

## Sound Judgment

★★★★	chicken day
★★★★	eagle's nest
★★★	brunch
★★	sat. dinner
★	cereal

### Method Man & Redman Blackout

Def Jam  
★★★★

I don't know about y'all, but I have been waiting for this album to drop since they announced it during last year's Hard Knock Life tour. It finally hit the streets on Sept. 28 and I could not wait to pop it into my CD player and brace myself for the hardcore beats and lyrics that these rap phenomenons were going to display.

What I thought would be one of the greatest collaborations of all time, turned out to be a flop. The album, *Blackout*, was to be a partnership between Redman and Method Man, but instead the album reeks of the sound of a Redman album from beginning to end. From the skits to the majority of the beats, Redman's style dominates this album.

With a few exceptions of tracks produced by Rza (of Wu-Tang), most of the album was produced by Erick Sermon (of EPMD and Def Squad). Don't get me wrong, Sermon's beats are knocking, but they cater to a certain sound that only Redman, Keith Murray, and EPMD can produce. It sounds like the Ticalion Stallion felt lost inside the tracks that Sermon produced. Out of

the 19 tracks on the album, Rza blesses us with his presence on three. On each one of these tracks, Meth takes over the cuts by gracing the mic first. It is obvious that Mr. Meth feels more at home rhyming over his fellow Wu-Tang member's beats.

One of the hottest tracks on the album, "Da Rockwilder", gives a taste as to what the rest of the album should really sound like. Produced by Rockwilder, the lyrics as well as the beat send a statement about the rappers that should have been used throughout the album.

Ja Rule and LL Cool J are featured on a track entitled "4 Seasons." (Is it me or is it every time LL is featured on a song with other hard core Hip-hop artists, his lyrics seem to be the hottest they have ever been?) They also did a remake of Das EFX's "Mic Cheka," renamed "Cheka." Of course the original will always remain a classic, but this is one remake that lives up to the previous success of the original. Another good cut is "Run 4 Cover" featuring Ghostface (of Wu-Tang) and Street. Straight from the Rza's archives, the beats on this track seem to embrace the hard pounding lyrics from each of the artists.

The album rounds out with "Well All Rite Cha," "Big Dogs," and "How High" (the remix). These all are on previous records that Redman and Method Man have produced.

Overall the beats and lyrics are good, but the album is lacking the sounds of the other main voice that is supposed to be on this album, Method Man! If you liked Def Squad's album and Redman's albums you'll love this, otherwise you can wait to pick this one up.

- Fatimah McAllister

### TERROR SQUAD TERROR SQUAD - THE ALBUM

Atlantic  
★★★★

When Terror Squad dropped "Capital Punishment" last summer, all hell broke loose. All of a sudden people were buzzing about the supposed heir to Biggie's throne, and were placing him in the same category with Nas and Jay-Z as one of hip-hop's most respected lyricists. Riding the wave of Pun's success is Terror Squad, a group of young upstarts (with the exception of rap veteran Fat Joe), who attempt to make their mark with *Terror Squad - The Album*.

For the most part, *The Album* is a solid effort. The group's six members, Big Pun, Fat Joe, Cuban Link, Armageddon, Prospect, and Triple Seis, all possess lyrical talent and display the grimy, "thugged-out" style that has the East coast on lock. This is best displayed on Pun's solo shot "Whatcha Gon' Do?," which features his trademark scatter-shot rapping over an ill violin arrangement. The song almost borders on mediocrity as Pun's

delivery sounds rushed and panicky, but it is saved by JuJu's production and Pun's hilariously sung chorus. "War" featuring Triple Seis is another winner as producer V.I.C. blesses the track with an alternating piano and violin phrase. Adding a twist to the album's "terror" theme is the introspective "As The World Turns" featuring Cuban Link and the crooning of R&B newcomer Tony Sunshine.

The only problem with *The Album* is the lack of identity between the lesser known acts and the muddled production. Also, with the exception of "War's" alternating drum patterns and the bass-driven melody of "Tell Me What U Want," most of the songs feature the same instrumentation: cinematic string arrangements and murky piano loops that sound like they were dug by Havoc. This makes many of the tracks, as well as the MC's rhyming on them, hardly distinguishable.

