

1D ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



Jay-Z's 'The Black Album'

By Jesse Washington
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — Is Jay-Z really retiring? Listening to "The Black Album," it truly looks like this world-class hustler is leaving the rap game like he left the drug game: on top.

Jay-Z and drug dealing are like the needle and the groove.

REVIEW Starting with the 1996 classic "Reasonable Doubt," Jay-Z spent seven albums building his whole style and persona on a cocaine connection. "You already know what I'm about," he raps on the new track "What More Can I Say," then proceeds to recite a list of felonies and related vices that would give C. Dolores Tucker an instant seizure.

"What More Can I Say" begins with a clip of Russell Crowe in the "Gladiator," roaring "Are you not entertained?" to a blood-thirsty crowd. It's an apt analogy for today's criminal-minded rap music — men from the bottom acting out a deadly spectacle.

Drug dealers are always struggling with the right moment to retire. Jay-Z escaped that life with enough money to launch his rap career. Now he plans to escape the rap race without ending up like Michael Jordan in his final low-flying season. And "The Black Album," full of complex, witty raps and soulful beats, is as good as anything Jay-Z's ever done.

"December 4" is the same story Jay-Z's told throughout his career — the story of his life — but he makes it fresh with his trademark verbal dexterity and by adding his mother's voice to the chorus. It's another potent installment in Jay-Z's career-long justification of his old lifestyle, his explanation to the world of why he is who he is. On "The Black Album," with song titles like "Justify My Thug" and demands to "feel my truth," the man wants you to understand, literally, where he comes from.

Jay-Z also spends considerable time claiming to be the best rapper of all time (he may have a point, if you consider consistency) and talking about retirement ("They never really miss you 'til you dead or you gone/ So on that note I'm leaving after this song"). And he stops briefly to take aim at critics who've accused him of a variety of offenses, hitting dead-on each time.

To those who don't like him quoting Biggie Smalls: "I'm not a biter, I'm a writer for myself and others/ I sell you Big's

Please see IS JAY-Z/2D

Above reproach in hip hop world



Eminem has owned up to making a song full of racist lyrics about black women.

By Artellia Burch
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Eminem, the self-proclaimed worst thing since Elvis Presley to do black music so selfishly may be racist as well.

OPINION

Last week The Source magazine held a press conference and released a song of disrespect authored by Eminem.

Here are some of the lyrics, *black and white they sometimes mix / but black girls only want your money cause they're dumb chicks* or lyrics like *black girls are dumb and white girls are good chicks / white girls are good; I like white*

girls.

After the song was released, Eminem released a statement saying he was a teenager who had just broken up with a girlfriend when he wrote those lyrics.

"The tape they played today was something I made out of anger, stupidity and frustration when I was a teenager," he said.

But The Source has confirmed that the tape was manufactured in 1993, making Eminem at least 21 years old.

My question is where are the big headlines about Eminem and his racist, sexist remarks? Why is no one calling him to the carpet like they have done to black artists?

Michael Jackson's face is all over the country for an alleged action, while this guy has confirmed he made this tape. Yet his face isn't blasted on everyone's television screen.

Although, I'm outraged, I'm not surprised that none of the black rappers have said anything. Why? Because most of hip-hop's heavyweights gave Eminem their stamp of approval when he first released his debut album on Aftermath Records, which is owned by Dr. Dre formerly of N.W.A.

Where's Missy Elliot now that we need her opinion on Eminem? When her opinion was unsolicited

Please see SILENCE/3D

Magazine: Eminem a lyrical racist

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — Editors of the hip-hop magazine The Source have accused the rapper Eminem of racism because of lyrics on a tape they said dates from 1993.

The recording, which David Mays and Raymond Scott played Tuesday at a press conference in midtown Manhattan, allegedly features Eminem, who is white, rapping about a breakup with a black girlfriend.

The rapper says in part, "Black girls are dumb, and white girls are good chicks."

