

SHAQUILLE O'NEAL-SHAQ DIESEL

With the release of SHAQ DIESEL Shaquille O'Neal proves that he is not just a basketball player but a multi-dimensional entertainer. O'Neal is the latest in the line of athletes who wanna-be rap-stars (remember Darryl Strawberry and Rocket Ismail?) but he seems to have actual talent. At first listen "SHAQ DIESEL" seems to be nothing more than a shameless self-promotional release, with Shaq repeatedly referring to himself in the first person, and going on about how bad he is. But you have to know the type of individual that O'Neal is, he brags but in a comical manner, so it doesn't come off too arrogantly (HATE TO BRAG, and I'M OUTSTANDING). As a great basketball player knows, the key to a winning product is to surround yourself with a great team, and O'Neal follows this by having rap stars like Def Jef, Erick Sermon (from EPMD), and the Fuschnickers help him out. Shaq has a strong, deep voice much like Chuck D, or Ice-Cube, and he raps with force. All of his songs are filled with basketball terminology, and like any other rap album, a plethora of name-dropping occurs mentioning everyone from Shawn Kemp to Clint Eastwood. The best line comes from the best song, "I KNOW I GOT SKILLZ", 'I'll treat you like Spielberg you get your ass kicked in the Park.' Overall this is a decent album that is worth a listen. **RATING 7/10**

DJ JAZZY JEFF & THE FRESH PRINCE-CODE RED

Jazzy Jeff and The Fresh Prince are one of the most successful rap duos of all time, but lately they have moved into other endeavours (producing and acting respectively) that has taken the edge off the skills that they once had. Since they are two of my favorite performers I really looked forward to this release and was unfortunately disappointed. They seem to be stuck in the same rut that they were in HOMEBASE, as they don't do anything new. This is supposed to be an album of maturation, but they haven't really made any new strides. This isn't a bad CD, it's just that with their past achievements I expected so much more. The best song is the dance floor smash "BOOM!SHAKE THE ROOM" which has a pounding rhythm and is their best cut since "SUMMERTIME". Other songs worth mentioning include: "CAN'T WAIT TO BE WITH YOU" and "I'M LOOKIN FOR THE ONE (TO BE WITH ME)". All in all, the album is an average release, but one that pales in comparison to what they can do. **RATING 6/10**

LL COOL J- 14 SHOTS TO THE DOME

LL Cool J is back and he is more hardcore than ever. The first track, "HOW I'M COMIN'", explodes from the speakers as Cool J keeps his stranglehold as one of the original pioneers of rap. The album is filled with what is expected from LL, but also shows that Cool J doesn't stick to his roots, as he varies his style slightly

from "MAMA SAID KNOCK YOU OUT". There is, of course, the expected 'sex rhyme' that he is known for with the mellow, pumping sound of "BACK SEAT" that continues the trend of songs like "BIG OLE BUTT". One of the best songs on the CD is the retrospective, "FUNKADELIC RELIC" where he incorporates samples from some of his best songs from "RADIO" to "MAMA SAID KNOCK YOU OUT" to give a history of his highly successful career. Definitely a must-listen for both Cool J fans and any rap disciple. **RATING 8.5/10**

SCOTT MACDONALD

El Seven Nite Club Featuring Big Sugar with guest vocalists

When I saw this tape I thought it might be interesting; a recording made at a night club where vocalists get to sing things other than the usual fare. Some of the guest artists were Tyler Stewart (Barenaked Ladies), Lee Aaron, and Morly Johnson (The Infidels).

What I discovered was that these people should stick with what they normally sing. I have never heard such a mangled version of "House of the Rising Sun" in my life, thanks to Mitch Krol from Masochistic Religion. The high point was the House band: Big Sugar. They backed everyone and did a few solos. I don't think this is an album I will ever grow to love, but then again Jazz/Blues isn't my usual style and that was the focus of the album; however, if

that is your style, you might want to check it out. I would advise that you borrow it from someone before you buy it.

ALDERA CHISHOLM

God Shuffled His Feet The Crash Test Dummies (BMG)

No more "Superman's Song", the Crash Test Dummies have changed. For the better? I'm not so sure. This Winnipeg-based band is both unique and intriguing. They are distinctive basically because they do not write about fluff—i.e. crying over lost loves. They are quite philosophical at times, questioning anything. The slightly erotic "Swimming in Your Ocean" leads from theological speculation to pregnancy anxiety, and "How Does a Duck Know" is a simple song that gives formulations of the ancient and persistent problem of evil. In their first album, *The Ghosts that Haunt me*, the Dummies had an almost folksy, old-time, relaxed sound. This has been replaced with aggressive, rhythm-driven and restless music in *God Shuffled His Feet*. Some people may love this, and it's always great to see a band change and expand, but in my mind too many things in this world are fast-paced, and to see the Dummies get swept up in the pace of our world is disappointing. At least they still have Brad Roberts' deep and sexy voice. This album is worth listening to just for that!

REBECCA MOORE

