

Music Review: Black Spade- To Serve With Love



Once a member of the St.Louis R&B group Soul Tyde Black Spade's dissonant keyboard pieces from Worrell world, doleful belting and earnest rapping has pulsed since the '90s. To Serve With Love is his first proper album hip-hop version 3.0 for a prominent triage of soul, R&B and funk that take sonic favor. Rapping in a pitch part Common, part Q-Tip and a drowsy Busta Rhymes Spade appreciates women, moans about complex love affairs and nonchalantly talks about the brunt of being an emcee. Marching band tromps and harpischord funk keyboards on the half-beat filter the aural environment.

Quirky and self-sufficient Spade performs and produces all the songs under the moniker of Stoneyrock which emulate some classic sounds from the past. The drums are understated until a flashback of Jam Master Jay's volume-heavy cardboard box beats energize "Not For The Bullshit." The album's title song bytes the melody of Bob James's "Feel Like Making Love" keyboards and then Lynette Brown sings Roberta Flack's line as a trudging pulse dissolves the song with Spades' verses for an old love. Sharp meters of G-funk fall down on the sides of his words for "The Half That's Never Been Told" that ends with a female voice and piano rant about the ghetto. "Evil Love's" funky claps swing in time with Spade's reflections on love in a raw sing-rap style that hollers less than Ja Rule but kicks game like any old wise bluesman. [To Sir With Love](#) is one of the first movies to challenge teenage angst in a school setting. Spade's co-opting of the movie title is his antidote for the black veil-wearing hip-hop-is-dead-team.

Ras Kass Preps “Institutionalized Vol.II” For August 5th Release On Babygrande



One of the most critically acclaimed West Coast emcees of all time,

Ras Kass is renowned for his complex lyricism, sharp battle rhymes and witty punchlines.

1996's debut “Soul On Ice” established Ras as one of the front-runners

of the post West Coast gangsta rap movement pioneered by seminal acts

such as N.W.A. and nationally popularized by modern day icons Dr. Dre,

Snoop Dogg & more.

Marrying a hardcore street sensibility with his signature witty

wordplay, Ras built a loyal underground core with subsequent albums

including 1998's “Rasassination,” featuring guest appearances by Dr.

Dre, Xzibit, Twista & RZA (of Wu-Tang) as well as multiple mixtape

releases.

Currently serving time, Ras Kass's ambition in the face of

adversity is

on full display with the August 5th bow of “Institutionalized Vol. II.”

Sure to satisfy Rass’s loyal constituency and beyond, “Institutionalized Vol. 2” is a testament to both Ras’s resilience and the raw skill that underlies his longevity within the ever-changing hip-hop landscape.

For more information and to sample some tracks, please visit:

www.crackspace.com/raskass

www.babygrande.com

VH1 Sets Date For 5th Annual “VH1 Hip Hop Honors”

NEW YORK, June 23, 2008 –“ With just days until its star-studded –VH1 Rock Honors– concert event saluting The Who, VH1 has announced the upcoming date for its next A-List tentpole event the –VH1 Hip Hop Honors.–

Now in its fifth year, –VH1 Hip Hop Honors– will once again pay tribute to the hip hop luminaries who broke new ground and propelled the genre into a truly global phenomenon. VH1 will fete this year’s honorees at a high-energy event at the Hammerstein Ballroom in New York taping Thursday, October 2, 2008 and premiering on VH1 on Tuesday, October 7.

The music and influence of each of the honorees, to be named

later this summer, will be recognized through performances in collaboration with some of today's hottest talent. Generations of hip hop will bridge the gap for one exceptional night to set it off with the original style and flavor that sparked and inspired the evolution of the music.

Last year's show was hosted by Tracy Morgan and honored A Tribe Called Quest, Snoop Dogg, WHODINI, Missy Elliott, the film *Wild Style* and Teddy Riley and Andre Harrell for *New Jack Swing*. The star-studded 2007 edition also featured performances by the honorees, along with appearances by Ciara, Eve, Pharrell Williams, The Game, T.I., Timbaland, Bow Wow, Busta Rhymes, Common, T-Pain, Keyshia Cole and Nick Cannon as well as Chris Rock, Harvey Keitel, LL Cool J, Kerry Washington and Diddy. Salt -N- Pepa, Nelly Furtado, Ne-Yo, KRS-One The Teacha, Jermaine Dupri, Grandmaster Caz, Nelly, Mos Def, Kool Moe Dee, Grand Wizzard Theodore and The Chief Rocker Busy Bee.

"As we'll remind viewers with our upcoming VH1 Rock Honors show saluting The Who, VH1's on-air tentpole events represent the best of music and pop culture entertainment. We work tirelessly and passionately to attract the biggest stars in the industry, create must-see buzz and engage record numbers of viewers," said Tom Calderone, Executive Vice President and General Manager, VH1.

"Our VH1 Hip Hop Honors has grown into one of the most anticipated events in the hip hop community, drawing legends from back-in-the-day to the hottest stars of the genre today. This fifth edition will reflect the true power of hip hop while promising to deliver our best Hip Hop Honors show yet," he added.

In addition, VH1 announced today that it will televise the Broadcast Film Critics Association's 14th annual Critics Choice Awards gala live on Thursday, January 9, 2009 from the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium.

This coming July 12, VH1 will tape its 3rd annual “VH1 Rock Honors,” celebrating the legacy of the legendary band The Who. This year’s event, from the Pauley Pavillion on the campus of UCLA in Los Angeles, will deliver a night of high-voltage tribute performances by Pearl Jam, Foo Fighters and The Flaming Lips all leading up to the spectacular grand finale performance by The Who as they rock the stage.

Once again, VH1 will expand elements of both shows online at VH1.com and on VH1 Mobile. Exclusive video footage from the event will include celebrity interviews, “behind-the-scenes” footage and more. Additional multiplatform plans will be announced closer to the event.

“VH1 Hip Hop Honors” is executive produced by Lee Rolontz for VH1 and Jac Benson for blacjac Entertainment Group. Louis J. Horvitz will direct. Nelson George and Fab 5 Freddy are co-executive producers.

VH1 connects viewers to the music, artists and pop culture that matter to them most with TV series, specials, live events, exclusive online content and public affairs initiatives. VH1 is available in 95 million households in the U.S. VH1 also has an array of digital channels and services including VH1Classic, VH1 Soul, VH1 Mobile, VH1Games and extensive broadband video on VH1.com. Connect with VH1 at VH1.com.

Throwback: Whodini-One Love

Old School Hip-Hop, The Golden Age