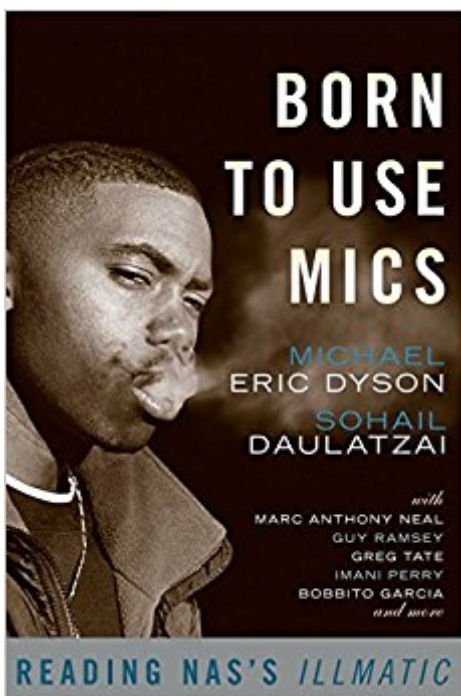




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Born To Use Mics: Reading Nas's Illmatic



Synopsis

At the age of nineteen, Nas began recording tracks for his debut album and changed the music world forever. Released in 1994, *Illmatic* was hailed as an instant masterpiece and has proven one of the most influential albums in hip-hop history. With its close attention to beats and lyricism, and riveting first-person explorations of the isolation and desolation of urban poverty, *Illmatic* was pivotal in the evolution of the genre. In *Born to Use Mics*, Michael Eric Dyson and Sohail Daulatzai have brought together renowned writers and critics including Mark Anthony Neal, Marc Lamont Hill, Eddie S. Glaude, Jr., and many others to confront *Illmatic* song by song, with each scholar assessing an individual track from the album. The result is a brilliant engagement with and commentary upon one of the most incisive sets of songs ever laid down on wax.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Though not an overwhelming chart success when released in 1994, Nas's album *Illmatic* has long been hailed as a hip-hop masterpiece, whose sales steadily climbed until in 2001 it attained platinum status (i.e., one million-copy U.S. sales). Editors Dyson and Daulatzai corral a team of all-star commentators, including themselves, to assess the album's merits and its place in the larger cultural context. Arriving at the very end of hip-hop's "Golden Age," *Illmatic* pointed the way for hip-hop's post-gangsta crossover into and alteration of the pop-music mainstream. The essays aren't easy reading, but they

constitute a vital book for readers eager to understand the history of the genre. As Daulatzai observes, "There is something about Illmatic that transcends the categories of hip-hop, though at the bottom line, Illmatic is just a dope album, embodying everything that is hip-hop while mastering what matters most: beats and rhymes. An absolute must for serious pop-music collections. --Mike Tribby

Booklist "A vital book for readers eager to understand the history of the genre."

This book was very informative and explored thoroughly by the authors. Illmatic is a true classic and needs to be examined and dissected as this novel does. Great insight on the history of this groundbreaking album and all the necessary producers that produced this exquisite masterpiece. How it got made and the necessary people that made it possible. The east coast was looking for something to embrace because at the time the west coast was becoming the source of current hip hop classics. Lyrical the east has always been the best not to say their aren't any lyrical cats elsewhere but the west was more into production of the musical renaissance. This album was influential in other classic's been made like "Ready To Die" and "Reasonable Doubt". Biggie might have taken the album art cover idea but "Reasonable doubt" samples the music from the classic "Illmatic" Also to know that "halftime" was on the "Zebra Head" soundtrack. Nas dropping classic verses on "Live at The Barbeque" and MC Search putting Nas on "Back to the Grill" and shopping his demo. The east-coast had group's dropping classics but not individual artist like the west-coast. This book is truly informative and deserves Five Mics for being written.

Excellent read... In my collection... Very intelligent man

Fire

My son was excited to get this

Brilliant

Great

Great read. Excellent book

Good condition

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