Surprisingly enough, the album's show stealer is Bronx veteran Fat Joe, who outshines the crew with his simple, yet commanding flow. While the Squad's other members sport a "how-many-words-can-I-fit-in-one-measure" cadence, Joe eases back and rides the groove to perfection.

While *Terror Squad - The Album* isn't as perfectly executed as it was conceived, it is still a solid effort that will have heads banging along the Eastern shore. Fans of Noreaga, DMX, and Ja Rule, don't sleep. *Terror Squad - The Album* is a worthy addition to your street soundtrack.

-Phonte Coleman

### The Organization wins opening spot at homecoming gig

By ANGERIA LIPFORD  
ECHO STAFF WRITER

NCCU rappers Phonte Coleman, Thomas 'Pooh Bear' Jones, Chaundon, and vocalist Aziz Collins—the Organization—had the audience coming out of their seats and dancing in the aisles at Apollo Night on Oct. 20.

The group won the second of the two rounds that night.

Singing duo Heaven and Brandis won the first round of the night after performing Whitney Houston's and Mariah Carey's theme song from Disney's *The Prince of Egypt* film.

Heaven and Brandis, along with The Organization will perform Saturday, Oct. 30, in the Homecoming Show at the McLendon-McDougal Sports Arena at 9 p.m.

The annual Apollo Night was at B. N. Duke Auditorium and was sponsored by the Alfonso Elder Student Union Activities Board.

Steve Harvey was played by Cedric Bowers, and co-hostess Taisha Isbell. Sandman Simms, - or, in this case,



CRYSTAL FOREMAN/Staff Photographer

From left: Aziz Collins, Thomas 'Pooh' Jones, Phonte Coleman, and Chaundon of NCCU hip-hop crew *The Organization*.

"Sandwoman" - was played by Letitia 'T' Melvin.

The lovely Kiki Shepard was played by Activities Board President Marquita Shepard. Music was provided by DJ Bro-Rabb and Earthquake Productions.

The show was divided into two rounds. The Organization and Heaven and Brandis, the winners from each of these rounds will be opening acts for the Destiny's Child homecoming concert at NCCU.

## Salsa sizzles at Carolina Theatre

By RAINAH SIMMONS  
ARTS EDITOR

Established in 1973 under the leadership of pianist, Jesus "Churcho" Valdes, Irakere is a 12-member ensemble from Cuba. In 1978, Irakere was the first the band to perform in the United States since the Cuban Revolution. They performed at the Carolina theatre on Oct. 24.

### Review

Irakere  
The Carolina Theatre  
Oct. 24

This is Irakere's first U.S. tour since the 1980's because of strained Cuban-American relations. When they won Grammy Awards in the Latin Music category in 1979 and 1980 they were not allowed to come to the United States to accept their awards.

This Cuban salsa jazz band sizzled their way into the hearts of the audi-



ence. Irakere means "jungle" in the dialect of Western Nigeria. They play the jungle well. The band is animated and electrifying.

The trumpets blazed into the nights. The percussionists tapped out illuminating beats. The saxophones melodically flowed into the rhythms laid by the precise playing of the keyboard player. The soloists sang the spirited and upbeat music with an earnest desire for crowd

participation.

Their music is powerful, innovative and unique. Irakere takes all these words to another level.

You cannot simply listen to their music; it jumps right off the stage.

If you want to have a party, Irakere is the band you want to invite. Their vigorous movements and energetic performance rocks the crowd in a way not seen a lot of concerts.

## 'Showtime' for Naughty Boyz

By CEDRIC R. BOWERS  
ECHO STAFF WRITER

The dance group The Naughty Boyz, which includes three North Carolina Central University students, was approached by a producer from "Showtime at the Apollo," after performing in a local talent show. Impressed by their performance in the show, he gave them news that would change the rest of their lives: he wanted them to tryout for the show the following weekend in New York.

The following weekend they were on their way to Harlem, N.Y. to audition for the show. The Naughty Boyz lineup includes NCCU sophomore Keith Allbrooks, freshman Chris Murphy (both from Maxton, N.C.), sophomore Hulon McIver, and Adonis Bridges, a freshman from Columbus, Ga.