The Source said in a press release that the tape was provided to the magazine by "three white hip-hop fans from Detroit who were peers of Eminem in the early 90s, at the time of the recording."

Eminem acknowledged last week that he was the rapper on the tape.

"The tape they played today was something I made out of anger, stupidity and frustration when I was a teenager," Eminem said in a statement through a spokesman.

"I'd just broken up with my girlfriend, who was African-American, and I reacted like the angry, stupid kid I was. I hope people will take it for the foolishness that it was, not for what somebody is trying to make it into today."

Mays and Scott, who is known as Benzino, have clashed with Eminem in the past. The Source published a poster in February 2002 featuring Scott holding Eminem's decapitated head.

In his statement, Eminem said Mays, Scott and the magazine "have had a vendetta" against him, his record company and its artists "for a long time."

Eminem, whose legal name is Marshall Bruce Mathers III, won a Grammy for best rap album for "The Slim Shady LP" in 2000.

Endowment honors America's jazz greats

By Verena Dobnik
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — Count Basie. Miles Davis. Ella Fitzgerald. Dizzy Gillespie. Sarah Vaughan.

These are some of the names that have been previously honored as America's "Jazz Masters" by the National Endowment for the Arts.

Last week at Manhattan's LaGuardia High School for Music and Art, the title of NEA Jazz Master was expanded to include a jazz advocate — music critic Nat Hentoff.

The others awarded were guitarist Jim Hall, rhythm instrumentalist Chico Hamilton, pianist Herbie Hancock, arranger-composer Luther Henderson and

vocalist Nancy Wilson. "America is filled with underutilized, underemployed artists," NEA Chairman Dana Gioia told an audience that included LaGuardia high school students.

Established in 1982, the NEA Jazz Masters program adds more great jazz names to its roster each year. The goal is to select living artists who have made exceptional contributions to the advancement of jazz. Each "Jazz Master" is to receive \$25,000.

The NEA is working with the Verve Music Group on a commemorative double CD set of recordings by 28 "Jazz Masters" to be released in January. In addition to a nationwide tour that will bring jazz to all 50 states,

hour-long audio profiles of the winners will be aired.

Those awarded are chosen through nominations submitted by the public, then reviewed by a panel of jazz experts. To date, 73 jazz artists have been named "Jazz Masters."

Hall, this year's winner as guitarist, turned professional when he was 13. He has recorded nine CDs in the past decade.

Hamilton, a bandleader, began as a teenage sideman with Lionel Hampton, Duke Ellington and Ella Fitzgerald.

Hancock performed as a solo pianist with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra when he was 11 and by 1998, won three Grammys for his recording "Gershwin's World."



Beenie Man, international reggae star performed in Charlotte last week along with Tanto and Metro.



Jay-Z
The Black Album
Various producers
Rockafella Records



The quickest way to get my attention on a hip hop or rap record is to effectively use an of school sample. Jay-Z has this down to an art form. He

doesn't jack beats, he makes them his own and gives credit where credit is due. Could you ask for better?

Sure. This is Hova's swan song, so an immediate classic was in order. That's not what this is, but it also doesn't have to be. "The Blue Print," "Hard Knock Life" and his "Unplugged" CDs would make any rapper's career a huge success and are what other rap albums can be judged against.

So is "The Black Album"

There are times when Jay-Z gets gansta and starts to hate. "99 Problems" seems to be directed at law enforcement, but on another level it's probably directed at someone specific. "Threat" is a response to the many who say Jay-Z has gone commercial and soft. He hasn't. He just knows how to extend a career.

With nearly 500,000 copies moved the first week, "The Black Album" is a great way to close a career. At 33, Jay-Z is getting long in the tooth for the rap game (according to

fans' buying habits, not my personal assessment). The old man is going out with a sizable bang.

Ratings

Classic;	☆☆☆☆
Excellent;	☆☆☆☆
Good	☆☆☆☆
Fair	☆☆☆☆
Why?	☆☆☆☆
No stars — A mess	☆☆