impeccable style. The sharp folks at Converse did, and decided to bless us with a serious collabo for the fall: Enter Chuck T's by Mos Def. The MC is equally comfortable among underground lyricists as he is among Hollywood's elite. Similarly, Converse shares a reputation for street-chic fashion and cultural credibility. So when Mos lends his creative input to two already classic designs, we can only expect some highly coveted kicks for fall. Drawing inspiration directly from his Brooklyn upbringing, details include images of the Brooklyn Bridge and Mos Def's graffiti tag-style autograph. These kicks are a must-cop, most definitely!

www.converse.com

–Devin "PAN" Barrett



WHERE ARE THE FEMALE MCs?

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HIP-HOP FOR THE RHYTHM & THE REBEL

MAGAZINE

THE SECRETS BEHIND

DETOX

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REVIEWS

The Lordz *The Brooklyn Way* (Perfect Game)



2

The Lordz (Mr. Kaves and ADM) don't care that the world doesn't need a new rock/rap experiment, they're gonna do it anyway. This one is far more rock than hip-hop, with unimaginative guitar licks and even ho-hum guest shots by Everlast and the dude from Rancid. This is definitely not how it's done in the home of Biggie and Jay. BC

KEY TRACKS "Rollin'," "It's Alright"

JR Writer *History in the Making* (Diplomats/Koch)



2.5

JR Writer's highly anticipated debut starts off with a bang, but the high points here are few and far between. While the Dipset rep is a vivid lyricist with a versatile flow, the beats on *History in the Making* are mediocre, making it tough to get through all 19 tracks. JESSE GISSEN

KEY TRACKS "That's A Bet," "Zoolander"

Bullys Wit Fullys *The Infrastructure* (SMC)



3

Bullys Wit Fullys consists of rappers Guce and Messy Marv, bringing nothing but street missives from the dark side of the Bay. With production from E-A-Ski and CMT among others, the beats are slow, thick and better-than-average and the duo's straight-ahead rhymes are punctuated with some catchy choruses. BC

KEY TRACKS "The Infrastructure," "This Frisco Baby," "Real Talk"

Dabrye *Two/Three* (Ghostly International)



3.5

Apparently, even Mars has backpackers. Sci-fi sounds and moody electronica are producer Dabrye's pedigree, scoring what plays like interplanetary b-boy music. Recruiting underground favorites (DOOM, Vast Aire, Jay Dee) to narrate his quest, Dabrye pushes the culture into spacey realms. Sure, his beats could cause close-minded ears to seizure. Such uniqueness, though, is ultimately his endearing quality. MB

KEY TRACKS "That's What's Up," "Game Over"

Ayatollah *Listen* (Soundchron)



3.5

With a production discography that reads like a rap version of Who's Who, Ayatollah has managed to accomplish the atypical feat of selling his work without really selling out. His long player showcases 11 tracks—drenched in samples and eccentric electricity. Ayatollah captures everyone's undivided attention. BRIAN MILLER

KEY TRACKS "Crazy," "Someone"

Field Mob *Light Poles And Pine Trees* (DTP/Geffen)



3.5

On *Light Poles and Pine Trees* Field Mob aim to shed the buffoon image that has plagued them on their two previous LPs. Though Smoke and Shawn J's rhymes occasionally tickle funny bones, the bulk of the set serves to prove that the two are bonafied MCs. Mission accomplished CC

KEY TRACKS "Smiling," "At the Park," "It's Over"

Pimp C *Pimpalation* (Rap-A-Lot)



3

Dropping almost exactly six months since being paroled, Chad Butler's second solo album doesn't get cute with it, sticking to the woozy sample-based, wood grain-repping formula that made him one half of Port Arthur, TX legends UGK. But with no production by the Pimp himself and a guest on every track, *Pimpalation* is too rushed to be super-tight. SEAN FENNESSEY

KEY TRACKS "Free," "Bobby & Whitney," "Knockin' Doorz Down"

dead prez and Outlawz *Can't Sell Dope Forever LP* (Affluent)



