



CLEARING THE FIELD

Motion Man f/ Kutmasta Kurt
Threshold records

MO-Shun-MA-HAN! You know who he is—the guy with the honorable mention on the beginning of the remixed Linkin Park cut “In the End.” Anyway, if Kool Keith had a lyrical twin, Motion Man, with his all-over-the-place storytelling-style, would be it—“Motion combos sharp wit flotation like sharks in ocean/ Attacking human flesh like I’m Tyson of Jeffery Dhamer/ Got the skills to kick your ass or eat your ass.” Although “Clearing the Field” features complimentary lyricists Biz Markie, E-40, Planet Asia and Kool Keith, the icing comes from the enhanced portion of the disc. These signature flash movies do well in their attempt to add to the Motion Man and Kutmasta Kurt persona through rudimentary animation—make sure you view the videos at their website. Expect one of these cuts to become underground faves: “Straight Flowin’ on ‘Em,” “Make It and Sell It. Recoup,” “We Work Styles,” “Beotch,” and “Winner Takes All!! (Knockout Kings 2002).” Threshrecs.com

RIOT BY CANDLELIGHT

Sleep
Under the Needle Recordings

Seattle’s got three good things: Starbucks, Bill Gates and Sleep...waitaminute, who the fuck is Sleep? With a raspy voice reminiscent of that deadlocked dude from Young Black Teenagers, Sleep shoots off words and syllables like a Gatling gun does bullets. His skills don’t stop there; seems that he’s got a penchant for storytelling. On “12023 33rd Northeast” with its “Our house in the middle of the street” chant talks about the killing of a grandmother to keep a happy home permanent. On “Angelique” he talks about child abuse. 18 tracks might be too much thinking for the average person, so it’d sit better if you just took your time when listening to this one. Stuckundertheneedle.com

LIBERATION

Tré Hardson
Flying Baboon Music

Tré is better known as Slim Kid Tré of defunct four-some The Pharcyde. He’s the one that sang some of his lyrics (like on LabcabinCalifornia’s “She Said”). I don’t know whether to think of Liberation as a neo-

soul or rap album. Tré rocks tracks either way, but I’d have to say his soulful singing does better at moving you. Listen to “Watcha Do,” “Just Can’t Hold,” “Life is Love,” and “Everything” and figure it out for yourself. I think he should sing more. Production from Evidence, Fat Jack, Suga Pop, and The Angel tighten up the music, while guest artists—including Slam artist award winner Saul Williams, Jurassik 5’s Chali 2na, the legendary MC Lyte, and former Brand New Heavies singer N’Dea Davenport—provide the depth and soul. Flyingbaboon.com

SURRENDER

Seek
Soulestial Elements

Seek, a six-person band from the ATL, hailing from the same camp that India.Arie rooted. Their sound is like an acoustically enriched, smoothed-out house Sade. Their first album “Venus and Mars,” an independent release, sold well. With lead singer Lisa Terry’s voice belting out soft whispery lyrics, Surrender is definitely something you pop in when you need to wind down. Look for the reassurance of your woman in “Right Here,” the live band sound of “Give,” and up-tempo love song “Sky High” to lock you into Surrender. Seekronized.com

BEYOND REAL EXPERIENCE Vol. 2

DJ Spinna
Beyond Real Recordings

DJ Spinna has produced tracks for artists like Michael Jackson, De La Soul, Mos Def, Pharoahe Monch, Mary J. Blige and Eminem. Spinna takes what he knows from Hip-Hop, breakbeat, classic soul funk and jazz, and house to mold 18 solid tracks. (Spinna’s tracks introduce old school nuances tweaked to an unexplored level. Check out “Spittin’” with its George Clinton “Under the Sun” samples.) Artists Guru, Akil, Shadowman, Mr. Complex & El Fudge, and Sadat X and a host of others only add to his already dope instrumentals. Look for “So what,” “O.K.,” “Plan X,” and “This Ain’t a Game” to vie for exposure. Djspinna.com

INTERVIEW: THE X-ECUTIONERS



If you asked me what my favorite show of the whole year was, I would say without pause the X-ecutioners with their show at Carrboro, North Carolina’s The Cat’s Cradle. These 3 DJs are sick. For most of you that’ve seen the “It’s Going Down” video, that’s just a grain of sand in the X-Men desert.

The X-Men have been using all their body parts to tweak beats since the late ’80s. They were just some NYC DJs who just battled and practiced together. The X-Men really only wanted to be the champions of NY but ended up grabbing the world. The group has had many line-ups, but currently have three members—Grand Master Roc Raida, Rob Swift and Total Eclipse. Until recently they haven’t really had the major exposure they deserved, but with their team-up with Linkin Park that’s changed. Now they rep turntablism harder than anyone one else.

The X-ecutioners have been on the road with The Anger Management Tour with Eminem, Xzibit, Ludicris, and Papa Roach but seem to not have any anger issues, only funny bones, which they use as a device to rock their 12s.

Why are yawl so badass? And what do yawl eat to make you that way?

RR: I eat weed cakes. **RS:** I’m so badass because I’m open minded and blessed by the almighty God. I eat a lot of pasta, chicken and salad. **TE:** Because I wear jerseys. I eat chicken.

What Kind of car do yawl have?

RR: Benz ML320. **RS:** A 2002 Ford Explorer. My next car is a Range Rover. **TS:** I have a GS 430, but I want to trade it for a GEO.

REQUIRED AUDIO



What's the craziest thing to happen to yawl on The Anger Management Tour?

RR: One night a fan jumped on stage while Slim was on and security grabbed him (the fan) real fast and beat his ass. **RS:** Women showing us their breasts while we performed. **TS:** When I almost bust my ass doing a spin onstage.

What's your favorite juggle?

RR: My Salt & Pepper, "Push It." **RS:** My routine with "Nobody Beats the Biz." **TE:** I don't beat juggle, I only juggle women...in a kind way.

Who's your favorite X-Men character?

RR: I like them all. **RS:** Cyclops. **TE:** The Beast from the East.

Roc Raida—

Do you still rock the helicopter hat? HELL NO. You're funny for that one. **Why do inmates on death row have to shave before being fried?** I guess to go out lookin' their best? **How many states still have the death penalty?** I have no idea. 37, maybe?

Rob Swift—

Did grow up being a "real anal" kid? I used to have perfect attendance at school. **Are you gonna do any more projects with Stonestrow?** Maybe in the future. Look out for my new solo album, "Sound Event," October 29 on Tableturns Records. **How were witches killed during the witch-hunts?** Stoned to death or burned at the stake.

Total Eclipse—

How often do total eclipses occur? Whenever I strip butt-naked. **What's the name of your new solo joint?** Tha Hottest Shit of the Year. **How many states offer more than four options of death for the death penalty?** Texas, Texas, Texas, and last but not least, Texas!