

FEATURES

50 vs. Kanye: Whose album is really worth buying?

Marvin Lattimore
ARGUS STAFF

For the past few years, hip-hop has been on a bit of a losing streak in terms of record sales. Although there have been a few significant events like the return of Jay-Z and Nas, T.I. facing himself, Jim Jones balling out of control, and the South proving they shall rise again (in rap that is), none of these moments were able to sustain rap's previous dominance on the billboard charts. Even though these moments didn't really make that much of a difference saleswise, there looks like there might be two saving graces in hip-hop that might just help it get off its feet again.

50 Cent and super-producer/rapper, Kanye West having been going back and forth promoting their third solo albums prior to their September 11 release. Well the wait is over, and now both albums are out and the world is listening.

Now, before one can go about determining which album to buy, one has to briefly backtrack and remember how this historic event in hip-hop all started. When 50 Cent was having problems with rapper Cam'ron, he decided to change the name of his next album "Before I Self-Destruct" to "Curtis", just to get under Cam'ron's skin. The album, scheduled to

come out in June, was then delayed to Sept. 11. Around the same time Kanye's next album entitled "Graduation", was also scheduled to come out in August, but Def Jam president Jay-Z, then decided to push the album's date back to Sept. 11 as well just to have a little competitive fun with 50 Cent. Then 50 bet Kanye that if his album sells less than Kanye's in the first week of sales, he will then retire from the world of rap.

Since that statement was made by 50 Cent over the summer, the competition has been heating up. Let's do a quick tale of the tape between 50 Cent's "Curtis", and Kanye West's "Graduation".

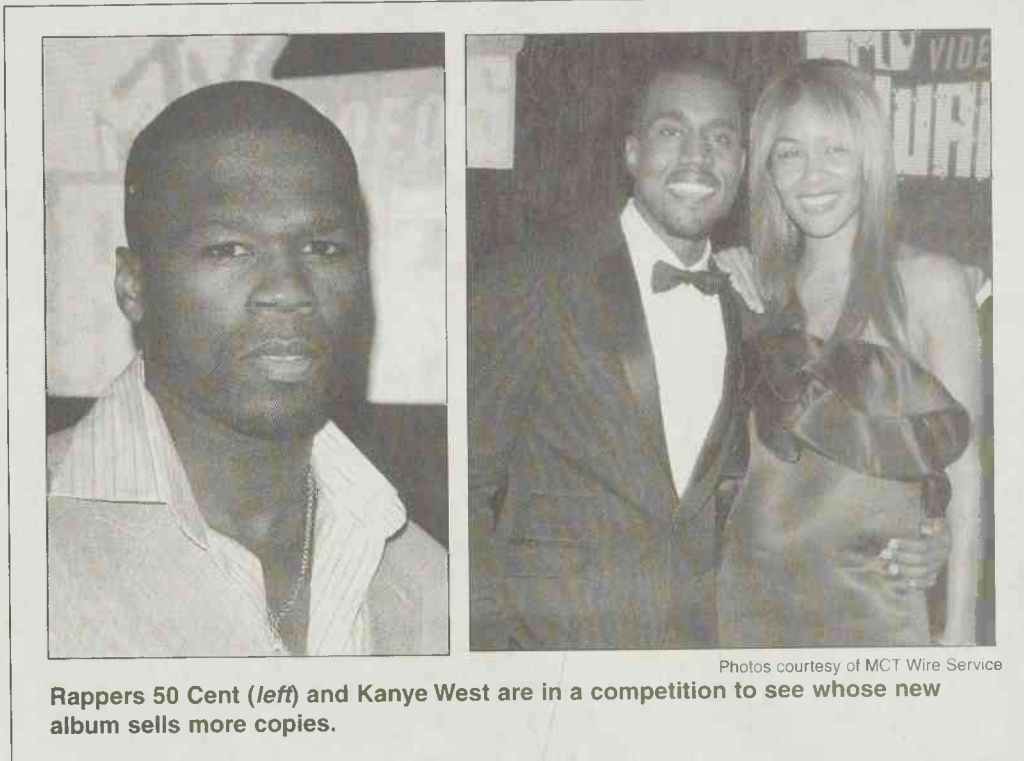
□ Past Results: Both artists are now on their third solo album which is a good thing, but 50 technically had five albums altogether including the movie soundtrack and the G-Unit album. The first two albums for 50 Cent have sold over 800,000 on their first week. Kanye's on the other hand has only sold over 600,000 on the first week alone. So if you've never listened to these two artists' previous work, and you're going by sales, then you know who to buy first. **Advantage: 50 Cent**

