

Book Review: Total Chaos



Hip-Hop's transformation from an organic folk culture bred in the Bronx with roots in Afro-diasporic cultural practices into a commercially-successful zeitgeist of cool has put a lot of the artform's core values at stake. After 30 years of popping, scratching, emceeing, tagging, Phat Farm, Def Jam, BET and The Source questions of hip-hop's death, authenticity and its ability to empower future hip-hop heads are some of the concerns addressed in Total Chaos. Veteran hip-hop journalist Jeff Chang who's *Cant Stop Wont Stop* history of hip-hop earned him the Deems Taylor award last year assembled various practitioners to tease out these arguments about the past/present/future of hip-hop. Understanding the cultural rhythm of hip-hop by dissecting its creed seems to be the adventure of hip-hoppers 30 and over. The fans who lack the intimate knowledge of the Golden Era and before don't gripe as much about the various turns corporate politics has created in the mainstream distributions of the music. Some argue that times have changed and the old guards of the art need to accept the new voices and their values which reflect contemporary times. Nas's declaration that hip-hop is dead has stirred this conversation both ways and it situates the concerns of Chang's book which hopes to dismantle hip-hop's canon from the inside. Chang's interview with Tim'm West and Juba Kalamka tramples the official idea that hip-hop is heterosexual art. The two founders of the Bay Area homohop group Deep Dick Collective address the invisible queer history of hip-hop by their presence and discussion of downlow boys in the cipher and gay visual pioneers Keith Haring and Jean Michael Basquiat. Long before the praises of hypermasculinity hip-hop heads and house music lovers shared the same dance floor but openly gay emcees are still new to the mainstream. You can "hear" the chip on their shoulders obviously coming from the irony that hip-hop was a response from the powerless to take power and by the early '90s the artform was mimicking its original oppressor.

Accomplished graffiti writers Cey Adams and Brent Rollins argue that the same big company attitude that has enveloped hip-hop has caused its commercial art direction to suffer as well. From spray-painting trains to pen and pixel images and

the popularity of professional photo-editing software Photoshop, hip-hop's visuals have been cheapened. Snoop's Doggystyle is cited as the best example of poor illustration thanks to nepotism (his cousin did it) and Public Enemy's Fear Of A Black Planet's superior visuals and sales captured the awe of record companies, fans and fellow artists. As much as the computer is derided for making lesser quality optical outings cheesiness has always had its place in hip-hop one specific example being the Jazzy Jeff and Fresh Prince second album cover. The usual issue of misogyny in gangsta rap is traced to its roots in American stereotypes about Black women by Joan Morgan and Mark Anthony Neal. They compare notes from racist ideologies of the red-hot mamas to the words and actions of male rappers and journalists. Morgan's previously unknown admission that Mike Tyson's rape trial was handled by tax lawyers who cast him as a small-brained big phallus-carrying animal explains why hip-hoppers of both genders need to leave the hypermasculinity and hoedom alone. By the end of the book Chang successfully travels over several mini histories of hip-hop that answers Nas's decalaration with proof of hip-hop's life in crisis not death. KRS-One said that Nas's stance was more of a warning than a definitive casket-closing. These essays within the anthology stake out problem areas in the music and culture that can be healed and force hip-hop to turn on its head and reclaim its insurgent but fun spirit.

Brother Ali's "Undisputed"

First Week”



AN INCREDIBLE FIRST WEEK FOR AN INDEPENDENT ARTIST WITH...