3

Outlawz and dead prez work well together for this, their first progressive offering together. The quintet kick real facts about gangs, society and the black community over tracks by edi don, m-1 and stic.man, among others. Highlights include both politically-inspired and emotive tracks over hypnotic basslines. RH

KEY TRACKS "Window 2 My Soul," "1 Nation"

Oh No *Exodus Into Unheard Rhythms* (Stones Throw)



3.5

After getting the OK to remix legendary composer Galt MacDermot for a full-length feature, producer-turned-MC, Oh No, wastes no time flipping the classic rhythms. Unfortunately, some of Oh No's sub par bars squander over Mac Dermot's tunes. Overall its banging tracks and guest spots (Posdnous, Buckshot) will have you never wanting to go into *Exodus*. BM

KEY TRACKS "Black," "Know Better"

Oddisee *Instrumental Mixtape Volume 2* (Halftooth)



3

Critically endorsed as one of the best underground producers, Oddisee shows and proves on his latest instrumental sampler. Though crude, chew stick sounds define a majority of the album, Oddisee still finds ways to please the backpackers and gat packers alike. BM

KEY TRACKS "Trust (Remix)," "Bring Back"

J-Zone *To Love A Hooker* (Old Maid)



4

Following his recent, and kick-ass, instrumental EP *Experienced*, producer J-Zone (who says he's on hiatus from rapping, now just rocking beats) gives you the soundtrack to a movie he never made. The beats are conceptual, block-rockin', heavy and definitely dirty. Sometimes movies in your speakers are just as good as on screen. BC

KEY TRACKS "Letitgo!," "Gotcha!"

Large Pro *Beatz Volume 1* (Red Line)



3.5

Large Pro has molded the careers of rap legends (Nas, A Tribe Called Quest) with his soulful, mellifluous tracks. On his first installment of instrumentals the Queens-bred producer/MC delivers more of the same—laid back concoctions that would make any Native Tonguer want to spit a progressive 16. JESÚS TRIVIÑO ALARCÓN

KEY TRACKS "Love Wit U" "Secret Agent"

Skyzoo *Cloud 9: The 3 Day High* (Custom Made/HOJ)



3.5

Great production can be a double-edged sword. While it can provide an uplifting platform for unknown MCs, it can also overwhelm overachievers. Not Skyzoo. Teaming up with 9th Wonder for an entire LP, this NY upstart provides countless flows and insight complete with "that Brooklyn bullshit." 9th delivers once again as Sky proves himself worthy of Wonder's instrumentals throughout. CC

KEY TRACKS "Way To Go," "I'm On It"

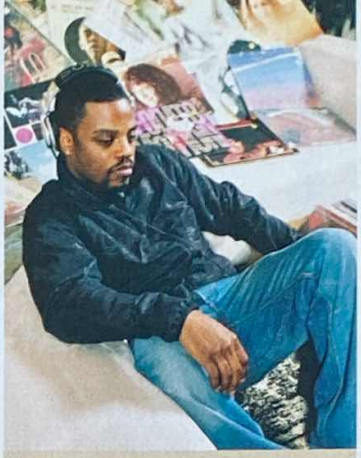
Trae *Restless* (Asylum/Rap-A-Lot/G. Maab)



3.5

Yet another H-Town MC that's trickled into the mainstream after 2005's breakthrough. Trae is a slithery, quick-lipped spitter that won't overwhelm anyone but wields a slick, 2Pac-inspired gangsta confidence. More than half of his album's hooks are built on samples of Texas classics and Trae rides that nostalgic style to a debut worth a trunk pop or two. SF

KEY TRACKS "Swang," "No Help"



