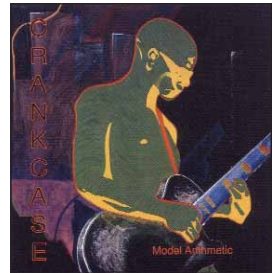
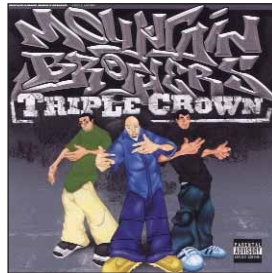
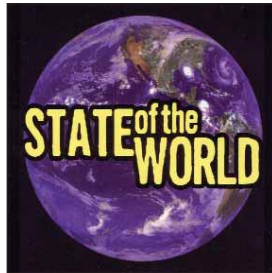
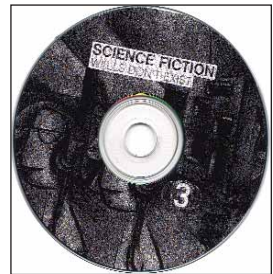
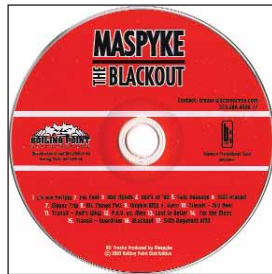
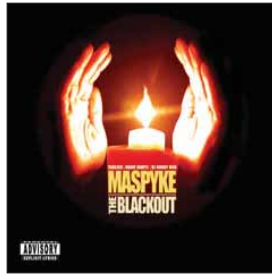


REQUIRED AUDIO

BY JOEL MARASIGAN



THE BLACKOUT

Maspkye

Massachusetts-formed MASP KYE mapped themselves way back in '91. Opening up for groups like ATCO, Guru, EPMD and Kwame, it's no wonder that their music reflects that era of hip hop—it's like old new-school for the now school. Theirs is a funky, jazzy, bass-laden style; part Slum Village and A Tribe Called Quest. Look for cuts like "All Things Fall," and "Spirit of '92" to fill your ear holes full of fun stuff.

WALLS DON'T EXIST

Science Fiction

Reviewed by Paine: Instrumental hip-hop has made a triumphant resurgence in the last year. Names like DJ Shadow, RJD2, and Djinji Brown are getting recognition as more than producers. With drums, keys and the most obscure of samples, a producer can make the music speak for itself. Science Fiction hasn't been producing long and his debut album, *Walls Don't Exist*, on the budding Third Earth Music label bears a bold freshness that makes his rawness an asset rather than an impediment. Born and raised in Nigeria, Science Fiction began his craft by making

bedroom remixes of artists ranging from Nas to Bjork. He now hopes to bring his brand of hip hop to a wider audience.

Walls Don't Exist plays at a quicker pace than most instrumental albums. Some tracks, such as the frenetic "Ever After," are worthy of spins at rave parties and places hip hop rarely finds itself. Still, this record belongs in the hip hop genre. Science Fiction integrates the drums found on hip hop's greatest albums with string and key arrangements that sound so smooth, one would think they're original.

Like any first-rate album, *Walls Don't Exist* has a well-organized theme. Unlike other records with as many BPMs, this album is very melancholic. The vocal samples, which dare to go against the overdone blues croon, are innovative. It is at these points that Science Fiction's influences, which include Radiohead and Nirvana, become apparent. One of the stand out works on the album is the track, "The Sunshine," which uses a hypnotic bassline alongside high hats and distorted vocals. This production is reminiscent of Dan Tha Automator and Del tha Funkee Homosapien's *Deltron 3030* album in many ways.

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This album is a step outside the box for a lot of listeners. Still, Science Fiction finds an uninhabited area where hip hop, electronica and everything else can play off of each other with stability and respectability. After all, Third Earth seems to be taking the biggest risks in hip hop at the moment, namely Jean Grae and the Juggaknots, and with this latest release, continue to do so successfully.