#6 ON BILLBOARD INDIE CHART

#24 BILLBOARD RAP ALBUMS

#48 BILLBOARD R&B/HIP HOP ALBUMS

#69 ON BILLBOARD TOP 200 (10,781 SOLD)

#1 SELLING ALBUM IN MINNEAPOLIS (2028 UNITS)

#3 HIP HOP RELEASE ON ITUNES

#63 TOP 100 ON ITUNES

Brother Ali’s new album “The Undisputed Truth,” released April 10th on Rhymesayers, has taken off to an amazing start! Soundscan reports have charted first week sales at an impressive 10,781, making “The Undisputed Truth” the #1 selling album in Minneapolis, #69 on the Billboard Top 200, #6 on Billboard’s Indie chart, #24 Billboard Rap Albums, #48 Billboard R&B/Hip Hop Albums, peaking at #63 on iTunes Top 100, and also charting as the #3 hip-hop release on iTunes.

Brother Ali’s buzz is certain to build with his national headlining tour in full swing. His dates continue throughout June (including a show at Coachella) and are selling out fast, so be sure to catch his intense live show with Rhymesayers labelmate Psalm One.

WATCH THE NEW MUSIC VIDEO FOR BROTHER ALI’S “UNCLE SAM GODDAMN” HERE:

[read more](#)

ON “The Undisputed Truth”:

“Ali fuses formidable mic skills and unvarnished honesty...with a voice that veers between the tremolo authority of a

storefront preacher and a syrupy baritone suited for a Mississippi Delta juke joint"- VIBE

Brother Ali's got that sound, that drive, that believability and, crucially, that affection-inspiring passion on The Undisputed Truth. -LA WEEKLY

"If his first album, Shadows on the Sun – one of 2003's best hip-hop releases – was meant to introduce Ali to his would-be fan base, The Undisputed Truth – which sees Ali's life taking a total 180 – seals the damn deal." URB (four star album review)

"Producer Ant perfectly underscores Ali's gruff cadence, simultaneously self-assured and stressed, with a melodic lope that scrunches soul vocals underneath loops of bluesy guitar." -SPIN (four star album review)

"Brother Ali, Rhymesayers' righteous albino wordsmith, is a powerhouse who spits tricky rhymes with the force and consistency of a steel piston." -XLR8R

UPCOMING TOUR DATES:

THU-APR-19 MENOMONIE, WI BLUE DEVIL LOUNGE

FRI-APR-20 MADISON, WI HIGH NOON SALOON

SAT-APR-21 CHICAGO, IL SUBTERRANEAN

SUN-APR-22 BLOOMINGTON, IN BLUEBIRD

MON-APR-23 ST. LOUIS, MO WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

TUE-APR-24 LOUISVILLE, KY UNCLE PLEASANTS

WED-APR-25 ANN ARBOR, MI BLIND PIG

FRI-APR-27 INDIO, CA COACHELLA

SAT-APR-28 COLUMBUS, OH SKULLY'S MUSIC DINER

SUN-APR-29 CLEVELAND, OH GROG SHOP

TUE-MAY-01 BURLINGTON, VT HIGHER GROUND LOUNGE

WED-MAY-02 BOSTON, MA MIDDLE EAST

THU-MAY-03 NEW YORK, NY KNITTING FACTORY

FRI-MAY-04 PHILADELPHIA, PA THE CHURCH

SAT-MAY-05 BALTIMORE, MD OTTOBAR

SUN-MAY-06 CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA STARR HILL
TUE-MAY-08 CARRBORO, NC CATS CRADLE
WED-MAY-09 WILMINGTON, NC SOAP BOX
THU-MAY-10 MT. PLEASANT, SC VILLAGE TAVERN
FRI-MAY-11 ORLANDO, FL THE SOCIAL
SAT-MAY-12 ATLANTA, GA DRUNKEN UNICORN
MON-MAY-14 BIRMINGHAM, AL THE NICK
TUE-MAY-15 NEW ORLEANS, LA PARISH @ HOB
WED-MAY-16 AUSTIN, TX EMOS LOUNGE
THU-MAY-17 ALBUQUERQUE, NM LAUNCHPAD
FRI-MAY-18 TUCSON, AZ CLUB CONGRESS
SAT-MAY-19 FLAGSTAFF, AZ ORPHEUM
SUN-MAY-20 POMONA, CA GLASSHOUSE
TUE-MAY-22 SAN DIEGO, CA BELLY UP
WED-MAY-23 LOS ANGELES, CA TROUBADOUR
THU-MAY-24 SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA DOWNTOWN BREW
FRI-MAY-25 SAN FRANCISCO, CA SLIMS
SAT-MAY-26 RENO, NV NEW OASIS
TUE-MAY-29 EUGENE, OR WOW HALL
WED-MAY-30 PORTLAND, OR HAWTHORNE THEATRE
THU-MAY-31 SEATTLE, WA VERA PROJECT
FRI-JUN-01 BELLINGHAM, WA NIGHT LIGHT
SAT-JUN-02 MISSOULA, MT THE LOFT
MON-JUN-04 SALT LAKE CITY, UT URBAN LOUNGE
TUE-JUN-05 DENVER, CO BLUEBIRD THEATRE
WED-JUN-06 KANSAS CITY, KS RECORD BAR
THU-JUN-07 DES MOINES, IA VAUDEVILLE MEWS
FRI-JUN-08 MINNEAPOLIS, MN FIRST AVENUE

New Book! THIRD COAST:

Outkast, Timbaland and How Hip Hop Became a Southern Thing by Roni Sarig (May 07)

THIRD COAST fully explores the history of rap as it emerged out of the South through many crosscurrents. Sarig goes way back to the oral tradition of slaves in the South, field hollers, the blues and gospel, and connects the dots to early 20th century African American radio announcers who rhymed, testified and signified. Hosts like Jocko Henderson, Daddy-O and Poppa Stoppa actually spoke in rhyme, and their broadcasts reached way down into the Caribbean, “influencing Jamaica’s earliest toasters such as U-Roy and Sir Lord Comic to perform their rhythmic rhymes over reggae dubs.” It would be these toasters, then, who would influence and inspire the young Jamaican on his way to New York: Kool DJ Herc, aka the father of hip-hop. Sarig also notes the influence of musicians, poets, comedians and celebrities with roots in the South who continued with the toasting, boasting, signifying and rhyiming: Rudy Ray Moore, Clarence “Blowfly” Reid, Muhammad Ali, the Last Poets, the Watts Prophets, Gil Scott-Heron and H. Rap Brown.

THIRD COAST is the most thorough, wide-ranging, and exhaustively researched book yet to examine the roots and development of Southern Hip Hop. Sarig follows rap’s history from Miami Bass to Houston’s Gangsta Goths, hitting on Memphis’ gangsta walk and New Orleans’ bounce music, and exploring Atlanta as the New Motown and Virginia as a no man’s land where studio wizards such as Timbaland and the Neptunes spun pop magic. On his journey through Dirty South Hip-Hop, Sarig explores how far recent hip-hop has come both sonically and culturally, focusing on the big players like OutKast, Missy Elliott, Ying Yang Twins, T.I., UGK, Eightball & MJG,

Three 6 Mafia, Juvenile, Ludacris, and Lil Jon, exploring its roots, style, slang and influence, and considering its more recent genre-busting iterations like crunk.

The '90s had artists talking East vs. West, but it's now impossible to ignore the Third Coast.

Roni Sarig is the author of three books, including *The Secret History of Rock: The Most Influential Bands You've Never Heard*. His work has appeared in *Vibe*, *Rolling Stone* and *Spin*. He lives outside NYC.

THIRD COAST Chapter Listings

INTRO: What You People Know About the Dirty South?

Word Up: The African-American Oral Tradition. Go DJ, That's My DJ: Jive Talking to Reggae Toasting. Raise Up, This One's For You: Southern Rap Explosion. Southern Heritage. Social Music. Inversion. Southern strategy. Down to the Crossroads.

PART I: REGIONALISM AND EARLY CROSSCURRENTS

1. The Rise and Fall of Miami Bass: Soul Talking: Clarence Reid and Henry Stone. Hip-Hop Comes South. 2 Live is What We Are: Miami Bass Booms. As Nasty As They Wanna Be. Maximum Boom: Bass in the Car and on the Charts.