LAST CALL

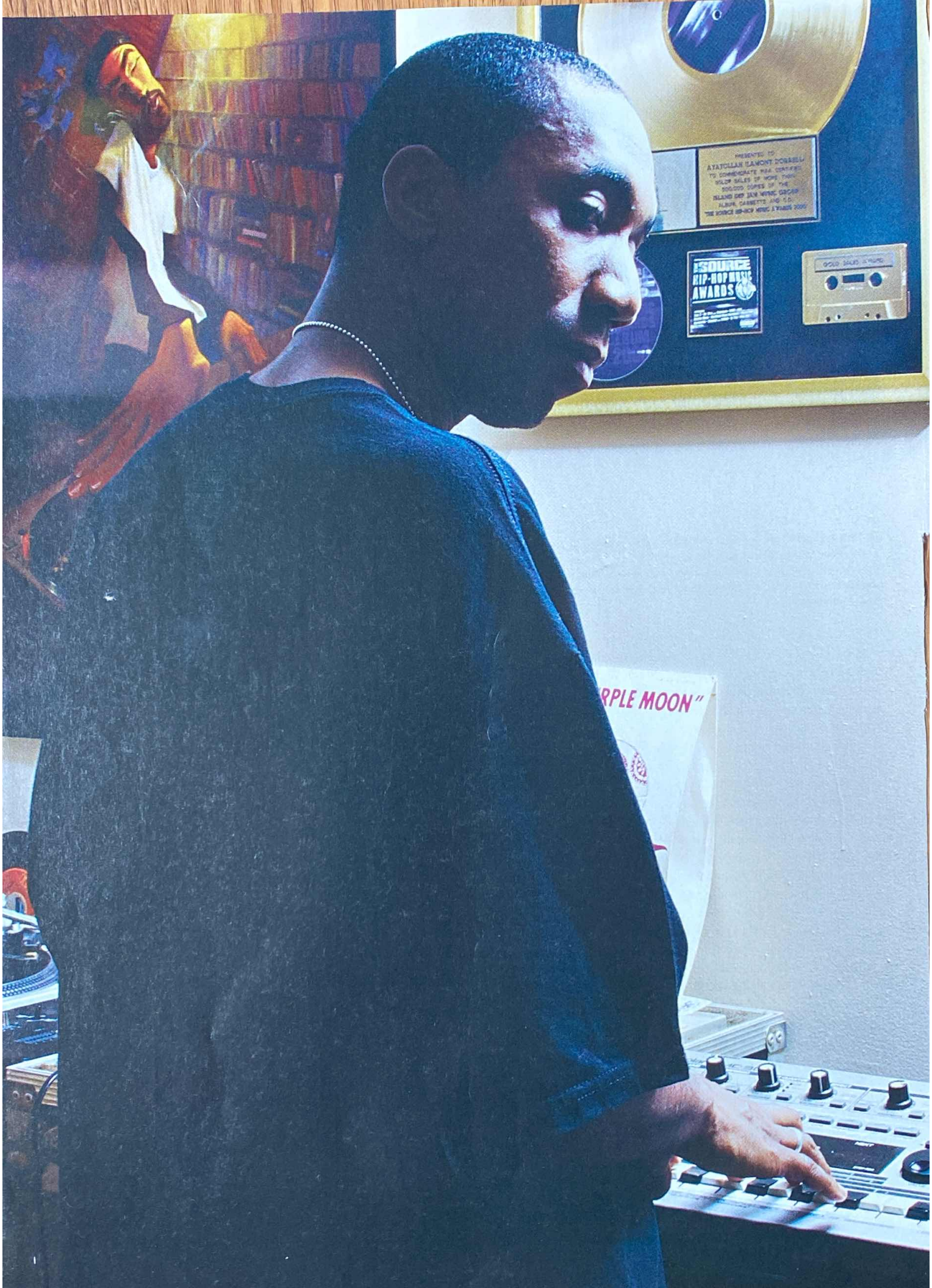
KARRIEM RIGGINS tells us how he finished J Dilla's *The Shining*.

WHEN WE STARTED the album we did four live joints, and [Dilla] wanted to spit on two of them. The first one is the one with MED ["Jungle Love"]. It was initially just MED on there and J was gonna spit his verse, so I got Guilty Simpson on and we mixed it [with] Dave Cooley. And the second one was "Love Movin'" with Black Thought. Initially he was gonna spit on that, and I got Thought to complete the joint. So that's basically why it was incomplete, it was not mixed and some of the joints he was gonna spit on, he didn't get a chance to.

