

CHILD'S WEB

Have we reached peak rapper naming? Stage names aren't new — particularly in hip hop; James Todd Smith is LL Cool J, and Sean Combs is (once again) Puff Daddy. But lately it seems the well of rapper nom de plumes is creatively dry; I'm looking at you Yung Turd and Mr. Muthaduckin' eXquire. This brings us to **Childish Gambino** — a great name by any measure, mixing innocence and menace, like good hip hop should. And legend has it Childish Gambino's creation story began with an online Wu-Tang rap name generator.

If Gambino looks familiar, he probably is — in a parallel universe he is Donald Glover, an actor, writer and comedian perhaps best known from TV's *Community*. Now focused on music, Gambino released his second studio record in December 2013, the critically acclaimed *Because the Internet*. Like Glover, *Internet* is ceaselessly creative and post-modern, like an unending loop of glitchy techno alongside cut 'n' paste hip hop, avant-soul and funk — all with a heavy dose of '70s baby-makin' sleaze.

"It's probably easier to answer how much time I don't spend on the internet," Gambino told *Time Magazine* last year, "which would probably be the time when I'm sleeping." And the ADHD-inducing quality of life online is reflected in the record. On the mic, Gambino is as relaxed and playful as a guy who started in standup comedy, which he did. A natural performer, he frequently recalls a less bombastic Kanye, particularly in the line-ending guttural honks on album track "The Worst Guys."

Lyrically, Gambino doesn't quite pull off the dirty stuff; instead of the hardcore sociopathism of Lil Wayne, Gambino leaves you kinda wanting to wash his mouth out when he raps, "In the garage/ I had a ménage." But overall, his flow is confident — if somewhat nerdrageous — name-dropping Tyler Durden and Coachella like a hip-hop equivalent to Patton Oswalt.

Childish Gambino's Deep Web Tour featuring special guest Danny Brown continues 7 pm Friday, May 9, at Cuthbert Amphitheater; \$35 adv., \$40 door. — William Kennedy



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