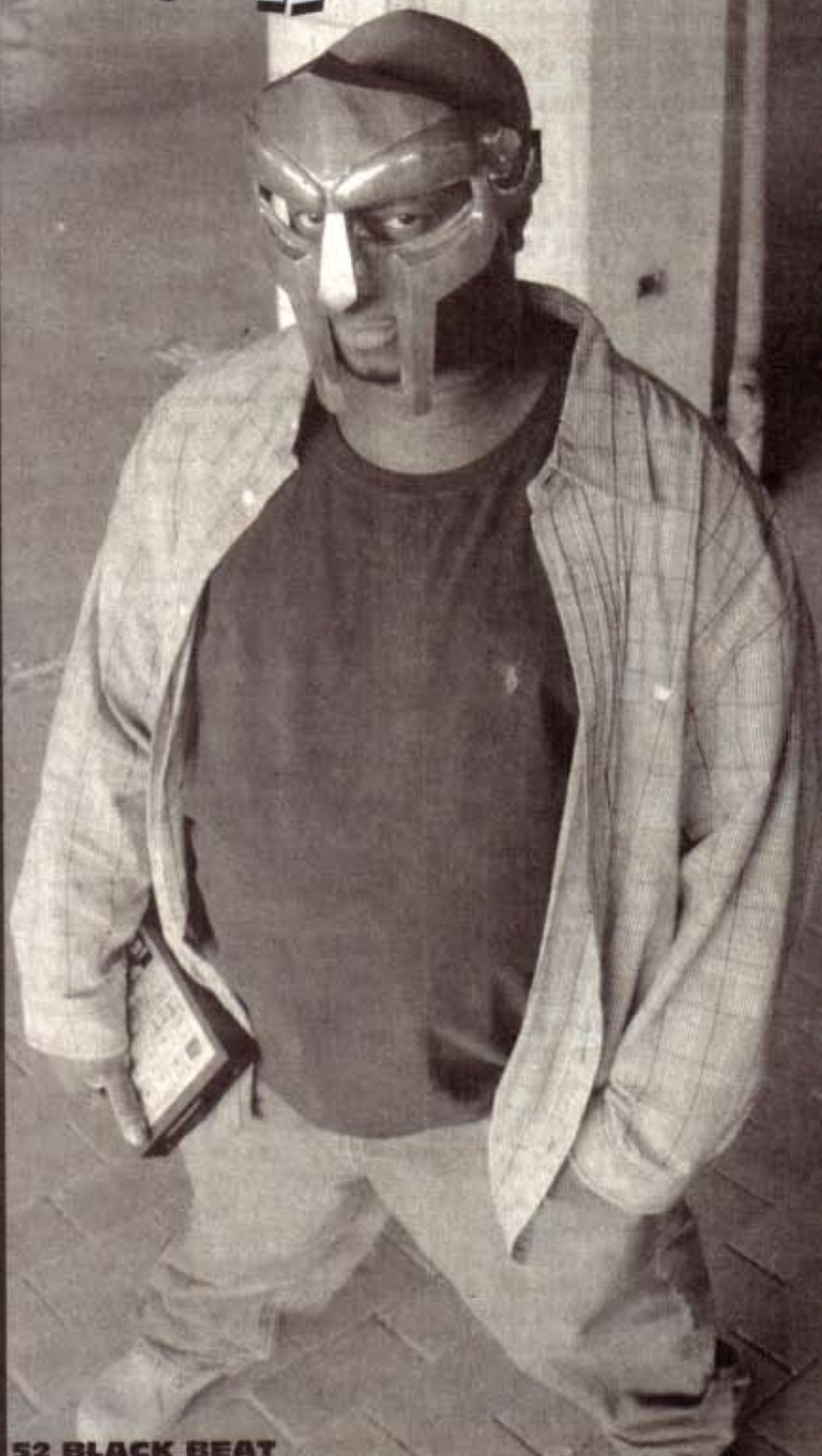


Wapo

Round-up



MF DOOM

Part Of A Well-Balanced Diet

He's the man behind the rusty iron mask. His face has remained a mystery over the years as he spit a venomous flow that melted away anyone who opposed his lyrical prowess, while unleashing his wrath on unsuspecting and wack-rythmin' foes. He recently teamed up with the subsonic mastermind of hip-hop's underground, Madlib, in an attempt to take over the world. Their masterpiece, *Madvillian*, was their weapon of mass destruction. This time around, the man known as MF (for Metal Face) Doom wants you to sit down at a table with him, one-on-one, man-to-man and... enjoy a delicious meal.

