

Kickmag's 2007 Picks

Common – Finding Forever



An esoteric street paradise after 15-years of a solo recording grind. Producers Kanye West and Will.I.am shape rhythmic reveries around Common's semi-countrified delivery. His voices flows with an R&B sensuality that can change into b-boy battle mode when Premier gets on the track. He found his forever with this soon-to-be classic.

[Rick James – Deeper Still](#)



A grown-up and reflective funkster articulates life after Super Freak. Stone-City band horns are still sassy and syncopated on the one. Howard Hewett guests on the baby-making "Do You Wanna Play." An excellent swan song for the bad boy that revived Motown, challenged Prince and strengthened his myth by becoming another rock and roll casualty.

[Public Enemy- How Do You Sell Soul To A Soulless People That Sold Their Soul](#)



Angular and still angry 20 yrs after the fact Chuck D, Flavor, Griff and the Slws cast out the media and political warlocks with their aural authority. A collaboration with KRS 1 is a historical meeting of elders that eclipses its own preachiness in the midst of a million rappers who will not address the pathways to soullessness. Another milestone for hip-hop's most politically consistent group.

Kanye West – Graduation



The third act of Kanye's education process is another audacious reason to like the man. Daft Punk is sampled, Dwele and Mos Def sing, Lil Wayne guest-raps and Kanye directs the whole thing with little thought towards convention. Purists diss Kanye's democratic crate-dug production sources ("Flashing Lights") as an enemy of hip-hop's true street masculinity. But Graduation is what you get when you mix backpack rap with Diddy the sum of Dead Prez in shiny clothes and there is nothing anti hip-hop about it.

[Phil Perry – A Mighty Love](#)



Another collection of classic soul from the St.Louis born singer best known for covering Aretha Franklin's "Call Me." Perry loves timeless melodies and good stories in a song. Thankfully his voice is one that handles the burden of timeless material by owning its core arrangement and filling each bar with love from his 40-year affair with R&B.

Sly And The Family Stone (reissued box set)



Funk foundations from the second-biggest Black rock star of the '60's. Arthur Lee's was the first multi-cultural and co-gendered rock band but Sly's was the first successful one. A catalog of hits, samples and signposts of an influential era. The box set recounts Sly and the Family's growth from being a polished band to becoming a new paradigm in American music.