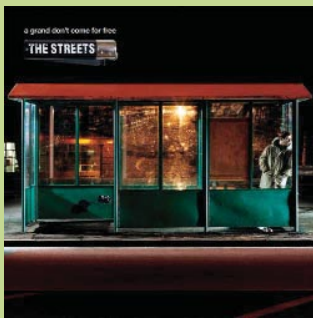


REQUIRED AUDIO

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY
JOEL MARASIGAN



PICK OF THE MONTH A GRAND DON'T COME FOR FREE The Streets

Mike Skinner comes with the realness on this UK hip hop two-stepper. There's a clear difference 'tween American rappers and blokes like Dizzy Raskal and Skinner, but the thing they've locked down from rap culture is the skill of storytelling. He's not the best flowing guy but the way he can describe detailed scenes to create a feeling—he defiantly gets my vote for best UK hip hop album.

85 DECIBEL MONKS / 85 Decibel Monks

Tack Fu and his motley 85 Decibel Monks (The Chaircrusher, Hartless and Drumk) show that emcees aren't the only ones that can steal the spotlight. Tireless beats and sporadic wordsmiths (Illogic, Blueprint, Bad Fathers, Mars III) make this album perfect from dorm room to headphones. Hey pot-head, track 16 is the recipe for the sticky-icky cookie. —TackFu.com.

BLACK MAMBA SERUMS V2.0 / Bigg Jus

Keeping subtle relations to the spirit of jazz, blues and '60s black liberation music Bigg Jus steps forward to produce some of the illest sounds this side of the more experimental tip of hip hop. The interesting thing about this project is that it is a single disc, double album. When you pick this one up you'll see the how. —BigDada.com

CHEWING ON GLASS & OTHER MIRACLE CURES / Sixtoo

Initially, he got more attention when he rocked the mic with Anticon in the late '90s but found himself producing nice heroin-induced sounding tracks. Grab your headphones kiddies and try to discern whether the instruments you hear are live or sampled—either way get ready for a beat-miners dream album. —Ninjatune.net

KUTMASTA KURT PRESENTS DOPESTYLE 1231

With a production resume that includes the likes of Linkin Park, Dilated Peoples, and Kool Keith it's a wonder why a solo project like this would be set loose as an indie. This is, however slightly less radio-friendly than the year's previous project Motion Man/Kutmasta Kurt effort. Dopestyle 1231 are Bay Area hip hop artists MC Dopestyle and DJ/producer Tom C. —Waxploitation.com

MASH OUT POSSE / Mash Out Posse

This hybrid is what the rap/rock genre sounds like when hip hop does the style. When you get rock/rap heads doing it sounds more like Insane Clown Posse or some other crazy band with modified Kiss-type costumes. When rock/rap listeners hear M.O.P. they'll think they sound like urban pussies yet urban cats know better than to dress like Kiss. Note: Just because you include a DJ and a guy that raps doesn't mean you are making hip hop music; it's rock/rap or rap/rock. This album is dope. —RocaFella.com

THE DEVIL MADE ME REMIX / Paris

One of the original, politically conscious rappers follows up last year's controversial project with a compilation release based on Anti-establishment. The titles tell it all: "Coffee, Donuts & Death (Piggy on a Platter Mix)," "Lights, Camera, Revolution," "The Devil Made Me Do It (Poach A Pig Mix)," and "Time For Peace." Wait a minute, where did that last one come from? I think he's turning soft! —GuerrillaFunk.com

FOREVER / Alvendia

If you're Filipino and just moved away from your roots in the Bay or San Diego here's one for you. You homesick puppies can look up this artist and get your healthy dose of Freestyle. Sometimes I get a little homesick but I just order up a good plate of Adobo and Rice from the local Point Point Joint instead. —Mabuhay Bitches.

COMPILATIONS

FED UP AND MOVIN ON: DMX TRIBUTE / Dj Lt. Dan

No need to look any further because here's a 36-track compilation of your favorite DMX cuts, and freestyles that will have you growling, barking and lookin' for the Ruff Ride. Arf. Arf. —DjLtDan.com

SOUNDS IN THE 90s / DJ Rasta Root

The homie Root drops the stuff that made the 1990s fun. Twenty-two fantabulous cuts (by artists like ATCQ, Common, Pete Rock & CL Smooth, Biggie, De La Soul, Brand Nubian, Blacksheep and others) mashed and mixed by this select show is why he was nominated one of ATL's best DJs. —SmokinNeedles.com

STAPLE PRESENTS: THEME AND VARIATION / DJ Language

Staple always seems to put some of the original fly style. Here's some of that smooth shit re-made by Language. 2 discs (one is smoothed R&B/Hip hop; the other is old school funk/R&B/Club stuff) make these 43 an urban music collectors set. —StapleDesign.com

REFLEX MEDIA "GO"

Missed the excitement of a few car shows lately? Maybe you wanna see what street racing looks like? I know you want to see—a sexy model up close and personal. Yeah. I agree. —reflexmedia.net

PROJECT DEFINITIVE RHYME LEGENDS / DJ Frantik

[not pictured] Frantik slews out a whopping 49 tracks in just under 80 minutes on this tribute to the West Coast underground. If you want to impress and educate your friends on legends like Freestyle Fellowship, Aceyalone, Busdriver, and other Heavyweights do it with this CD and short trips to the mall.

H.I.V. VOL.3 CONTAGION / TheDjStrong

[not pictured] Emcees like Rasc Kass, Cypress Hill, El Dorado Red, and Krondon help set the stage for the TheDjStrong H.I.V. series that says it all—the CD is SICK. Volume 3 is hosted by Akil of Jurassic 5 and includes thirty-three street banging tracks for the left coast. —TheDjStrong.com