This mask-wearing villain actually began life as the mild-mannered Daniel Dumile. A London-born kid who became a New York City inhabitant, he became Zev Love X and with his brother DJ Subroc joined together to form the once popular K.M.D. (positive Kause in a Much Damaged society). Together they released music with a humorous and positive energy that was laced with some light political rhetoric. Along with the likes of Poor Righteous Teachers and Brand Nubian, K.M.D. was on a hip-hop revolution. Unfortunately, things unraveled quickly. Subroc was fatally struck by a car and their label practically botched the release of their socially and politically charged *Black B's't'rds* release. Following these unfortunate occurrences, Zev disappeared without a trace, not to return 'til the turn of the century.

In '98, he resurfaced, with his face covered by a stocking as he dropped his poems and rhymes at New York's *Nuyorican Café*. He'd soon drop his solo debut as MF Doom, borrowing the origins of Marvel Comics' Doctor Doom as his own — donning an iron mask to hide the scars caused by the industry. His debut, *Operation: Doomsday*, was an instant success within the underground and his output seemed to never stop. Whether doing cameos or recording under the Doom, Viktor Vaughn, King Geedorah or Madvillian personas, Doom has constantly been on the grind — writing, producing and spittin'. His latest release, *MM... Food*, contains tracks named after food and tells stories that cleverly put some of these foods to metaphorical use (remember: beef isn't good for any MC). In addition to this release, he's been on the *MM... Food* tour in which he's urged fans to donate food for the hungry and homeless. Maybe this masked villain isn't so bad after all.