As far as the song structure, he basically had it down [but] some of the songs were incomplete. The stuff that he did was pretty much where he wanted it, so there wasn't much to do but enhance it slightly. We actually didn't have enough songs to put the album out so we added the one with Common and D'Angelo ["So Far So Good"]. J really wanted to work with D'Angelo so it just fit perfectly.

"So Far So Good" was supposed to be a remix on *Be*, but Common let us have it. That beat was on *Donuts*, but he changed the drums and the way he chopped it. On "Love Jones," he's playing all of the instruments on that. That's an old break beat he had on a CD and he couldn't find it, so he replayed it note for note. We recorded it in Echo Park with old consoles and instruments, that's why it sounds so raw.

Everything was scattered in Pro Tools. We were trying to figure out which sessions were the right ones. I never touched any of the beats. His stuff was complete as it was. The only thing that I really did was just produce the sessions for vocals, making sure they sounded mixed. Dilla had a great ear for mixing. He didn't overthink it. It sounded warm and you'd feel it in your soul. I took that and tried to get the same feel. AS TOLD TO JESSE GISSEN


SOURCE
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AWARDS
RPLE MOON"

Sign Language

A MAN OF FEW WORDS, AYATOLLAH IS HAPPY TO LET HIS BEATS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES.

STORY **JOHNNY MANN** | PHOTOGRAPHY **MIKE DELFIN**

FROM HIS CREATIVE sampling of Aretha Franklin on "Ms. Fat Booty" to his new collection of *Good Times* DVDs, everything about Ayatollah screams vintage soul. The Bronx-bred producer doesn't even bother keeping up with gear heads, as he'd rather upgrade his MPC-60 and track down antique tools to refine the sound that will grace upcoming projects from Masta Ace, Smif-N-Wessun, and Sean Price. Scratch caught up with 'Tollah—fresh from recording several tracks with Cormega for his new album—to talk about his sound, love of classic equipment, and undying loyalty to the MPC-60.

SCRATCH Your beats are often described as soulful. What are the elements you add to your sound that make people describe them that way?

AYATOLLAH My sound is not just soulful; it's a heavy, heavy soul sound. Everybody out now has a soulful sound, but I have a heavy soul sound. You can hear the difference in the cadence of the music I'm doing as opposed to a lot of other producers. There are different rhythms and beat patterns I put in the track to make it bounce differently. It's the little things I do to enhance the tracks like adding extra kicks, extra snares, or overlapping different bass sounds. Even tempo has a lot to do with it. It's all in my mood, too. Depending on my mood, I come up with different types of styles of music. It's wherever the wind blows me. It's basically all off of emotion. If I'm [in] my crib by myself there's no negativity. If there is, I'm bringing it to the table and I'm gonna make it work for me by putting it into the beat. All the good times, all the bad times, the drama it comes out on the machine.



ROLAND 303
ALESIS NORD LEAD
CASIO CZ101
TECHNICS 1200s
AKAI MPC60

With all the different MPC models available, what is it about the MPC-60 that makes it your weapon of choice? You can't go wrong with this or any Akai machine, but for me it's the MPC-60 because the MPC-60 has a different sound from the other Akai machines. The samples and drums just have a better sound quality when they come out of this machine. I did "Ms. Fat Booty" and [Styles P's] "The Life" on this machine with eight seconds of sample time before any of the upgrades. I pushed the limit on it and that's just real talk. Now I have all the upgrades so I can do whatever, so imagine what's going on now. But in general I don't really like new equipment. I don't think you can capture the feelings with the new equipment like you can with vintage equipment like a Fender Rhodes or a Moog. That's where my head is at, the hard-to-find stuff that still has those sounds that are incredible. I want to use the equipment Herbie Hancock would use or what Stevie [Wonder] used to use when he played.

What was your goal for the *Now Playing* instrumental album? I just wanted to put out ill beats that I could have given to artists [but] there is a contingent of people who just want to hear tracks. I could have had mad MCs on them, but I just put it out for myself. I'm proud of the album and I'm about to drop another one. I might change it up a little bit, but it's gonna just be beats. I'm gonna focus on just putting out a whole catalog of instrumentals. Mos Def called me and told me I reminded him of a black version of Moby. I think that's an ill compliment because I think Moby is dope and he's experimental and I'm super experimental right now.

