

Hip Hop Takes A Turn and Common Leads The Way



Santa Monica, CA Aug 08, 2007 On his 7th album, Finding Forever, Grammy winning rap superstar Common hits the jackpot, scoring his first career #1 on the Billboard Album Chart.

The G.O.O.D. Music/Geffen Records album scanned 155,329 in its first week, 32,187 more than the next best selling title. Common's previous best ranking on the chart was #2 for 2005's BE. Like BE, Finding Forever has fellow Chicagoan Kanye West in the role as executive producer. Guest artists on the album include West, Lily Allen, will.i.am, D'Angelo, and Gang Starr's DJ Premiere. Along with production by West; will.i.am and the late Detroit legend J. Dilla (So Far To Go) produce tracks.

What's extraordinary about the best selling Finding Forever is that it was truly the people who made Common #1. With songs and an album that have received critical acclaim and consumer interest, Common's music has not yet penetrated mainstream commercial radio. Those who bought the album bought it for the artist and his brand, not a particular song. Very few artists make the connection with the public as Common does. As his hometown paper Chicago Tribune wrote, "Common has become the rarest of pop success stories: a mainstream hip-hop artist who projects a mature, compassionate image and thrives on thoughtful, soul-fired albums designed for repeated listening rather than short-lived singles."

Common is an anomaly, who thrives with the multi-impressions

he gets outside the traditional hip hop avenues from his Gap television commercial a few months back to him being the face of Converse's (Product) Red campaign to his album being carried at Starbucks as well as him playing and doing a very successful album signing at a Starbucks in Santa Monica, which according to the Fire Marshal drew over 1,500 people. On-line Common has been everywhere. Finding Forever and Common have been the main featured title at iTunes, and was featured with Verizon, to currently being Artist of the Month at Microsoft Windows Media, to performing for Live Sets on Yahoo! and AOL's "Sixteen Bars" and the album previewed with MTV.com's The Leak.

In the press, which has always been with Common from his 1992 debut Can I Borrow a Dollar? through 2000's acclaimed Like Water for Chocolate and 2005's multi-Grammy-nominated BE, Common is often cited as one of the best observers and masters of wordplay in rap history and critics believe that Finding Forever continues that legacy. In a stellar review XXL wrote: "Common makes timeless hip-hop seem easy." Both People and USA Today bestowed their highest rankings on the album. Rolling Stone wrote, "his ear grabbing command stands up to almost any MC out there." And for the first time in his career Common graces the cover of the Source in their August 2007 issue. In the last few months Billboard, Ebony, and Uptown magazine have put him on their cover.

On top of his music success Common has recently launched a burgeoning acting career with roles in Smokin' Aces with Jeremy Piven as well as the soon-to-be released American Gangster with Russell Crowe and Denzel Washington as well as filming both Wanted with Angelina Jolie and Morgan Freeman and The Night Watchman with Keanu Reeves and Forest Whitaker.

There are very few artists who consistently deliver such thought provoking cutting edge material who are accepted by the mainstream as Common. The chart topping may have signaled a new era in not just hip hop but in credible music overall,

and Common and his fans have led the charge to this era.