Other members include Marvin Bridges, Lee Mack and Robert Bridges. The Naughty Boyz were chosen as number eight to appear on the show. Taping began Aug. 28. The group were to appear on Showtime at the Apollo for three consecutive weeks in October. The first showing was on Oct. 16. The group donned silver jump suits and danced to Doo Doo Brown's "I Wanna Rock."

Bridges.

They came in first place and while giving their thanks, were quick to throw up the "Eagles" sign.

The following Saturday also saw the group's repeat performance of their hit dance routine where they were once again chosen as the winners.

"We were nervous at first because of all the acts, but at the same time we were excited because we were finally experiencing a dream we thought we would never be able to

realize," said NCCU sophomore and group member, Hulon McIver.

Those who missed these two airings can catch them again this Saturday at midnight on NBC.

While in New York, the Naughty Boyz met celebrities such as Eve, Tia and Tamara, Case, Ginuwine, The Wiz, and the show's host, Steve Harvey.

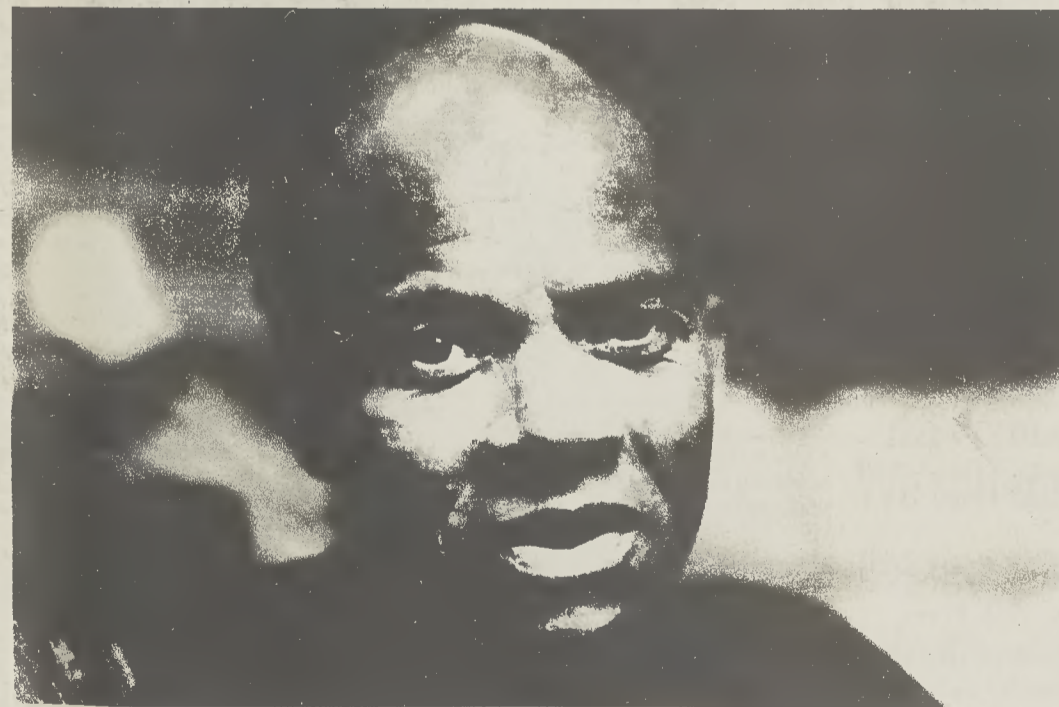
"The Apollo was a once in a lifetime experience," said Allbrooks. "It's a dream come true that we will never forget," said Murphy.

"This experience is something we had been waiting on for a long time, one goal we had set for ourselves," said Adonis Bridges. "My brother and I have been dancing for ten years and this is finally proof that our hard work has paid off, and we would just like to thank God for allowing us to experience this dream."

The Ex Umbra and the Department of English welcome acclaimed novelist

## John Edgar Wideman

author of *The Cattle Killing*



Friday, November 5

at 7:30 PM in the Miller Morgan Building

Also reading will be DANIEL WIDEMAN

and 1999 Winner of the Cave Canem Prize NATASHA TRETHERWEY

Admission is Free