

Hip-Hop Cornered



CL Smooth

PETE ROCK AND CL SMOOTH The Main Ingredient (Elektra)

The main ingredient is the second album from Pete Rock and CL Smooth. The first, *Mecca and the Soul Brother*, was highly acclaimed and launched Pete Rock on a solo production run for acts from NAS to Michael Jackson. He offers a very accessible style, sampling from well known oldies, which makes for a musical, tight, polished overall feel.

Main ingredient has more of an R&B feel to it than most hip-hop, it's almost too clean.

CL Smooth appears most on the album and is a positive, highly skilled brother who obviously thinks about his lyrics and their effect on his community. He's not using any of the trendy 'fillers' that plague rap.

Being a father is a recurrent theme, along with his obvious love for his wife. Overall CL and Pete Rock are milky and *Main Ingredient* is refreshing, positive and without a body count.

Check 'World Wide' for vintage Pete

Rock and 'Main Ingredient' for most innovative KRS One sample. Well worth the thirty bucks.

BRAND NUBIAN Everything Is Everything (Elektra)

This is Brand Nubian's third album. The first was an up-beat classic, the second was a ward militant classic and this one is... different.

'Word Is Bond' is the single and shows the trend of the whole album. There is a female vocalist who appears in a good percentage of the songs, giving them a soft, almost mushy feel.

'Alladat' is really the only stand-out, and features Busta Rhymes in the chorus and outstanding Sadat X verses.

The posse cut is blah, with a brother calling himself Snaggle Puss (a pink lion!?) making a feeble attempt at a 'new style'.

The Brand Nubian rawness has been replaced with musical slickness, making for a mediocre album. I hate to say it, but *Everything Is Everything* lacks something.

BLACK SHEEP Non Fiction (Mercury)

Finally! I've been waiting for this for years. After their debut, *A Wolf In Sheep's Clothing*, I was itching to hear part two. Disappointed is the word to describe my feelings when I heard it. Dres is still an excellent rapper, who amazes me with his brilliance, and the songs where he is solo are great ('Autobiographical' and 'Do Your Thing') but every other song has the DJ producer Mr Lawnge rapping as well. He is an average rapper and put next to Dres he is blah! His annoying rhymes pop up all over the album and render it almost unlistenable. There is none of the humour that was ever present in their debut and no really outstanding beats. It's like they are painting by numbers. If I could make an edit without Mr Lawnge it would be better.

AG guests on 'E.F.F.E.C.T.' and the Legion guest on 'Weboys' but on the whole this is pretty ordinary. Dres needs to go solo!

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