□ Production: The beats on both albums are great. Kanye beats were basically

all made by him, but 50's beats were done by Dr. Dre, Timbaland and fellow G-Unit member Havoc. But when you listen to both albums closely, you'll notice that Kanye's beats have more of a natural flow to it, while 50 beats sound more like the last two albums. **Advantage: Kanye West**

□ Collaborations: Originally, West promised that there would be no other artist on his album. Well apparently Mr. West had a change of heart. Some big name artists on the album include T-Pain, Young Jeezy, Lil' Wayne, and Mos Def. However, he does do a good job collaborating with these artists and others like Dwele and Coldplay's Chris Martin. 50 Cent, who once again is collaborating with members of G-Unit, Eminem and Mary J. Blige, decided to take a different approach. He decided to take a softer approach on this album by hooking up with Justin Timberlake, and Akon, Nicole Scherzinger, and Robin Thicke. This is a big change for 50 Cent and it gives him an advantage. **Advantage: 50 Cent**

□ Songs: By the end of the summer, the public had already heard five songs off of 50's album and Kanye only had two out at that point. Kanye's songs really show the rapper's growth in



Rappers 50 Cent (left) and Kanye West are in a competition to see whose new album sells more copies. Photos courtesy of MCT Wire Service

his lyrics and who he picked for the songs. However, it all comes down to "Big Brother", Kanye's dedication to Jay-Z, and 50's hood classic "I Get Money". In the end, 50's songs aren't really much to brag about since they're in the same song formation as the last two, which was making a plethora of gangster songs, a mainstream club hit, and couple of love songs. **Advantage: Kanye West**

□ Overall: 50 Cent's album "Curtis" is really just like the last two albums. However, he does get bonus points for the collaborations on the

album. Kanye West's album Graduation is really like a student graduating from school. You can really see the growth of Kanye rapping and producing skills taking a turn for the better. The only question is whether the world still likes Kanye West. He's had a lot of different temper tantrums on MTV including the Video Music Awards that took place last Sunday. By now, mainstream America might just be tired of Kanye's antics and buy 50's album just to teach Kanye that he's not the only rapper in the world and the world shouldn't revolve around him. However, it's

all about what's inside the album and not in the outside world. **Overall winner:** Kanye West's "Graduation"

There you go folks, Mr. West wins by decision. But you got to give it to 50 Cent though. He knew that Kanye West once stated that his biggest competition in the music business is Justin Timberlake, and 50 did his homework and got a track on the album with Justin, just to give his album a chance. Now we wait until the billboard charts will reveal if 50 Cent dominated once again, or if he will be forced into early retirement.

Unexpected success: first novel

Alexis D'Anjou
ARGUS STAFF

Pen, paper and a passion for writing entered the equation for a Winston-Salem State alumna and her first novel. From Platinum books comes the new book, *Unexpected Interruptions*, by Trice Hickman, Class of '91.

The book is about Victoria Small, an African American woman who has a friendship with an African American man but who soon finds she is also interested in a Caucasian man. Throughout the book she tests the boundaries of love, race, class, and where she fits in.

"I deal with a lot of issues in the black community like skin color bias, class stratification, good hair versus bad hair," Hickman said. "I address them with humor, but I address them so that we can start talking in a dialogue."

"Winston Salem State gave me a really strong foundation," said Hickman. She earned her bachelor's degree in Mass Communications and a master's degree from Wake Forest University ('96). After graduate school, Hickman and her husband moved to Washington, D.C., three weeks prior to 9/11.

"It was a pretty traumatic transition for us," Hickman said.

While in D.C., she continued working on her novel, as well as working a fulltime job. But it was her husband who realized her dream for writing and decided that it was time for her to write fulltime.

"This book would not have been written if it wasn't for number one God and if it wasn't for my husband," she said.

Instead of going the traditional route of sending her manuscript to a publishing company, Hickman decided after a lot of research and effort to own her own publishing company.



Photo courtesy of Trice Hickman

Novelist and WSSU alum Trice Hickman.

On average, it takes about two years for a book manuscript to become the finished product, but it took Hickman less than a year.

"I decided to come back to Winston [Salem] because I feel that as a professional and an artist, my roots are there," Hickman said in reference to the start of her book tour.

She will be on campus for book signing from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Friday, Nov. 2, during Homecoming weekend. Her novel will be released Nov. 1, and will be available wherever books are sold including the WSSU bookstore.

For more information, visit Hickman's Web site: tricheickman.com.

