

Advisory Board xxi

Foreword by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. xxii

Introduction xxix

PART I: 1978–1984—THE OLD SCHOOL 1

Afrika Bambaataa 15

Zulu Nation Throwdown 17

Planet Rock 21

Kurtis Blow 24

Rappin Blow (Part 2) 25

The Breaks 27

If I Ruled the World 29

Brother D with Collective Effort 32

How We Gonna Make the Black Nation Rise? 33

Eddie Cheba 37

Live at the Armory 1979 (1) 38

Cold Crush Brothers 40

Live at Harlem World 1981 42

Live at the Dixie 1982 44

Weekend 46

Fresh Wild Fly and Bold 48



vi Contents

- DJ Hollywood** 52
 Live at the Armory 1979 (2) 52
- Funky Four + 1** 57
 from Rappin and Rockin the House 58
 from That's the Joint 60
- Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five** 64
 from Live at the Audubon Ballroom
 (12/23/78) 65
 from Superrappin 68
 The Message 73
 White Lines (Don't Don't Do It) 77
- Lady B** 81
 To the Beat, Y'all 81
- Sequence** 85
 from Funk You Up 85
 from And You Know That 88
 from Simon Says 89
- Spoonie Gee** 89
 from Spoonin Rap 90
 Love Rap 93
 (See also "The New Rap Language" [Treacherous
 Three])
- Sugarhill Gang** 96
 from Rapper's Delight 97
- Treacherous Three** 106
 The New Rap Language 107
 from Kool Moe Dee's Battle with Busy Bee (1981) 110
- Tanya ("Sweet Tee") Winley** 112
 Rhymin and Rappin 113
 Vicious Rap 115



PART II: 1985–1992—THE GOLDEN AGE 119

Beastie Boys 130

Paul Revere 131

Sure Shot 132

Shadrach 134

Big Daddy Kane 136

Raw 137

Wrath of Kane 139

Ain't No Half Steppin' 141

(See also "'95 Freestyle" [The Notorious B.I.G.]

Boogie Down Productions 145

Poetry 145

Criminal Minded 148

My Philosophy 151

South Bronx 154

Blackman in Effect 156

De La Soul 159

My Brother's a Basehead 160

Millie Pulled a Pistol on Santa 162

Stakes Is High 165

Eric B. & Rakim 168

Eric B. Is President 169

Paid in Full 170

My Melody 171

I Ain't No Joke 174

Microphone Fiend 176

Lyrics of Fury 178

Gang Starr 181

Step in the Arena 181

Just to Get a Rep 183



viii Contents

- Words I Manifest (Remix) 185
- Ice-T** 187
 - 6 'N the Mornin' 187
 - Colors 192
- Kool G Rap** 193
 - Road to the Riches 194
 - Streets of New York 197
 - Rikers Island 199
- Kool Moe Dee** 201
 - Go See the Doctor 201
 - How Ya Like Me Now 203
 - I Go to Work 206
 - (See also Treacherous Three)
- LL Cool J** 209
 - Rock the Bells 209
 - I Can't Live Without My Radio 211
 - I'm Bad 214
 - I Need Love 217
 - I'm That Type of Guy 219
 - Mama Said Knock You Out 222
- MC Lyte** 225
 - 10% Dis 225
 - I Cram to Understand U 228
 - Cappuccino 230
- NWA** 232
 - Dopeman (Remix) 233
 - Fuck tha Police 237
 - Gangsta Gangsta 241
 - Straight Outta Compton 245
- Public Enemy** 248
 - Miuzi Weighs a Ton 249
 - Black Steel in the Hour of Chaos 251