What type of stuff are you listening to? I'm going from Sun Ra to Willie Hutch to Fela Kuti to Parliament to Barry White to Eddie Kendricks to Bootsy [Collins]. I can't give too many up, but you can put those in there. There are no limits, if your mind is creative you can sample anything. Premier made that clear on [Jeru's] "Come Clean." When he sampled the water drops I said, okay I can do anything [Ed. note: Premier sampled a record, not *actual* water drops]. When I get behind the machine all the creativity just comes out. I can't even explain it to you on the spur of the moment.

Where should we be checking for your sound next? I'm working on a project with Cormega and contributing tracks to the new Sean Price and Smif-N-Wessun albums. I have some beats on a new album with Masta Ace, Strick and Punch and Words called EMC. I'm also working with some unsigned artists getting their demos together like Last Emperor and Bless Rockwell. I'm just trying to bring fresh new voices to the game. I'd love to start scoring soundtracks or do commercials or video games. Until then it's instrumentals because everybody wants to hear beats.


YOUNG BUCK


JAZZE PHA


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PIMP BY BLOOD, NOT RELATION

GHOST PRODUCERS
WHO'S FAKING THE FUNK?

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he boards,
you're not
***in' with me!"
P.DIDDY

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BATTLECAT
YING YANG TWINS
LIL SCRAPPY
AKON TALKS "SMACK"

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REVIEWS

Weddings" by T.I. and Billy Idol. While some of these joints might have been better left un-mashed, most are hot; perfect if you dance to '80s rock but can't resist crunk lyrics (ahem, hipsters!). WILL JOHNSON
KEY TRACKS "Bloc Party's On Kryptonite," "Hustlin Achievement"

Jim Jones
Hustlers P.O.M.E. (KOCH/Diplomat)



3.5

As the Diplomats' most vocal member, Jim Jones isn't one to bite his tongue. So on his latest effort, New York's riderman dishes a slice of devil's pie throughout 16 tracks. Although features and crooners guest star on the majority of the set, Jones' southpaw flow and swagger connect clean over a variety of regional ready tunes. BM
KEY TRACKS "Don't Forget About Me," "Reppin' Time," "We Fly High"

Various Artists
Sound Chronicle Records Volume One (Sound Chron)



3.5

For those who still love that boom bap, there are few options, which is why *Sound Chronicles Volume One* is such a refreshing collection. Production efforts from Goldrocc and the highly underrated Ayatollah keep MCs like Sean Price, Masta Ace, and Planet Asia honest. Dirty samples, deft lyricism, are both in full effect here. JOZEN CUMMINGS
KEY TRACKS "2's and 3's," "Like A Champion," "Jesus Price"

Molemen
Killing Fields (Molemen)



3.5

The sound of underground hip-hop varies from region to region. Luckily, the Chi-town-based beat squad, Molemen, provide an equal playing field—or rather, Killing Field—for subterranean regional favorites Kool G. Rap, Saigon, Slug, and Deltron 3030, among others. Although the MCs, at times, can be uninspiring, the production consistently kills. WJ
KEY TRACKS "My Alien Girlfriend," "QB2BK"

The Juggaknots
Use Your Confusion (Amalgam Digital)



3

While the Juggs' Breeze Brewin remains one of the underground's best kept secrets, his sister, Queen Herawin, who appears on over half the album, can be hard to listen to. Nonetheless, the group's first album in over a decade has some joints sure to make the backpackers rewind. JC
KEY TRACKS "Namesake," "Smile"

UNK
Beat'n Down Yo Block! (KOCH)



3.5

Atlanta rapper UNK snaps out of hometown trends on his debut album, *Beat'N Down Yo Block!*. With crisp, Southern-fried production provided by his fellow Oomp Music brethren, DJ Montay and Big Korey, UNK's music, with its fun-first ethos and catchy chants, is undeniably club-friendly, but comes without the unnecessary dance instructions. JC
KEY TRACKS "2 Step," "Say Yes," "Walk It Out"