2. Houston and the Gangsta Goths: Texas Hip-Hop: Life on the Human Ranch. Houston Starts Making Trouble. Geto Boys Get a Grip. Southern Gangsta Can't Be Stopped. The South's True Underground Kings.

3. Memphis-Pimped Out or Bucked Up: Wheatstraw's Gangster Blues. Memphis Gets Buck. Eightball & MJG: Pimps in the House.

4. New Orleans' Soldiers in the Murder Capital: In New Orleans, the Waters Rise, But So Do the People. From Calliope to Cali Hope, and Back. No Limit Tests the Limits.

Part II SYNTHESIS AND THE NEW SOUTH SENSIBILITY

5. Atlanta-Fusion and Family:

The Great Southern Crossroads. "Good Morning, Atlanta. We are Here." Atlanta Originals. Young, Fly, and Flashy. L.A. and Babyface Move South. The TLC Tip. 3 Years, 5 Months & 2 Days in the Birth of Southern-Identified Hip-Hop. Atlanta's Bass Survivors. Up From the Dungeon. The Road to Southernplayalisticadillacmuzik. Serving Up the Soul Food. Second Acts: The ATLiens are Still Standing.

6. Virginia-Transmissions from the Edge: Welcome to the Blank Slate. Untapped Market: Teddy Riley Comes to Town. When Timmy Met Missy. Good Ol' Virginia: The Masters of Urban Pop.

7. Atlanta as the New Motown: The Dungeon Family Move to the Front of the Bus. LaFace's Golden Era. Bombs Over the Dungeon Family. J.D. Welcomes You to Atlanta. Ludacris Disturbs the Peace. Laface's Legacy. To Camelot Like Campbellton. Kings of the South. The Beatles of Hip-Hop.

8. Hip-Hop's Ruralization: The Twice-Marginalized Rural South. Hip-Hop Sings the Blues. Mississippi Burning. Hollers from the Cotton Fields. Portrait of a White Boy. OutKast's Nappy Children. Sweet Home Cackalacky. Black Cowboys in Nashville.

PART III: WHAT GOES AROUND

9. Bounce Music-From Buck Jump to Bling Bling:

The Spirit of New Orleans. Buck Jumpin' in the Big Easy. Triggerman's Unlikely Getaway. Bounce Baby Bounce. Cash Money Gets its Roll On. Cash Money in Slow Motion.

10. Crunk Gets Crunk: Back in Memphis, Paul & Juicy Tear Da Club Up. Gette'm Crunk in the Crab Bucket. The Making of Lil' Jon. Crunk's Hidden Codes. Crunk Gets Crunk. Crunk's Fellow Travelers: Pastor Troy, Oomp Camp. Ying Yang in the Booty Clubs. Miami Becomes a Hip-Hop City (Again). Down South (of the Border) Hip-Hop.

11. Houston Reprise-The Turn of the Screw: Things is Slower in

the South. The Southside's Screwed-Up Empire. The North Also Rises. Lone Star Shining.

Interviewees

Include

Al Kapone

Allen Johnston

Andre Benjamin

Anthony Murray

B.G.

Betty Wright

Big Boi

Big Oomp

Big Rube

Big Sam

Billy Hines

Bo Crane

Bonecrusher

Boss King

Bryan "Baby" Williams

Bubba Sparxxx

Bun B

Cecil "DC" Glenn

Cee-Lo

Chad Hugo

Charles Young Jr. Charles Young Sr.