Rebel Without a Pause	253
Fight the Power	256
Welcome to the Terrordome	257
Queen Latifah	261
Evil That Men Do	261
Elements I'm Among	263
Run-DMC	265
Sucker MC's	266
It's Like That	268
Peter Piper	270
Proud to Be Black	272
Salt-N-Pepa	274
Tramp	275
Let's Talk About Sex	276
SchoollyD	278
P.S.K. What Does It Mean	278
Saturday Night	280
Roxanne Shanté	283
Roxanne's Revenge	283
Independent Woman	286
Slick Rick	289
La Di Da Di	290
Children's Story	292
I Shouldn't Have Done It	294
(See also "Auditorium" [Mos Def])	
Too \$hort	296
Cusswords	297
The Ghetto	302
A Tribe Called Quest	304
I Left My Wallet in El Segundo	305
Check the Rhime	308
Award Tour	310



x Contents

- Ultramagnetic MCs 312
 - Ego Trippin 313
 - Critical Beatdown 315
- X-Clan 317
 - Grand Verbalizer 318
 - A.D.A.M. 321

PART III: 1993-1999—RAP GOES MAINSTREAM 325

- Arrested Development 333
 - Tennessee 333
- Bahamadia 335
 - Spontaneity 336
- Big L 337
 - Ebonics (Criminal Slang) 338
- Big Punisher 340
 - from* Capital Punishment 340
 - '95 Freestyle (feat. Fat Joe) 342
- Bone Thugs-N-Harmony 344
 - Tha Crossroads 344
- Busta Rhymes 347
 - from* Scenario (A Tribe Called Quest) 347
 - Put Your Hands Where My Eyes Could See 348
- Canibus 350
 - Poet Laureate Infinity 3 350
- Chino XL 357
 - What Am I? 358
 - Wordsmith 361
- Common 363
 - I Used to Love H.E.R. 364
 - The 6th Sense 366



The Light	368
A Song for Assata (feat. Cee-Lo)	369
(See also “Act Too . . . The Love of My Life” [The Roots])	
Digable Planets	372
Rebirth of Slick (Cool Like Dat)	373
DMX	375
Damien	376
Who We Be	378
E-40	380
Sprinkle Me (feat. Suga T)	380
Foxy Brown	382
My Life	383
BK Anthem	385
Freestyle Fellowship	387
Can You Find the Level of Difficulty in This?	388
The Guidelines (Aceyalone)	391
The Fugees	394
Vocab	395
Fu-Gee-La	397
Ready or Not	399
Goodie Mob	401
Cell Therapy	401
Hieroglyphics	404
Cab Fare	404
Classic	406
Virus (Del)	408
Lauryn Hill	410
Doo Wop (That Thing)	410
Lost Ones	412
Final Hour	414
(See also The Fugees)	



xii Contents

Ice Cube 416

- The Nigga Ya Love to Hate 417
- It's a Man's World (feat. Yo-Yo) 419
- A Bird in the Hand 423
- It Was a Good Day 425
- (See also NWA)

Jay-Z 427

- Dead Presidents II 427
- Hard Knock Life (Ghetto Anthem) 430
- Renegade (feat. Eminem) 431
- December 4th 434
- 99 Problems 436
- My President Is Black (D.C. Mix) 438

KRS-One 439

- Sound of Da Police 439
- MCs Act Like They Don't Know 441
- (See also Boogie Down Productions)

The Lady of Rage 443

- Afro Puffs 444
- Unfucwitable 446

Lil' Kim 448

- Queen Bitch (feat. The Notorious B.I.G.) 448
- (See also "Quiet Storm" [Remix] [Mobb Deep])

Mia X 450

- Hoodlum Poetry 450

Mobb Deep 453

- Shook Ones, Pt. II 454
- Quiet Storm (Remix) (feat. Lil' Kim) 456

Nas 459

- from* Live at the BBQ (Main Source) 459
- N.Y. State of Mind 460
- Life's a Bitch (feat. AZ) 463



from The World Is Yours 464
 Ether 466
 Black President 469
 (See also “My President” [Young Jeezy])