Diddy
Press Play (Bad Boy/Atlantic)



3.5

Diddy's *Press Play* is for those who want to sound like they know hip-hop. Beats by Just Blaze ("Tell Me") and Kanye West ("Everything I Love") give the project credibility while his crossover tracks are MTV-worthy. Hip-pop for those who wear linen suits. JC
KEY TRACKS "The Future," "Tell Me," "Everything I Love"

Custom Made
Sidewalk Mindtalk: The Best of Custom Made Mixtapes (Babygrande)



2.5

You never know what you're gonna get with a mixtape, even if it's labeled "The Best of." This mixtape, released by L.A.'s Custom Made crew, is a collection of above average beats and dense lyrics—lyrics that won't survive in your long-term memory. Despite the latter, some songs might deserve a place in your iPod... maybe. WJ
KEY TRACKS "Gridiron Hash," "Solo Gofo"

Lady Sovereign
Public Warning (Def Jam)



3.5

It's tempting to make the obvious comparison between Lady Sovereign and other British-accented females, but it might be more useful to note the tightness of her U.S. debut album. Sovereign's first release under Jigga's Def Jam regime showcases an impressive flow atop 808 drums and thick synth sounds, uniting Jay-Z's Def Jam with Rick Rubin's. WJ
KEY TRACKS "Love Me or Hate Me," "A Little Bit of Shhh," "Random"

PREDICTION

STORY MATT BARONE

BACK TO THE FUTURE

The Rotten Apple had its attempt at coming back this year, but '07 will bring new sites to the front?

ACTUAL NEW YORKERS making NYC-entric music? Brilliant! Unfortunately, with the exception of DJ Scratch, most residents aren't stepping up to the plate. In fact, out-of-state producers Hi-Tek and 9th Wonder—with their respective N.Y. anthems—are presently the closest examples of credible advocates the city boasts. Just as eager for a new *Billboard* homebase as anybody else, *Scratch* got to thinking. Rap's birthplace seems stagnant, so how about an untapped area taking over? Alas, we nominated three cities, along with the non-neighborly board-workers who could bring that brand new ish in 2007.



JERMAINE DUPRI Music videos with half-naked ski bunnies would be must-see-TV, and who better to create garment-shedding anthems than JD? Think about it—the ATLien's magic touch enhances wack rappers (see Kris Kross, J-Kwon, Chingy, etc.). Just imagine what he could for ultra-dull Maine.

ERICK SERMON On the flipside, the Pine Tree State could bypass partying and embrace its frigid weather's placidness. We nominate the rugged funk of Long Island, NY's Erick Sermon. If DJ Premier can enjoy commercial acceptance, why can't the Green Eyed Bandit?



TIMBALAND Recently, Mr. Mosley's work with Justin Timberlake has re-established himself as a mainstream staple. However, Bubba Sparxxx's countrified masterpiece *Deliverance* is arguably Virginian Timmy's most dynamic, yet slept-on, work. If a lyrical prodigy is discovered in Iowa, combining the state's cornfield settings and Timbo's Bubba-channeling could equal SoundScan gold.

LARGE PROFESSOR It'd be the Mad Scientist's most daring experiment yet. During a flight layover in the Hawkeye State, Large Pro encounters Nathan Jones, the long-forgotten third cousin of Pro's other discovery, Nasty Nas. Flying the novice back to Queens, LP finds that incredible lyricism runs in the family. Together, they assemble his debut, *It Was Planted...*, and for the first time hip-hop is alive in Iowa.



SCOTT STORCH Like Iowa, North Dakota seems about as "hip-hop" as Rachael Ray. All good. Pair it with a trackmaster equally corny externally, and the marriage of lameness could be electric. Miami-based Storch's hit percentage is stellar, so surely his best Lil Jon impressions could bring MCs Lewis & Clark to the limelight.

JAKE ONE Similar to Storch in beat proficiency, Seattle's Jake One has been on the verge of acclaim for years now. What better way to bust out than aligning with the Peace Garden State's open-field? His samples and live instrumentation equally tight, Jake could give South Dakota's less-cool sibling a sound all its own.

