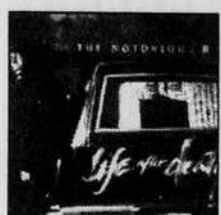


Rapper's post-mortem release blends various talents, hot beats



REVIEW
Life After Death
The Notorious B.I.G.
★★★★
(rap)

By Chris Hutchinson
Oregon Daily Emerald

Recently deceased rapper The Notorious B.I.G.'s second release, *Life After Death*, is a 24-song, double CD collection on which he raps about his life experiences.

"I write about situations and problems that occur in my life, and the experiences I've had doing all the records and tours have been exciting," B.I.G. said in a press release.

Apparently, he has had quite a journey from his days of hustling on the streets of Brooklyn to rapping through your CD player.

Life After Death features guest appearances from many of B.I.G.'s fellow artists, including Puff Daddy, Mase, Lil' Kim, The Lox, R. Kelly, Jay-Z, Angela Winbush, Too Short, 112, DMC and Bone Thugs-N-Harmony.

"All the people that appear on the album are friends or people that I have relationships with," B.I.G. explained.

Notorious B.I.G. translates his experiences into short stories on each track. Many people helped produce the various tracks on this collection from Sean "Puffy" Combs to RZA of Wu-Tang Clan.

"I got a lot of beats from all over...but I basically



Famous rapper The Notorious B.I.G. was killed in a drive-by shooting March 9 in Los Angeles.

chose just the hot ones," B.I.G. said. He is correct — the beats are hot.

My favorite song from this collection is "Hypnotize," which is aired frequently on MTV. The song is notable because the beat, rhythm and rhyme

flow incredibly well. It should be on the top-10 single list for a while.

"Ten Crack Commandments" is an interesting song that sets down the rules for the drug "game." If you follow these rules, "you'll have mad bread to break up, if not, 24 years on the wake up," raps B.I.G. The voice of Chuck D from the rap group Public Enemy is sampled, and the scratching on this track is top-notch.

Bone Thugs-N-Harmony add their vocal talents to the song "Notorious Thugs." Although I'm not a Bone fan, I did enjoy this track. It has a sentimental feel and would effectively evoke feeling in audiences if it were included in a movie.

"Playa Hater" is a humorous song in which B.I.G. actually sings. He should receive creative credit for being entertaining and for trying something different from traditional rap.

This album represents a wide variety of songs and beat talent. Sometimes artists, in any classification of the music world, tend to sound the same in every song. This is not the case with Notorious B.I.G. He presents a catalog of tracks that will be a huge hit for years. B.I.G. himself put it best: "I'm basically trying to show the world that the sophomore slump has nothing to do with me."

200 ENTERTAINMENT

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