The Notorious B.I.G. 471
 '95 Freestyle (feat. Scoob, 2Pac, Shyheim, and Big
 Daddy Kane) 471
 One More Chance (Remix) 475
 Ten Crack Commandments 477
 I Got a Story to Tell 479

Outkast 482

Ras Kass 483
 Ordo Ab Chao (Order Out of Chaos) 484
 Interview with a Vampire 486

The Roots 490
 The Next Movement 491
 from Act Too . . . The Love of My Life (feat.
 Common) 493
 You Got Me (feat. Eve and Erykah Badu) 495
 Web 497

Scarface 499
 Mind Playing Tricks on Me (Geto Boys) 500
 I Seen a Man Die 503

Snoop Dogg 505
 Nuthin but a G Thang (feat. Dr. Dre) 505
 Gin and Juice 508
 from Freestyle Conversation 509

2Pac 511
 Brenda’s Got a Baby 512
 Dear Mama 514
 So Many Tears 516
 from All Eyez on Me 518



xiv Contents

- Changes 519
- How Long Will They Mourn Me (feat. Nate Dogg, Big Syke, Rated R, and Macadoshis) 521
(See also “’95 Freestyle” [The Notorious B.I.G.])
- Twista** 524
 - Emotions 524
- UGK** 527
 - Murder 528
 - Dirty Money 530
- The Wu-Tang Clan** 532
 - Protect Ya Neck 533
 - C.R.E.A.M. 537
 - from* Bring the Pain (Method Man) 539
 - Duel of the Iron Mic (GZA) 540
 - Incarcerated Scarfaces (Raekwon) 542
 - Brooklyn Zoo (Ol’ Dirty Bastard) 545
 - Daytona 500 (Ghostface Killah) 546
 - The M.G.M. (Ghostface Killah and Raekwon) 549
 - Triumph 550
 - Shakey Dog (Ghostface Killah) 554

PART IV: 2000–2010—NEW MILLENNIUM RAP 559

- Aesop Rock** 570
 - 9–5ers Anthem 570
 - No Regrets 573
- Atmosphere** 575
 - Fuck You Lucy 576
 - Sunshine 578



Beanie Sigel 579
 The Truth 580

Blackalicious 582
 Alphabet Aerobics 582
 My Pen & Pad 584

Brother Ali 585
 Room with a View 586
 Picket Fence 587

Cam'ron 590
 Get It in Ohio 590

Cee-Lo 592
 Childz Play (feat. Ludacris) 593
 (See also “Cell Therapy” [Goodie Mob])
 (See also “Benzi Box” [DOOM])

The Clipse 595
 Grindin 595
 Zen (feat. Roscoe P. Coldchain and Ab Liva) 597

dead prez 600
 Police State 600
 Hip-Hop 602

Devin the Dude 604
 Briarpatch 604

DOOM 606
 Benzi Box (feat. Cee-Lo) 606
 Saliva (as Viktor Vaughn) 608
 Figaro 609

Eminem 611
 Just Don't Give a Fuck 612
 The Way I Am 614
 Stan 616
 Lose Yourself 619
 Mockingbird 621



xvi Contents

- When I'm Gone 624
(See also "Renegade" [Jay-Z])
- Eve** 626
 - Love Is Blind 626
(See also "You Got Me" [The Roots])
- Eyedea & Abilities** 628
 - Bottle Dreams (as Oliver Hart) 629
 - Now 630
- Lupe Fiasco** 632
 - Dumb It Down 633
 - Hip-Hop Saved My Life 635
- 50 Cent** 637
 - 50 Shot Ya 638
 - Ghetto Qua'ran 640
(See also "Hate It or Love It" [The Game])
- Jean Grae** 642
 - Lovesong 643
 - Hater's Anthem 645
 - Don't Rush Me 648
- Immortal Technique** 650
 - Dance with the Devil 650
 - Industrial Revolution 654
- K'Naan** 656
 - What's Hardcore? 656
 - My Old Home 658
- Talib Kweli** 661
 - RE:DEFinition (Black Star w/Mos Def) 661
 - For Women 663
 - Give 'Em Hell 666
- Lil Wayne** 669
 - from* Tha Block Is Hot 669



