

## For the Record

### Grand Puba has better than average effort, P.E. misses the target

TJ Stancil  
Music Editor

Yo! What's up people? At last, there is some great stuff arriving at record stores at one time! As I dallied around, I saw the latest from Grand Puba, Big Bub (formerly of the group Today), Prince and the New Power Generation, "The South Central" motion picture soundtrack, and a reissue of Gang Starr's first album *No More Mr. Nice Guy*.

The reissue of Gang Starr's album includes the remixes of their first two hits, "Manifest" and "Positivity." This is just in time for the November release of Spike Lee's *X* (I mention *X* because Gang Starr's Guru bears a striking resemblance to Malcolm X in the video for "Manifest." Look for it to be re-released or find its way on the *X* soundtrack).

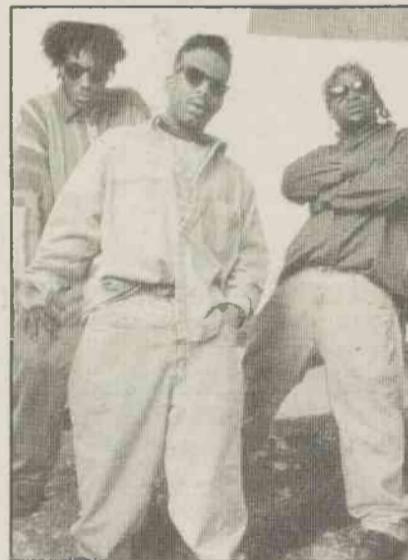
Also, for those Bob Marley fans, check out Island Record's four CD Marley Box set *Songs of Freedom*. It is more extensive than *Legend*, the old Marley standard. Other recent releases to check out: Trey Lewd (produced by George Clinton), Lo' Key, Roxanne Shante', 2 Too Many, M and M, Jacci McGee, Maxi Priest and Compton's Most Wanted. Also coming soon are albums by Naughty by Nature (*19NaughtyII*) and LL Cool J (named *Crossroads* with the first single titled "Ain't no stoppin' us"). Everybody be cool, and peace till next time.—The Music Man, way "Down South".

**Grand Puba**  
*Reel to Reel*  
Elektra Records  
Reviewed by TJ Stancil

At long last we finally have the (debut?) release by Grand Puba Maxwell. Puba has been a busy New Yorker since leaving underground rap sensations Brand Nubian, appearing on albums by Brand New Heavies, Mary J. Blige, Chubb Rock and Heavy D. He even made a stop on the *Strictly Business* soundtrack, enlightening us with "Fat Rat."

For those who don't remember Puba, he was the front man for the

mentioned Brand Nubian along with Derrick (Sadat) X, Lord Jamarr and DJ Alamo. Their biggest hit together was "Slow down," a hip hop classic about sex, drugs and the women who indulge in it. Unhappy splitting the "ends," Puba



Puba goes solo

has struck out on his own, taking DJ Alamo, the Brand Nubian style, the smooth samples, and probably Brand Nubian's chances for much future success along with him. Now, Puba has recruited New Rochelle homie Stunt Doogie to get "blunted" with, and the new adventures begin!

First off, if you don't like the Puba style, this is not for you. As usual Puba excels with his unique vocals, but refuses to talk about anything other than 40s (alcohol), stunts (ladies), blunts (ladies) and skins (ask a friend). But that's Puba. The samples are catchy, which enhance the two best cuts, "Check the Resume" and "360 degrees." They also happen to be the first two cuts so after those you go down hill. But luckily that hill is not too steep. "Lickshot" is a funky little song that has samples of JJ. from "Good Times." "Back it up" was produced by New York DJ Kid Capri, who even lays down vocals on the track. "Proper Education" may offend some Christians as well as Jews because of Grand Puba's religious views as a member of the Five Percent Nation of Islam. The song is anti-church and anti-white, but he doesn't try to offend too much.

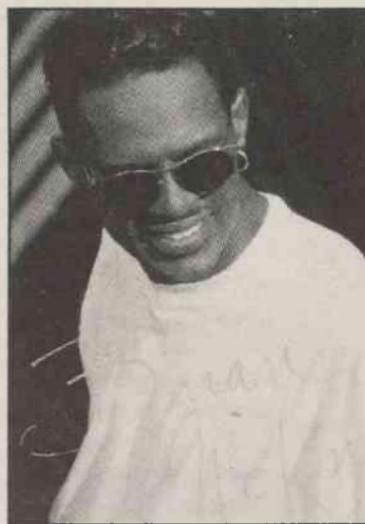
*Reel to Reel* gets a B-, because even though Puba is one of my favorite artists, I feel he should have expressed himself more over this 15 track album. Puba limited himself to "B-Boy" rhetoric, which is not the sign of a true Hip Hop star.