REVIEW

Area shops offer diverse choices

Staci Harris
ARGUS STAFF

Downtown Winston-Salem is full of many shops and restaurants. A popular location is the intersection of Sixth and Trade streets.

The main store at Body and Soul holds boutique, jewelry, scarves, bags, and many other items as well. They also play music from around the world. There is the book area which carries popular and current books for up to 20 to 50 percent off of the cover price. The third part of the store is the gallery, and everything is hand made from Africa, and includes things such as home furnishings, sculptures, and pictures.

"We get a few student customers from different schools, and we are really diverse," said Yvonne Ogbueze, a sales representative and a junior at Winston-Salem State.

Special Occasions, on N. Martin Luther King, Jr Dr. sells church supplies, greeting cards, collectibles, and Greek paraphernalia. Their specialty is books, says the store owner, Ed McCarter.

"Everything is geared toward African Americans," McCarter said. They do not offer student discounts. During holidays, especially Christmas, they may carry

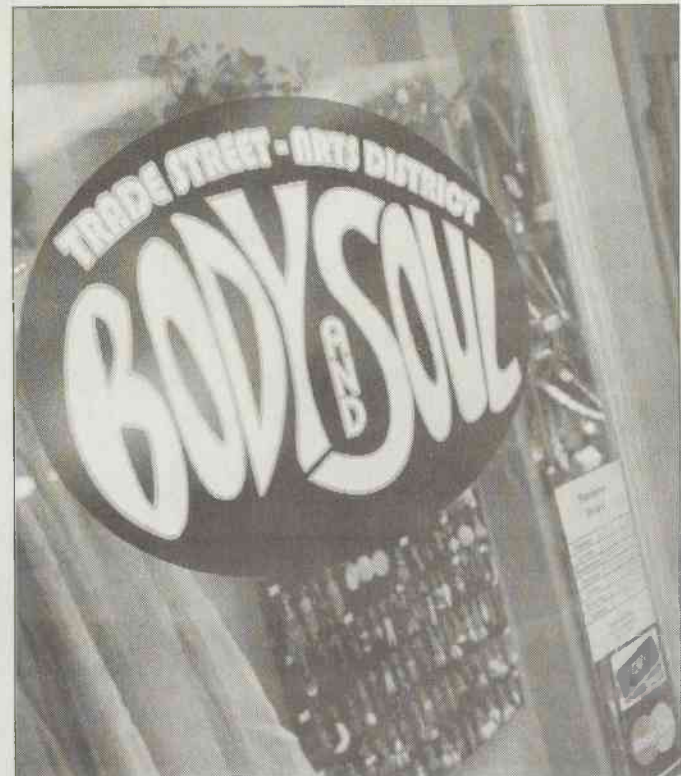


Photo by Garrett Garms

Body and Soul is one of the busier stores in downtown Winston-Salem.

items of ethnic nature, such as figurines, paintings, and Christmas cards. McCarter said most of the students who visit this store also have never been to a African American book store.

Another store which may suit students in the community is the HBCU store, downtown on Fifth Street.

"We specialize in branded apparel targeted more for HBCU alumni and fans for

the universities," said store president, Shannon Fuller.

They offer 10 percent discounts with the coupon found in the student directory. Fuller says they are excited for students being back.

"This time of year is definitely our busiest time of year."

North Carolina legislators draft bills apologizing for slavery

Lynn Bonner
MCT WIRE SERVICE

RALEIGH

More legislators want to apologize for the state's role in perpetuating slavery.

Lawmakers are now being asked to consider not one, but two, resolutions apologizing for the state's role in slavery.

Two state House members, Rep. Larry Womble and Rep. Earline Parmon, Democrats from Winston-Salem, filed a resolution Wednesday apologizing for slavery and its lasting effects.

A leading state senator, Democrat Tony Rand of Fayetteville, introduced a res-

olution Tuesday expressing similar sentiments.

Another House member, Republican Ruth Samuelson of Charlotte, had a resolution ready to file that would have the legislature atone for slavery and discriminatory Jim Crow laws. She decided not to file her resolution, saying

she did not want to compete with Womble.

"The idea is to get it done," she said. "The idea isn't to compete over who gets it done."

State Republican Party Chairwoman Linda Daves issued a statement supporting a state apology.

Womble has a history of introducing bills addressing slavery and discrimination.

Last year, he sponsored a bill that would have had companies doing business in the state examine their records for evidence that they participate or profited from slavery. That bill didn't go anywhere.

The slavery apology has considerably more support among lawmakers.

"It's the right thing to do," Womble said. "I decided to make sure that North Carolina did the right thing by apologizing for this terrible chapter in our state history."