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AIDS awareness album proves 'Red Hot'

CD review

Aaron Shakra
 Pulse Reporter

The Red Hot Organization aims to raise funds and awareness about HIV and AIDS. During the past 10 years, they have released a slew of albums under the "Red Hot + " moniker.

These compilations include exclusive, original music, and are organized by theme. "Red Hot + Rhapsody" was a tribute to George Gershwin. "Red Hot + Lisbon" featured music from the Portuguese-speaking countries of the world. These, of course, are just a few examples.

The latest album, "Red Hot + Riot," is probably the most poignant and

timely release in the series yet, given that the musician of focus — the late, great Fela Anikulapo Kuti — died of AIDS-related causes in 1997.

Kuti was a West African musician, purveyor of polyrhythms, and his own brand of music is commonly known as "Afrobeat." The large body of music he was responsible for throughout his career as a musician was often intertwined with the politics of the African continent. His influence on Western music in the past 20 years still remains largely unrecognized.

"Red Hot + Riot" features Kuti's music, but these aren't just tracks pulled from his voluminous discography. They're covers that, at various times, sample and recombine

Kuti's lyrics and music with brand new music, vocals and words. These tracks sound more focused and integrated than typical "re-interpretations," such as the various Bob Marley techno projects cast onto the marketplace. This is directly related to the bevy of artists — true musicians — involved. Dead Prez, Jorge Ben, Les Nubians and Sade Adu are just a few of the names involved in the project.

Even Femi Anikulapo Kuti — Fela Kuti's son, who has followed in his father's musical footsteps and has long been recording albums of his own — provides vocals and plays saxophone throughout the record. He's not the only other Kuti — Funke and Yeni Anikulapo Kuti contribute vocals to a handful of the tracks.

The result is a top-notch product, all the way down to the liner notes and design. In reading that "AIDS is no longer an emerging epidemic — it is a global emergency — perhaps the worst health crisis in human history



... In the time it takes to listen to this album, 150 Africans will become infected with HIV/AIDS," the listener gets a sense of immediacy of this problem the entire world is facing.

Mostly, what comes across in this music is content and purpose. But, of course, any album with Kuti's music is likely headed for success.

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Hockaday

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sorority picked their pledges, and by the end of the first hour and a half, the pledges were already breaking the rules and blatantly disrespecting authority — an authority that Becca was reluctantly in charge of. She was already being forced into a "bad guy" role, forcing the pledges to follow rules that they didn't want to, keeping the partying to a minimum despite the pledges' obvious desire to take body shots off anything that moved, that kind of thing.

And after a couple more shows like this, I wanted to call Becca and console her. Because while she wasn't getting torn to shreds, she certainly wasn't coming across as the Becca I knew.

Then things turned around. The pledges turned to petty in-fighting, and when they did challenge authority, it started coming down on other girls in the sorority, not Becca. In fact, Becca was horned into the "mediator" role — a cooler head prevailing over all the sorority backbiting and double-crossing.

In one episode, she was elected president for the 2002-03 year dur-

ing a banquet that was marred by controversy between old members and pledges. But Becca stayed above it all, serenely enjoying the moment for what it was. I was so proud, I wanted to cry.

In the end, Becca's magnetic personality came through, finally answering my one big question about reality television. When Becca was saved, I knew that good people will come across as good people, no matter the medium.

In the last show, as two girls decided to not join the house, one of the girls gave a tearful speech in which she blubbered "And ... I just really want to thank ... Becca ... for everything." And in an MTV.com "cast commentary," this same pledge said "I want to thank Becca ... she was great and constantly stood her ground! Girl, I cannot thank you enough!"

And Becca, I, too, cannot thank you enough. You gave me faith in the system, easing my fears for hours of reality television to come.

In this reality show, it seems, Becca was the sole survivor.

Contact the sports editor at peterhockaday@dailyemerald.com. His views do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.

Reel

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think that cassette four-tracks, which belong to the analog world, are a dying breed. Both Mumford and Dalbey use their home computers to record music as well, but say four-tracks aren't becoming extinct by any means.

"With a four-track, you get a more natural sound," Dalbey said. "A computer doesn't have the warmth and depth." Dalbey also credits the machine's price, \$100 to \$400, and accessibility as factors in its continued use.

And four-track popularity isn't limited to bedroom musicians. Artists like Beat Happening and the Moldy Peaches have released albums recorded on four-tracks.

However, Mumford cautioned that using four-tracks takes patience.

"There's a lot of things you can do in the digital realm with the push of a button that takes a lot of work to do with a four-track."

Nonetheless, he said musicians have more room to experiment and create different effects and sounds using multiple four-tracks.

Guitar Center employee Dan Lorenz said the store still sells a large number of four-tracks.

"It's portable, much less compli-

cated and all self-contained," Lorenz said.

Musicians interested in purchasing a four-track should consider

"I think a lot of people underestimate the value of stuff recorded on a four-track."

Brian Mumford
 local musician

whether or not they want a digital or analog (cassette) machine, and how many inputs they need. Dalbey, who recommends Tascam and Fostex brands, said a quality microphone is crucial to quality recording.

Although four-tracks are relatively small in size, the machine's contribution to the musical process is immense. It gives any musician the chance to record and share work — instead of limiting it to those with limitless funds.

"I think a lot of people underestimate the value of stuff recorded on a four-track," Mumford said. "I admire the low production quality stuff, especially compared to slick, corporate music."

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