SINOMATIC

Louis Logic

Blackstar did it with "Definition/Re-definition"—a back-to-back, complete-the-story-with-the-next-song cut. Penn State Alum Louis Logic teams with Celph Titled and Memo of the Molemen upping the ante on "Best Friends" and "Revenge." It's a vivid story of how he left his girl with his homie and the ultimate result of the beatdown. Producer J.J. Brown, King Honey and Celph switch up tracks "jackin for beats" style, adding their own brand of horns and intermittent skits. Louis Logic's playful lyrics and battle lines gives some tracks (like "Coochie") lifespan of a useless intermission ski, but for the most part Logic drops bombs.

\$ICK OF BEING RICH

J-Zone

Produced entirely by J-Zone. He incorporates the help of King Tee, J-ro, masta Ace, Celph Tittles, Copywrite and Go-rilla Pimp\$. He'll whip you into shape with his first single "5-Star Hooptie." zonesite.net

ODDS & EVENS

Defari

He's a qualified high school teacher via UC Berkley and Colombia University. He's also the latest of bomb droppers from the West Coast's Likwit Crew—King Tee, Tha Alkaholiks, and Xzibit. *Odds & Evens* undeniably reps the west but as people like Xzibit, Dilated Peoples, and Tha Liks attract fans so will Defari. Featured on the album are E-Swift, J-Ro, Dilated Peoples, Tash, Evidence and Phil da Agony. Radio should hit up cuts "For the Love" and "Xtra Thump."

TIME CAPSULE

Snafu of Oldominion

The Pacific Northwest comes with some good shit. Oregon resident Snafu—the founding member—boasts his storytelling skills on *Time Capsule*.

REQUIRED AUDIO

BY JOEL MARASIGAN

Musically, the tracks are ridden with the same darkness the weather brings to their section of the globe. It's not a bad thing when you are looking into destruction and self-mutilation. It definitely makes for good, angry driving music. Favorite cuts? Self reflection track "Change" and "2000 & Sumthin'" both featuring Toni Hill. Stuckundertheneedle.com

STATE OF THE WORLD

Various Artists

Look out Marvel Comics here comes a set of team-ups that's reminiscent of the old school RunDMC-style of honoring the DJ. Supa Dave, Cannibal Ox, Rob Swift, Invisible, Mondee, Total Eclipse, Chocolate, J-Live, Roli Rho, Manifest, Slug and DJ Quest all contribute and combine to rock tracks that balance emcee and tablist. Tracks are mostly tablist based and loaded with both world class battle scratching and production. Look for the hypnotic Manifest and Mondee track "Uplift," Slug and Mondee's "Keep Steppin'" and old school, funk-band influenced "Streets be Testin You," featuring Invisible. Find the repeat button on your iPod.

TRIPLE CROWN

Mountain Brothers

It's the return of the MBs! You can hear the maturity in the music—I guess after so many projects (*Mystic*, *Bahamadia*, various commercials, and whatever) one can find their groove. Triple crown is backed by assistant DJ donators Jay-Ski, Roli Rho, Kwestion, and the 5th Platoon to add to Chops' already infectious beats. Chops, Peril-L, and Styles still stick to the same witty punchline combos—"I signed a contract with Acura cause I got the stuff Legends are made of." Look for cuts "Microphone Phenomenal," "Birds of Paradise" and "Thanatopsis II" to do some mixtapes some damage. Mountainbrothers.com

MODEL ARITHMETIC

Crankcase

The three-man group, with lead man Andy Cooper, hails from Long Beach, Calif., to form Crankcase. The soul-powered, riff-based, jazz-funk instrumental band on the tip of live hip hop experimentation (whew) first appeared on the LB compilation CD, *Jazz*. Their past release of an album attack on Limp Biskit-esque rock-rap groups called "Who Stole the Funk and How We Stole it Back" reclaimed the proper approach to live hip hop. Peterecords.com