- I Feel Like Dying 670
- Live from the 504 671
- Dr. Carter 672
- Little Brother** 675
 - All for You 675
- Ludacris** 677
 - Southern Hospitality 678
 - Hip Hop Quotables 680
 - (See also “Childz Play” [Cee-Lo])
- M.I.A.** 682
 - Sunshowers 682
 - Paper Planes 684
- Pharoahe Monch** 686
 - Releasing Hypnotical Gases (Organized Konfusion
w/Prince Poetry) 686
 - Simon Says 690
 - Desire 691
- Mos Def** 692
 - Hip Hop 693
 - Mathematics 695
 - Dollar Day for New Orleans (Katrina Klap) 697
 - Auditorium (feat. Slick Rick) 699
 - (See also “RE:DEFinition” [Black Star w/Talib Kweli])
- T.I.** 701
 - T.I. vs. T.I.P. 702
 - U Don’t Know Me 703
- Kanye West** 705
 - All Falls Down 706
 - Jesus Walks 708
 - Homecoming 709
 - Can’t Tell Me Nothing 711



xviii Contents

- Young Jeezy 713
 from Put On 714
 My President (feat. Nas) 715

LYRICS FOR FURTHER STUDY 719

- David Banner/Cadillac on 22's [2003] 719
Binary Star/Reality Check [2000] 720
Biz Markie/Vapors [1988] 723
Black Sheep/The Choice Is Yours (Revisited) [1991] 725
Camp Lo/Luchini [1997] 727
Crooked I/Grindin (Freestyle) [2003] 729
Das EFX/They Want EFX [1992] 731
Deep Dickollective/For Colored Boys [2007] 733
DJ Jazzy Jeff & the Fresh Prince/Summertime [1991] 737
Drake/Say What's Real [2009] 738
Edan/Fumbling Over Words That Rhyme [2005] 741
Missy Elliott/The Rain (Supa Dupa Fly) [1997] 742
EPMD/Strictly Business [1988] 743
The Fatback Band (feat. King Tim III)/King Tim III (Personality
 Jock) [1979] 746
The Game (feat. 50 Cent)/Hate It or Love It [2005] 748
Jadakiss/Why [2004] 750
Jay Electronica/Exhibit C [2009] 752
Jedi Mind Tricks (feat. R.A. the Rugged Man)/Uncommon Valor:
 A Vietnam Story [2006] 755
Jeru the Damaja/Come Clean [1993] 757
Joell Ortiz/Letter to Obama [2008] 759
Juvenile/Ha [1998] 760
Kardinal Offishall/BaKardi Slang [2000] 762
Medusa/*from* This Pussy's a Gangsta [2007] 764



Contents **xix**

Naughty By Nature/Everything's Gonna Be Alright (Ghetto Bastard) [1991]	765
Nelly/Country Grammar (Hot Shit) [2000]	768
Nice & Smooth/Sometimes I Rhyme Slow [1991]	770
O.C./Time's Up [1994]	771
Pete Rock & C.L. Smooth/They Reminisce over You (T.R.O.Y.) [1992]	773
The Pharcyde/Passin Me By [1993]	775
Poor Righteous Teachers/Rock Dis Funky Joint [1990]	777
Sage Francis/Makeshift Patriot [2003]	779
Smothe da Hustler & Trigga da Gambler/Broken Language [1995]	782
Special Ed/I Got It Made [1989]	785
Stetsasonic/Talkin All That Jazz [1998]	786
Afterword by Chuck D	789
Afterword by Common	797
Acknowledgments	801
Notes	803
Index of Songs, Albums, Movies, and Books	809
Index of Artists, Authors, and Labels	819
Credits	829