DUPRI SARA DE BOER/RETNA. SERMON MICHAEL BENABIB/RETNA. TIMBALAND PHIL LOFTUS/CAPITAL PICTURES/RETNA. PROFESSOR BERY BEHRENDT/RETNA. STORCH SEAN MICHAELS/RETNA. ONE ANDY REYNOLDS.

FUTURE MUSIC ISSUE * TECH, TUNES, TRAVEL

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K-OS
Atlantis—Hymns for Disco
★★★★
Angry about good, eclectic hip-hop? Blame Canada.

(EMI/Virgin Records) It's hard to get a break when you're a Canadian rapper in America; just ask Maestro Fresh Wes, Saukrates or Kardinal Offishall. The frozen North has given birth to some of hip-hop's most talented yet simultaneously unrecognized MCs, and so too it goes for k-os, now three albums deep in his run for North America's admiration with *Atlantis—Hymns for Disco*. From his proclamation on the opener "Electrik Heat" to bring *"every single word and the verb Wildstyle"* to the playful, up-tempo beat and sung flow of "Sunday Morning," k-os exhibits a range of style as wide as his native country's vast forestry. It's hard to peg k-os in any sort of square hole, because he gets round with rock'n'roll and sings with soul on tracks like "Born to Run" and "CatDiesel," respectively. The biggest challenge to k-os's success, other than his utter lack of concern with bling-bling, may be that he's just too eclectic for the hardcore fanatics to get it. However, *Atlantis* will rock your body—if you open your mind. **Steve "Flash" Juon**



SONDRE LERCHE
Phantom Punch
★★★★½
There's plenty of muscle behind these jabs

(Astralwerks) The Norwegian boy wonder is back and in top shape, delivering his most diverse rock selection yet, and finding new and nifty ways to demand notice. Lerche and his Faces Down trio don't completely abandon the lounge jazz tendencies they nurtured on last year's *Duper Sessions*, but this time the focus is on tight songwriting, sudden changes and



THE GLIMMERS
Fabric Live
(Fabric)
★★★
Who's on it?
A tasteful and eclectic mix of '70-'80s staples like Roxy Music, Freeez, and Freddie Mercury and the standard dance fare getting mad play today, like LCD Soundsystem and Sons & Daughters.
Any good?
Though a genre blending collection that culls work from various eras all over the world, The Glimmers' *Fabric Live* is an exhausting listen. Unrelenting in energy, the mix reaps rewards to those with the tenacity to keep up with the German duo at the helm. **AG**



VARIOUS ARTISTS
8-Bit Operators
(Astralwerks)
★★★
Who's on it?
A collection of 8-bit producers (meaning they work within the confines of Nintendo 64 sounds) cover the godfathers of all things electronic, Kraftwerk.
Any good?
The genius minimalism of Kraftwerk means that their music sounds fantastic, no matter how simplified it gets. But we're not really sure what is gained by making their archetypal electronic sound just a half step more archaic? **JG**



VARIOUS ARTISTS
Recloned
(Clone Records)
★★★★
Who's on it?
Remixers including Carl Craig, Tiefschwarz, Dexter, Putsch '79 and Charles Webster add their own flavor to tracks by Clone artists Adult, Jupiter Black, Seymour Bits, Alden Tyrell and others.
Any good?
A great selection of Clone remixes past, present and future featuring their signature Ital-house and electro sound but also some more dancefloor–oriented material. Super pick for both the Clone fan and the more casual listener. **MSK**



VARIOUS ARTISTS
Soundchronicles Vol. 1
(Soundchron)
★★★½
Who's on it?
Bodymore, MD's Soundchron Records targets a heavyweight rep with new tracks from Planet Asia, Tash, Cormega, Smif N' Wessun, Styles of Beyond and Phil Da Agony.
Any good?
On-the-rise rhymers like MC-thespian M.E. impress, but producer Ayatollah's molasses like syrupy soul makes this worth copping. His teary-eyed tunes perfectly pair with reflective joints from Cormega and Masta Ace. **CS**



