

Passionate and Complex...

Wyclef Jean Still Stayin' Alive

by Michael Fournier
Features Editor

Eclectic: made up of what is selected from different sources.

"*Eclectic-2 sides II A Book*:" the sonic kaleidoscope that is Wyclef Jean's new album.

The Eclectic is Wyclef's second solo release on Columbia Records. His solo debut, *The Carnival* received much critical praise for its abandonment of "traditional" rap music and its inclusion of different musical styles. *The Eclectic* picks up from and expands upon where Clef left off. Jean's aim as a musician and artist is more focused now and the outcome is an album that is passionate and complex and it transcends the boundaries the rap world has built around itself. With *The Eclectic*, Wyclef Jean has emancipated Hip-Hop music.

The genres Wyclef dabbles in are far-ranging and they allow Clef to be creatively unrestrained; he pulls from R&B, Rock, Country, Reggae, and of course, Rap to create *The Eclectic*.

I dare say nobody else could fuse the classic country sound of Kenny Rogers (and get him to sing the hook) with the gritty offbeat flow of *Pharoahe Monch*, as he does on *Dub Plate* without making it sound contrived or gimmicky. Clef layers the drums from Slick Rick's *Mona Lisa* on top of a Ska rhythm and

then for fun adds the WWF's "Rock" for the hook on the club-banger *It Doesn't Matter*. Even Earth Wind and Fire have collaborated with The Product G&B on *Runaway*. Clef proudly declares that he is not sampling Earth Wind & Fire; he actually has them singing on his album.

Not many Hip-Hoppers could ever get the chance to say that.

The beats on the album definitely set Wyclef apart, but the lyrics and concepts also stand out on *The Eclectic*. The first track *Where Fugees At?* gives the listener some insight to the troubles within the Refugee Camp and the fact that all people want from Clef is another Fugees album. The soca-influenced *Perfect Gentleman* deals with exotic dancers and the hostile and often unjustified judgment of the public. In *Hollywood to Hollywood*, Clef addresses gang warfare and the incomprehensible mind set of gang members.

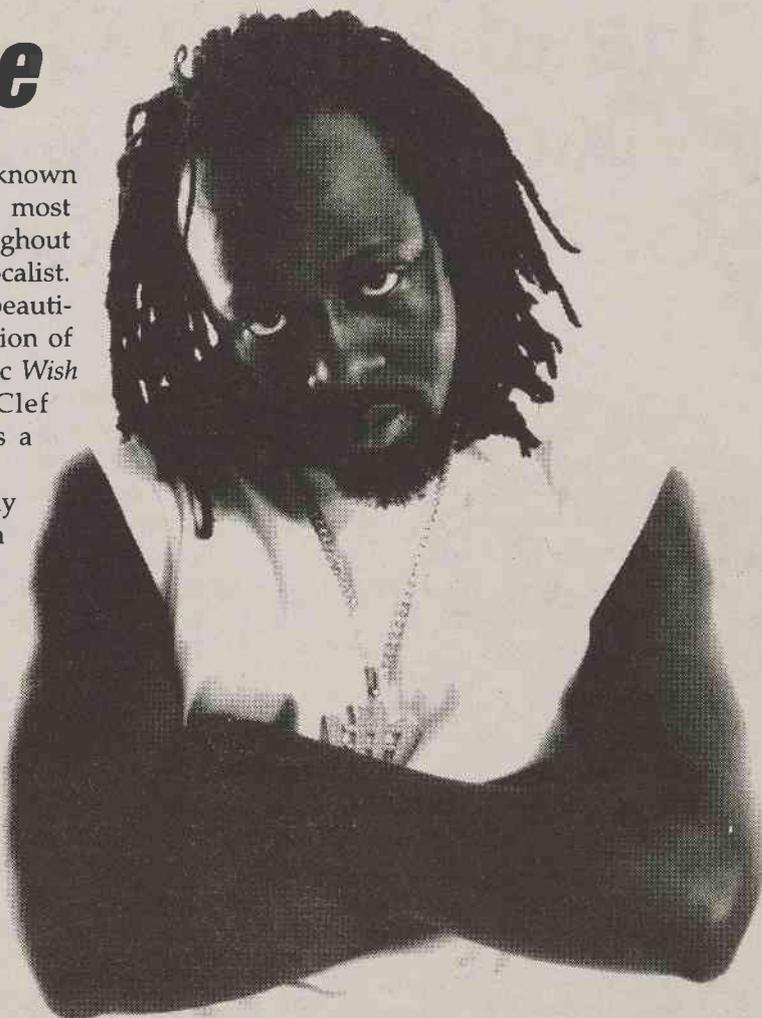
The most moving song on the album, however, is *Diallo*, (Amadou Diallo is the West African immigrant who was murdered by New York police). The song begins with a dramatization of Amadou Diallo's thoughts and actions during the last thirty seconds of his life. Done in the traditional Reggae style, the song is a powerful social commentary as well as a touching tribute.

Although he is known as a rapper, Clef's most moving work throughout the album is as a vocalist. From *Diallo* to his beautiful updated rendition of Pink Floyd's classic *Wish You Were Here*, Clef shines brightest as a singer.

Actually, the only noticeable problem is that the lyrics could have been a little tighter throughout the entire album. That's not to say the lyrics are wack, but Clef's flow has always been very free and many times untraditional in its end-rhyme. His flow is just different, and so to some that means average. Also *911*, featuring Mary J. Blige, is a very touching love song in which Wyclef, once again, delivers a powerful vocal performance, but it seems like Mary was just filling in for Lauryn Hill on that one (*Where Fugees At?*).

Without question though, *The Eclectic-2 Sides II A Book*: is a solid piece of work. It is an album with a wide scope that somehow remains unified and will certainly expand the narrow boundaries of Hip-Hop music.

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University Players Open Fall Drama Season with *Lysistrata*

The University Players, ECSU's theatre troupe, will open the current season with the classic Greek comedy "Lysistrata." The play will be presented on November 8 through 12 in the Little Theatre on the ECSU campus. Each performance will begin at 8:00pm.

Under the determined leadership of Lysistrata, the women of Greece go on strike in order to persuade their husbands to stop fighting each other and end war. The women strike in an unusual way: by refusing their husbands all sexual favors until peace is declared.

The large cast is primarily performed by ECSU students. Kimberly Carter will play Lysistrata, and her fellow "strikers" include Shonte Edmundson as Kleonike, Jessica Yelverton as Myhrinne, Sabrina Brown as Lampito and Nikki Houston as Ismenia. The male roles will be performed by Damond Nolan, Michael Edwards, Keith Burton, Marcus Scotton, Justin Grubbs and Joel Parker among others.

For additional information regarding the play, contact the Players office in the Little Theatre or phone 335-3436.

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