

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.

Guru To Release Jazzmatazz: The Timebomb/Back To The Future Mixtape



(7 Grand Records, New York, NY January 3, 2008) – Fresh off an international tour, Guru, super-producer, Solar, and 7 Grand Records announce the February 2008 release of Guru's Jazzmatazz: The Timebomb/Back To The Future Mixtape, the "raw" companion to the Jazzmatazz Vol. 4 album. The Mixtape carefully and superbly crafted by Super-producer Solar exhibits the "Golden Era" New York essence along with a cutting edge futuristic twist! Hence the title, "Back To The Future."

The tracks are pure "bangers" and the guest appearances are classic as they compliment Guru's iconic yet streetwise vocals! The MC's selected represent the best of America's true Hip Hop artists that hail from the "Underground" scene that Guru has remained so true to. There are features such as reggae artist Damian Marley, Aceyalone and Zion I from the West Coast, Blue Scholars from Seattle, Mr. Lif from Boston, Yungun from London, as well as legends Lord Tariq from the Bronx, Nature from Queensbridge, C. Knowledge from Digable Planets and Tony Touch to name a few. The album also features up-and-coming 7 Grand Records artists K. Born & Highpower from Philadelphia and Young Pablo from Paterson, New Jersey. This is no ordinary mixtape CD as it is hosted by the Mixtape King himself, DJ Doo Wop, who is featured on a couple of tracks.

"Since the inception of Jazzmatazz, one of our main focuses has been to create music for every generation, for the music lover. The Jazzmatazz series has always been about charting new territories, blurring genre lines, and collaborating with artists to create music that's timeless and relevant."

With a career that spans over a decade and one that is now eleven-LP's deep, Guru has been able to stay relevant when many of his counterparts have faded into the background. Now with a musical and business partnership in full motion with Solar, and the formation of their new label, 7 Grand, Guru feels even more reinvigorated. "7 Grand Records allows me not only to be creative, but to finally be in control of my creativity. Between us you've got a legendary spitter that's still hungry and still relevant, teamed up with the hottest New York producer in the game, which makes for a musical vision that is powerfully important and virtually unstoppable." Solar adds, "7 Grand Records is the epitome of what great NY Hip-Hop represents taken to the new millennium and beyond! Now in control of our own label, we're free to introduce forward-thinking Hip-Hop concepts to the masses," explains Solar.

In the past, Guru's Jazzmatazz endeavors have enabled him to collaborate with a who's who list of legendary musical icons including Roy Ayers, Donald Byrd, Chaka Khan, Isaac Hayes, Herbie Hancock, Branford Marsalis and popular cross-over favorites including Macy Gray, The Roots, Erykah Badu and Angie Stone. When asked how he has been able stay such a viable force in the music industry Guru states matter of factly "be honest with yourself, be original, be open to criticism and don't be afraid to reinvent and recreate yourself."

With Guru's Jazzmatazz Volume 4: The Hip-Hop Messenger (Back To The Future) and it's companion mixtape Guru's Jazzmatazz: The Time Bomb (Back To The Future Mixtape), Guru and Solar have delivered another fresh approach, one that's not only an interesting attempt at boundary-crossing but also a compelling enough to bridge the jazz, hip-hop & soul enthusiast all at the same time

ABOUT 7 GRAND RECORDS

7 Grand Records are dedicated to the art of hip-hop and beyond. Whether it's providing an outlet for challenging and stimulating music or releasing records with high artistic value, Guru and Solar are committed to providing an independent outlet for highly creative and uncompromising art. For more information about 7 Grand Records please visit:

www.myspace.com/gurusjazzmatazz

www.gurusjazzmatazz.net

Ice Cube-Gangsta Rap Made Me Do It

James Brown's Final Recordings Held Up By Legal Dispute



The legal feud over the estate of James Brown is stalling the release of the soul legend's final recordings, his longtime adviser said.

Brown cut an album in Los Angeles the summer before he died in

December 2006, but the songs are not being released because of courtroom disputes about who should benefit from his legacy and music royalties, said attorney Buddy Dallas.

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