

Yikes! Gravediggaz' new rap album: this sure ain't for the faint at heart

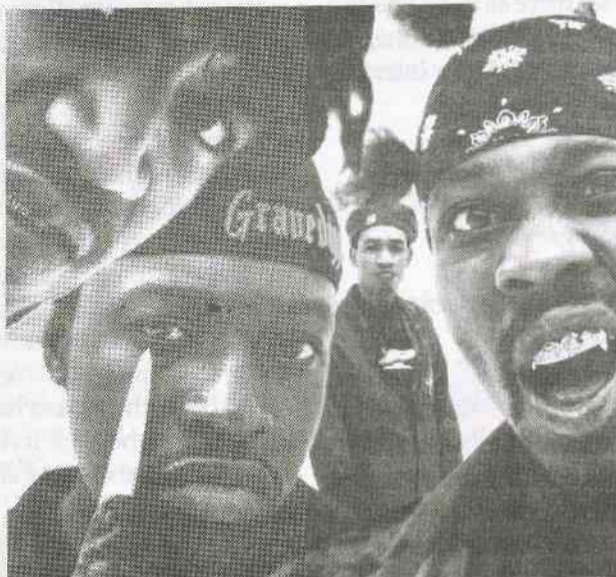
By Lolethia Underdue

Just in time for Halloween comes a new album for all you fans of hardcore rap. While murder and death are chilling subjects for many people, the Gravediggaz glorify these themes in their debut album *6 Feet Deep*.

The Gravediggaz are a splinter group originating from the extremely popular Wu-Tang Clan, another rap group just coming off their own successful debut album. The Rza, a member of Wu-Tang, started and produced the Gravediggaz while he and Wu-Tang were trying to get established.

Their debut album is co-produced by Prince Paul, who has successfully produced groups like De la Soul and Stetasonic.

The Diggaz use a combination of classic hip hop beats and eerie bass lines to showcase their grimy styles on the mic. The first release, "Diary Of A Madman," introduces the themes that appear throughout the album. This song opens with the Gravediggaz in court pleading insanity for charges of murder. They each describe their mental state and the gory acts they committed. Samples of old



Murder and mayhem are served up in the Gravediggaz' new album—just in time for Halloween.

horror movie sound tracks add to the eerie effect.

The follow-up to "Diary of a Madman" is "Nowhere to Run, Nowhere to Hide," another song about murder and mayhem. The track also has vocals performed by Kurious. In this track, the Gravediggaz go into details discussing the fate of those who oppose them.

"Constant Elevation's" hard hitting

beat and dynamic flow give the listener a different angle on the Diggaz style. It's a short showcase of a few of the members in freestyle mode.

"Just When You Thought It Was Over" and "Rest in Peace" are short and spooky, with guest vocals from Biz Markie, Craig G, and King Ice.

"Defective Trip" (Trippin) is definitely one of the better songs on the album. The

lyrical flow is rapid and well-done. This track contains vocals from Biz Markie and MC Serch.

"Blood Brothers" is another one of the Diggaz pieces with a nice flow. This song discusses the group's unity and brotherhood through an affinity for death and destruction.

"1-800-Suicide," as the title suggests, also deals with death. The song flows on in true Gravediggaz style, with material performed by KRS-1 and Just Ice.

For those who do not like heavy metal samples in rap songs "Bang Your Head" is a track you should probably avoid. The chorus, "bang your head," is shouted over an air-guitar background. It is rather loud and not pleasing to the ear.

"Deathtrap," however, is a phat track with good rhythmic flow and guest vocals from Masta Ace. Don Newkirk is on the keyboards.

The album's themes—death, murder and mayhem—are certainly not new to rap music. However, the Gravediggaz are spearheading this type of rap into urban radio where it has not received much airplay.

This album should definitely be checked out by all hardcore rap fans.

Players to present *First Breeze of Summer*

The University Players, ECSU's drama troupe, will present *The First Breeze of Summer* as its first major production of the year. Performance dates are Nov. 2, 3, 4 and 6 at 8:00 p.m. in the Little Theater, located in the G.R. Little Library on campus.

Written by Leslie Lee, *The First Breeze of Summer* was originally produced by the Negro Ensemble Company on Broadway. The play tells the striking story of a middle class Black family in a small Northeastern city as they gather one hot June weekend to celebrate the birthday of Gremmar, the grandmother.

"She is remembering her youth, so there are a lot of flashblack scenes, in which we see her as a young girl with the men who have left her," said Shawn Smith, director of the play. "She is trying to deal with her losses, and, at the same time attempting to pass on the wisdom she has gained from those losses to her grandson."

The Players' production of *First Breeze* will feature a large cast of veteran actors and talented new faces to the Little Theater stage, according to Smith.

Dorothy O. Wills will portray Gremmar; Chester Dunton will appear as her son Milton Edward, and Robin T. Greshman plays Edna, her daughter.

"All three actors have impressed local audiences with previous performances," said Smith.

Wills appeared as Maimie in the Scholarcade Production of Lanston Hughes' *Simply Heavenly*, Chester Dunton has had major roles in numerous Players' production, most notably as that of Troy Maxon in August Wilson's *Fences*.

Robin Greshman has also appeared in numerous productions, mostly recently as Olive Madison in *The Odd Couple*.

For additional information concerning the play contact the University Players' office in the Little Theater or call 335-3436.



Daryl Turner (left) and Bellicia Hines portray Sam Green and Lucretia in The Players' upcoming production of *The First Breeze of Summer*. The play, directed by Shawn Smith, will be performed Nov. 2, 3, 4 and 6 in the University's Little Theater.

Photo by Jamis Jordan