Chuck D

Clarence "Blowfly" Reid

C-Murder

Crunchy Black

Da Brat

David Banner

David Noller

Dee Dee Murray

Devin Steel

Devin the Dude

Disco Rick
DJ Chill
DJ Jubilee
DJ Laz
DJ Magic Mike
DJ Paul
DJ Strez
D-Roc
DSGB
E.S.G.
Earl Mackie
Eightball
Freddy Hydro
Fresh Kid Ice
Gangsta Pat
Gene Griffin
Gipp
Gregory D
Henry Stone
Ian Burke
James McCauley (DXJ)
Jamilla Bell (Jack the Rapper's daughter) Jason Geter
Jason Orr
Jazze Pha
Jermaine Dupri
Jimmy Brown
Joe "DJ PappaWheellie" Gonzalez
John Abbey
John "J-Dogg" Shaw Juicy J,
Kaine
Kawan "KP" Prather
Khujo
Kilo
King J
KLC Knottz
K-Rino
L Rocc

Leatrice Pierre (Timbaland's mom)
Lil Bo
Lil Flip
Lil Jon
Lil Jon's
brothers & mom,
Lil Scrappy
Lil Troy
Luther Campbell Malice
Mannie Fresh
Matt "SoReal" Sonzala MC ADE
MC Shy-D
Melvin 'Magoo' Barcliff Michael Watts
Mike "Mr. Collipark/DJ Smurf" Crooms
Mike Clark
Missy Elliott
MJG
Mr. DJ
Mr. Mixx
Mz. Vet
Neil Case
Nick Scarfo
Orville Hall
Pastor Troy
Pharrell Williams
Pitbull
Pretty Tony
Prophet (Nappy Roots)
Pusha T
Ray Murray
Ready Red
Rico Wade
Rob "Mac" McDowell Robert Shaw
Ronald "Slim" Williams
Ryan Camron
Shirani
Sleepy Brown

Speech
Steve Gottlieb
T.I.
Ted Lucas
Teddy Riley
Timbaland
Tom Bowker
Tony Mercedes
Tony MF Rock (aka Woodchuck)
Trick Daddy
Wayne Briggs
Wes Philips
Willie D

The Hypeman Cometh: Flavor Flav



William Drayton's performance alter ego Flavor Flav became the biggest star of reality TV last year with the hugely successful Flavor of Love. A house full of women vying for his affections created the right amount of drama to keep viewers interested in TV's first Black bachelor's search for love. The show came on the heels of Flav's romance with the tall blond Brigitte Nielsen on "The Surreal Life." Flavor of Love spawned the current first Black bachelorette reality show starring the equally entertaining New York and her stern but funny mother Sister Patterson. Flav's trademark phrase "Flavor Flavvvvvvvvv" entered pop culture but not without criticism. His dark skin, Viking-inspired crowns, gold-toothed grin and hip-hop inspired speech fascinated viewers and made some of them decide that he was too much of a minstrel and misogynist.

Messageboards posted insults aimed at Flav's complexion that invoked images of the disgraceful Black memorabilia positioned throughout Spike Lee's "Bamboozled." To these viewers the absence of Boris Kodjoe or LL Cool J-type looks disqualified Flav's pursuit of love and reduced the women of the show to desperate victims. He was again casted into the role of a public enemy scorned in some ways for what he once said in song for "being too Black."

Television was always driven by the need to promote something and the man and women of Flavor Of Love used this fact as the motivation for doing the show. Since the show's end some of the women have attained their own 15 minutes of fame particularly the new reality TV star New York. Flavor's eventual choice of a mate, Delisshus has moved on in the media world as a fixture at hip urban events. The jester-like hypeman who laid the foundation for future famous hypeman including Eminem's best friend Proof has returned to touring with his legendary hip-hop band Public Enemy. PE had the honor last year of its pioneering work Fear Of A Black Planet being entered into the National Recording Archive.

The artwork from the album grabbed critical eyes in the industry and art direction on hip-hop albums gained a new importance. Their prominence as the most-successful politically inclined rap group seemed to be in contradiction with Flavor's television career but both gigs require amounts of humorous charisma and a tad of the fantastic. Beyond Flavor Flav's stage persona there is musical talent that can play several instruments and still rhyme silly over hip-hop beats. After years of stops and starts the native of Long Island, New York finally released a passionate solo album with music for Old School hip-hop fans, Country and Western lovers and all the urban music fans in between. Now touring North America Flav took the time to answer some questions about his solo jaunt and accusations of crass cooning.

