

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
<i>from</i> Rappin and Rockin the House	58
<i>from</i> That's the Joint	60
Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five	64
<i>from</i> Live at the Audubon Ballroom (12/23/78)	65
<i>from</i> 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
<i>from</i> Funk You Up	85
<i>from</i> And You Know That	88
<i>from</i> Simon Says	89
Spoonie Gee	89
<i>from</i> Spoonin Rap	90
Love Rap	93
(See also "The New Rap Language" [Treacherous Three])	
Sugarhill Gang	96
<i>from</i> Rapper's Delight	97
Treacherous Three	106
The New Rap Language	107
<i>from</i> 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
Schoolly D	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
<i>from</i> Capital Punishment	340
'95 Freestyle (feat. Fat Joe)	342
Bone Thugs-N-Harmony	344
Tha Crossroads	344
Busta Rhymes	347
<i>from</i> 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



<i>from</i> 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
<i>from</i> 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
<i>from</i> Freestyle Conversation	509
2Pac	511
Brenda's Got a Baby	512
Dear Mama	514
So Many Tears	516
<i>from</i> 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
<i>from</i> 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
<i>from</i> 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/ <i>from</i> 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
Smoothe 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



This page intentionally left blank