VARIOUS ARTISTS
Tectonic Plates
(Tectonic)
★★★★½
Who's on it?
Grimy dubsteppers like Armour, Digital Mystikz, Loefah, MRK, Pinch, Skream, Vex'd and others.
Any good?
Deep. One disc compiles 13 sub-bass rattling tracks only available previously in limited 12-inch runs on this Bristol-based label. The other contains a mix made up of edits of released songs and exclusive forthcoming material. **WW**



VARIOUS ARTISTS
7" Up!
(Crippled Dick Hot Wax)
★★★★
Who's on it?
Carefully selected 7-inch sides from the fertile post-punk period of 1978–1982, featuring Mark E. Smith of The Fall and members of PiL and Maximum Joy in paranoid and snaky positions.
Any good?
Aside from an Art Brut-ish tribute to venereal diseases ("Don't Try to Cure Yourself"), nearly everything is criminally overlooked—an icy and insistent mélange of steam-pressed synths and boomerang bass lines that'll light a fire in any disco. . .punk. **AP**



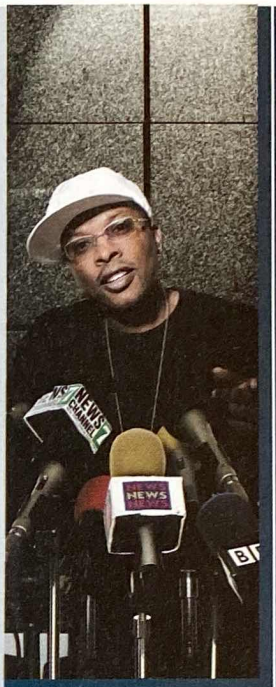
DJ MOONER
ELASTE: VOL. 1: SLOW MOTION DISCO
(Compost)
★★★½
Who's on it?
The playlist for decadent parties at "Bia degli Angeli," a club on the Adriatic Coast of Italy. Somewhere between Italy, Kraut rock and that ol' "Bohannon Beat" featuring obscure cuts by the Rah Band, Heaven 17 and Chocolate Star.
Any good?
With mid-tempo fun, *Elaste* also tells the story of how two American DJs blew Italian minds in the early-'80s, and how the DJs they inspired went on to push the cosmic disco scene forward. **DS**



VARIOUS ARTISTS
Om:Chilled
(Om)
★★★½
Who's on it?
The warmth of the chilled soundtrack is provided by the likes of Jimpster, John Beltran, Land Shark aka Lance DeSardi and Om chanteuse Samantha James, plus a remix from King Kooba.
Any good?
Don't let the name fool you, this one's for more than just lounging. Sure, the vibe's hazy and the bass lines viscous, but energetic beats are key to these sounds, too. **NL**



SVEN VATH
Sound of the Seventh Season
(Cocoon)
★★★★
Who's on it?
The svelt trance kingpin-turned-techno titan changes it up for another "season," calling on minimal producers Audion, Trentemøller, Dominick Eulberg, and Jesse Somfay among many others.
Any good?
Breaking it down to two discs dubbed "Wild" and "Life," Vath's season seven is clicky techno heaven that's as much for your head as it is for your feet. **JB**





DJ JAZZY JEFF
Hip-Hop Forever 3
★★★★
Hip-hop for dummies, you dummy

(BBE) If you're looking for a compilation of hard-to-find jams, this isn't it. However, while DJ Jazzy Jeff doesn't do much diggin' in the crates with this 26-track compilation, he does craft a 70-minute set of smoothly mixed hip-hop without a bad song in sight. The mix is more or less balanced between relatively lesser-known tracks by artists such as Little Brother, Mister Complex and Saukrates, as well as Golden Age classics, including "Passing Me By" and "The Choice Is Yours." The hits might turn off the hip-hop nerd in you, but Jazzy Jeff makes sure to bring in the next track before you get bored hearing "Who Got the Props" for the 5,000th time. With just the right amount of masterful scratching spread throughout the album, Jazzy Jeff creates a nice balanced party mix with some old school flavor. If you want to teach someone about hip-hop, play them this mix—DJ Jazzy Jeff makes a great professor. **Dustin Glick**