

For the Record

Tony, Toni, Toné & KRS-ONE Return to Old School Formulas

Sons of Souls

Tony Toni Toné

Mercury Records

Reviewed by: Eric Polhill

"Yo, everybody's going retro right?" At least that's what my man Ish thinks, and I'm going to have to agree. With their third



album, *Sons of Soul*, Tony Toni Toné has taken a giant step backward into the future. Let's face it, we all dig the '70's. I'm not talking about the Partridge Family/Brady Bunch vibe. I'm talking about the "What's Happening" and "Good Times" flavor. The Tonys have put together a mixed bag of Sly and the Family Stone funk, the Jackson Five's catchy hooks and the smoothness of Stevie Wonder to create an album destined for platinum success and classic notoriety.

Sons of Soul brings a breath of fresh air to a market cluttered with straightjacked hip-hop beats. It seems that the #1 rap song of six months ago is sampled in this week's #1 R&B hit. I guess what goes around comes around, but thank God for Tony Toni Toné. They not only sing, they play live instruments.

While the vibe of this album is retro, it has something everybody can enjoy. From the soothing sounds of "(Lay Your Head On My) Pillow," and the moving mix of bass and strings on their current hit "Anniversary" to the bouncy guitars on "Tell Me Mama" the

Tonys show a wide range of vocal and arranging skills. Even when confronted with the overused hip-hop tracks, the Tonys show astounding versatility. With the help of A Tribe Called Quest's Ali Shaheed Muhammad and a lot of inspiration from Sly, their cut "Tonyies! In The Wrong Key"

sends you back to the days of afros and bell bottoms.

Tight production coupled with innovative concepts makes this their best effort to date. This album should allow the Tonys to reach that plateau of deserved recognition as one of the most talented and influential groups in R&B.

This is definitely a must have for any record or CD collection. Purchase this one even if you have been skeptical of Tony Toni Toné in the past. I stress the word "purchase" because we need to support African-American entertainers. They are not going to reach gold and platinum sales if we only dub records from friends. Rating: A

Return of the Boom Bap

KRS-ONE

Jive Records

Reviewed by: Corey Brown

"Return of the boom bap means just that it means return of the real hard beats and real rap."—

KRS-ONE

And so with these words Kris

Parker comes back with his seventh album. Parker, known to all in hip hop as KRS-ONE, releases his first true solo effort; although he's been the force behind Boogie Down Productions for years.

After he dropped the disappointing *Sex & Violence* album, KRS tries to ensure the success of *Boom Bap*. He teams with top producers like DJ Premiere of Gang Starr fame and the one and only Kid Capri, making this album much improved musically.

By now most people have heard his first release, "Black Cop," if not on the radio then in somebody's car with the bass boomin'. "Cop" and "The P is Still Free" both also appeared on movie soundtracks from the summer.

In probably the most creative song on the album "I Can't Wake Up" KRS speaks of being a blunt getting smoked as he goes down the lists of his peers that smoke the weed out.

He does a good job in reverting back to his original formula of rap style—fusing reggae with hip hop. This style is shown in "Uh oh" and is heard again and again throughout the album.



Other tracks of interest on the album include "Mad Crew" and the Kid Capri produced cuts "Stop Frontin'" and "Brown Skin Woman."

"Outta Here" is a jam dedicated to all those rappers that fell off. Overall, this is a phat

album. KRS sums it up best when he says, "No doubt BDP is old school but we ain't going out." Rating: A

T.I.M.E.

Leaders of the New School

Electra Records

Reviewed by: Scott Johnson



After a two-year hiatus the group that brought us "Sobb Story" and "Case of the P.T.A." is back with their second effort titled *T.I.M.E.* (The Inner Mind's Eye). Busta Rhymes, Charlie Brown, Dinco D and the new addition of Milo, prove that there is no sophomore jinx for the

Leaders of the New School. The album is solid and provides excitement for both those who jammed with the first album or new hip hoppers.

Each song revolves around the lyrics of Busta Rhymes. Busta is the crux of this talented group, and his success on the mic

determines the success of each song. The phattest jam on the album is "Bass is Loaded," which possess a hype base groove and Busta at his best. On this track Busta grunts, laughs and flows in that rough-neck style, which would make Onyx slam.

Another notable track, and first release of the album, is "What's Next." Once again, Busta leads the way for the rest of his crew over a playful beat, which is similar to the style LONS dropped on their first album. A few other tracks that deserve shout outs are "Spontaneous (13 MC's Deep)," "A Quarter to Cutthroat" and

"Syntax Era."

On *T.I.M.E.* Busta is not alone. Charlie Brown has stepped up a notch and can now hold his own as an MC. Milo definitely has skills on the mic and adds a new dimension to the album with his reggae styled flow. And Dinco, well Dinco is the exception. The talents of the other three members of LONS make up for Dinco's sub par performance.

T.I.M.E. is a must buy if you are a Leaders of the New School fan. It is tighter than the first album and flows very smoothly. If just like Busta Rhymes then you should still buy the album because he comes through in every track. The two years off helped take LONS to the next level. *T.I.M.E.* is a nice change of pace for those who dwell on the chronic tip. While Leaders won't get crazy airplay like some other rap artist, don't sleep, because LONS definitely has *T.I.M.E.* on their side. In the words of Busta, "Word to God, 1993, shit is solid." LONS is solid in '93 and will be for a very long time.

Rating: B+