Don't get me wrong now, this album has some hits, but some of the tracks just don't sound very well thought out. "Check it out" with vocalist Mary J. Blige could have been done better, considering the talent of both artists. "Baby What's Your Name" has Puba showing us his singing abilities, which though his vocal quality is nil, the cut was a pleasant surprise.

Grand Puba is worth a look because the Pros outweigh the Cons. Also, as an added bonus this album contains a remix version of "360 degrees" as well as "Who Makes the Loot?" a Puba cut from The Brand New Heavies' *Heavy Rhyme Experience*. The track is hype, and is a great way to end the album. **B-**

**Brian McKnight**  
*Brian McKnight*  
Mercury Records  
Reviewed By Scott Johnson

Brian McKnight has arrived on the R&B scene with his self-titled



Master of ballads

debut album. *Brian McKnight* is definitely on the smoothed out tip as he combines fat beats with soothing lyrics to put together a quality album. Most of the tracks are all purpose slow jams, with the excep-

tion of "Yours" and "I Can't Go For That" which both happen to be the weakest songs on the record. In the remake "I Can't Go for That," McKnight tries to speed things up and add a little rap. It just doesn't fit in with the rest of the album.

But with the exception of those two songs, the rest of the album is definitely slamin'. It is hard to pick the best songs because all of them are equally good. Leading the way is the first released

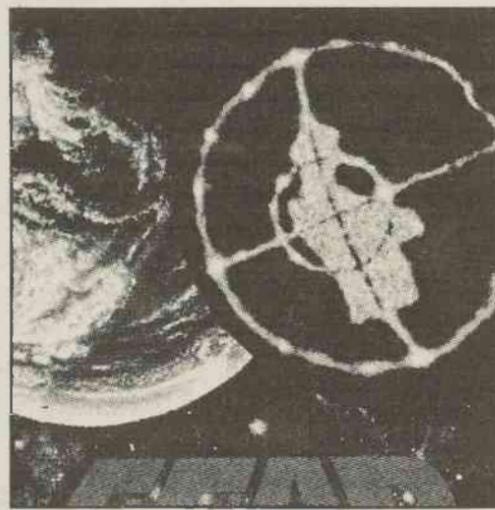
song, "The Way Loves Goes," and following not too far behind are, "One Last Cry," "After the Love," "Never Felt This Way" and "Oh Lord."

Lyrically, McKnight is on point, although most of the songs deal with losing someone you loved. In "One Last Cry," McKnight sings "My shattered dreams and broken heart are mending on a shelf/...Got to get over you/Nothing for me to do/But have one last cry." Musically, the album is smooth because of its light jazz sound.

*Brian McKnight* is a nice, all-around album to listen to, so it is worth buying. In addition, the album is over 60 minutes long, so don't worry about not getting your money's worth. **A-**

**PUBLIC ENEMY**  
*Public Enemy's Greatest Misses*  
Def Jam  
Reviewed by Scott Johnson

After Public Enemy changed its style after their debut album, *Yo Bum Rush the Show*, they managed to revolutionize the rap world with their follow up albums, *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back* and *Fear of a Black Planet*. PE was known for its controversial lyrics and fat samples, and put out hits like "Don't Believe the Hype," "Rebel Without a Pause," "Fight the Power" and "Welcome to the Terrordome." After a disappointing fourth album, *Apocalypse '91 the Enemy Fights Back*, Public Enemy is on the scene again with a compilation of six of



P. E. comes off soft.

their greatest misses and seven remixes of former hits.

Chuck D and Flavor Flav continue their tradition of solid lyrics, but the music seems to be getting progressively worse. Five out of the six new songs are, at best, average, while Flavor Flav's solo "Get of My Back," from the "Mo' Money" soundtrack, brings up the rear. Songs like "Tie goes to the Runner," and "Hazy Shade of Criminal" are the best out of the six.

As for the remixes, there is only one which is better than the original. The remix of "Louder than a Bomb" has a funky beat and is the best song on the album. Another notable remix is the live version of "Shut Em Down," but unfortunately, this is only available on the CD. Other remixes of "Who Stole the Soul," "Megablast" and "Party for Your Right to Fight" are just plain bad.

Public Enemy is rapidly becoming an enemy amongst the black audience as their following is becoming increasingly white. I hoped that PE had gone back to their roots and put together an album that was slamin' like in the old days, but instead I bought an album that was budget.

Don't bother wasting your money on the new or used version of *Public Enemy's Greatest Misses*, and try to dub it from a friend. PE will be coming out with another LP in '93. Maybe they can avoid missing the mark next time.

C-/D+