What were you trying to do with the album?

The main thing I was trying to do with these album was to show

all different sides of Flav I am a musician I can play instruments.

I heard you play eleven instruments?

I play over eleven but that's cool. I play over fourteen different instruments and self-taught also you know when I grew-up in church I was in the choir and I could sing a little bit. That's just a talent I wanted to express to the world you know I am a musician. I'm into all kinds of music so that's why my album has different kinds of music on it. You got rap stuff, R and B stuff, then on the end of it you even got country-western. The last one's called "Hotter Than Ice" and I do like country music but see music is a universal message and I want my album to be universal so that's why I did not put the same kind of jams for my record I wanted to put all different kinds of jams on this record so that way I can sell it to all different kinds of audiences instead of just catering to one audience.

I noticed you had different kinds of sounds one song sounded like the early Bum Rush The Show material.

A lot of people think my album has no direction the world ain't got no direction either. So once the world gets direction I'll put out an album that has direction till then while the world is mixed up I'll put out an album that's mixed out. At least I can sell it to everybody instead of just one audience.

Who did the production on the album? I could tell that some of it was live instruments and some of it was samples and stuff.

Which is today's music and not only that Public Enemy we were the first to ever sample. We were the first ones to put out samples in our music. I'm thinking of going back to basics. I produced the whole album but at the same time I had other people come in and produce as well. On "Two Wrongs Don't Make

It Right" "Bridge Of Pain" all of these are different producers. But then again it was my production money that put it out there so I'm the producer.

What made you decide to put out the album independently? It would seem with the success of your TV show you could grab a major deal.

I've been signed to record companies and all record companies have made money off of me. I feel that it's my turn to make some off of me I wanted to wait until I was really scott free so I could sell this album myself and make my own doggone money.

You said this was going to be your only solo album because you wanted it to be a collector's item does that still stand?

Definitely that still stands but I'm still working on another Public Enemy album with my partner Chuck D and The Bomb Squad we're putting The Bomb Squad back together for the first time in years. We're going to come out with this next Public Enemy album and I guarantee it's going to be a banger.

How was the European Tour you just came back from and what is going with PE?

I know that Public Enemy is going to do a North American tour

How do you feel about the criticisms of Flavor of Love that it's a lot of cooning and the women are degrading themselves by fawning over you?

I just want to say that everybody is entitled to their own opinions not only that everyone's opinion is to be respected by Flavor Flav even if they have the wrong opinion. Let me say this my purpose of doing TV is I'm looking forward to a TV career. I'm looking forward to a movie career that's why I moved to LA in the first place. Now with this TV show Flavor Of Love I am the bachelor on TV so I'm going to have to pick

and choose from girls. Girls that came on my show you gotta remember I didn't put them there they put themselves there. And every time you seen disagreements in the house fighting and brawls and all of that they were not fighting over Flavor Flav that was personality conflict.

You got a bunch of different personalities for the first time in one house ever yes you gonna have conflicts. So that's why I'm saying people right now have the wrong perception of Flavor when it comes to the Flavor Of Love only thing I've tried to do is mediate. I tried to be the mediator of the conflicts. I don't really like violence. To all of the people that don't understand hopefully one day they will understand.

How do feel about today's hip-hop?

Today's hip-hop is in all different kinds of directions because that's how we're living. It's not just in one direction anymore it's all mixed-up right now. Rap music has taken its own course and it's up to us to put it back on course. I'm proud of all the music artists congratulations to all you new artist making records welcome aboard.

What are you most proud of about your album?

That it's done and it's out. I've been trying to come out with a solo album since 1990 but I worked on this album for about two years.