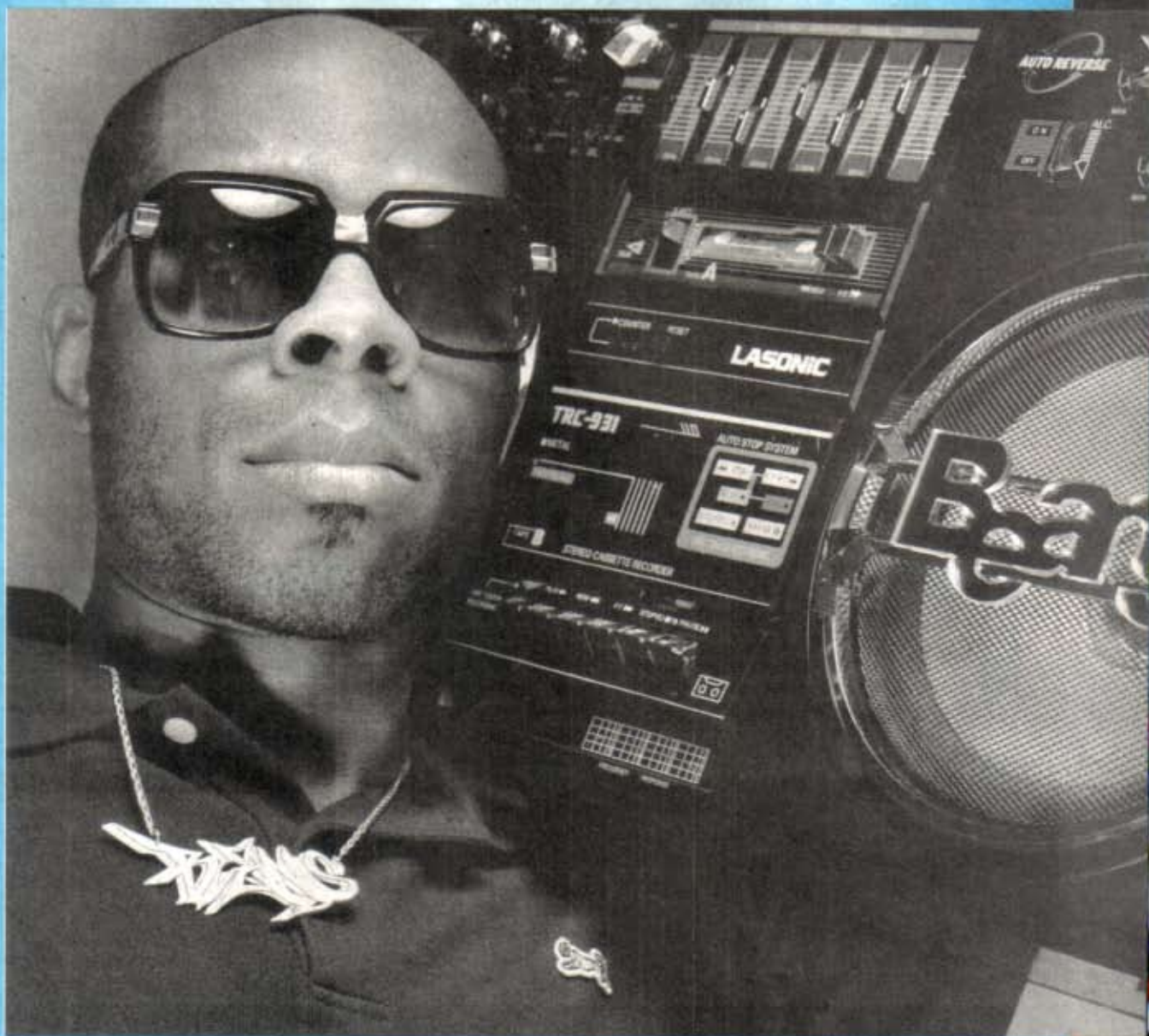
BEANS

Hip-Hop's Next Wave Maverick

As a member of the Antipop Consortium, Mr. Ballbeam (AKA Beans) was part of hip-hop history. Originally a member of the Brooklyn Boom Poetic Collective, it was with Priest, M. Soyid and acclaimed producer E. Blaize, that Beans sparked a buzz amongst the boroughs of New York City back in '97 with Antipop's pseudo-electro hip-hop vibe. Their singles showcased a brand of funky glitch-pop and IDM (translation: intelligent dance music) fused with traditional east coast hip-hop rhyming. Their full-length debut, *Tragic Epilogue*, was the jump-off for the group — earning them comparisons to likeminded legends Company Flow. In fact, the buzz spread so far that even folks over in the United Kingdom took notice. Antipop made history when they signed to Warp Records.

This England-based label was known more for their IDM artists such as Aphex Twin and Boards of Canada. Hence, Antipop would be their first hip-hop endeavor. Further, the fact that they were willing to sign with an IDM label tested their dedication to traditional hip-hop. They began touring with IDM artists as that scene grew more and more into the hip-hop sound, releasing a total of three full-lengths and doing a free jazz collaboration with Matthew Shipp. But it wouldn't be until the breakup of Antipop in July 2002 that Beans would be able to spread his creative wings.

Warp held onto Beans and in 2003 dropped his solo debut, *Tomorrow Right Now*. He kept his Antipop style, but streamlined it with a bit more pop sensibility. He continued being a b-boy, albeit in a very absurd kind of way. He even pushed the limits, producing his own tracks, some of which included hints of reggae, human beat-boxing, straightforward rap and a few haunting tracks reminiscent of DJ Shadow's best work. With his latest foray into "next level" hip-hop, *Shock City Maverick*, Beans produces his own slick, crisp and cutting edge tracks; spits his typical off-kilter flow and proves once again that you ain't heard nothin' yet.





KRAYZIE BONE

This Bone Has A Split Personality

Those following Krayzie Bone's solo career should be well aware of this by now: Krayzie is probably suffering from a multiple personality disorder. Ever since his time with Bone Thugs, there's been a series of personal contradictions that popped up all over the place. This became extremely clear on his sophomore solo effort, *Thug On Da Line*. That LP cover had Krayzie in an outfit reminiscent of what the Black Panthers used to wear, with a vintage image of Civil Rights-era rioting in the foreground. Lyrically, the set found Krayzie spittin' positive messages and decrying the ways of the thug and hustler — while seemingly celebrating it at the same time. Just which side of the fence did Krayzie *really* stand? On his third and easily most complex and creative outing, Krayzie tackles and spits from both sides of his personality, aptly naming the project *Gemini: Good Vs. Evil*.

"Everybody has a good and an evil side," Krayzie explains, "and they fight. That's what the album will basically be about: my good side and the evil side that I'm fighting." For the *Good* half of his LP, Krayzie laces tracks with lyrics that find him leaving behind all his problems, releasing all of his stressful demons and describing Utopia. He shouts out those who've inspired him such as NWA, Ice T, Above the Law and JJ Fad, and shines a light of hope on his incarcerated fans, while de-glorifying the thug life. "I've been to prison and there's a lot of people out here glorifying the bad boy life or the thug life," Krayzie says. "When really, what it all boils down to is that you're going to get yourself into some trouble or get yourself killed. You hear it on these songs about people doing time, but that really ain't a place you want to be. I've been there." His *Evil* side finds him unleashing years of pent up rage and frustration — attacking all of those who've done him wrong with some of the fiercest battle raps he's ever dropped. With production by the likes of Lil Jon, Scott Storch and Def Jef, there's no question that rap fans will be feeling *both* sides of this concept LP.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ESPYRAN.COM



MIX MASTER MIKE

Bangzilla's Revenge

The art of the turntable continues to thrive at the hands of DJs such as the otherworldly Mix Master Mike. For those of you who've never heard of this vinyl-scratching master, here's the deal: Michael Schwartz got his start as a kid growing up in San Francisco. He'd come home from school in the '70s to the sounds of his uncle's extensive and eclectic record collection. The moment Mike *really* got the urge to put the hurtin' on some vinyl came during the moment he witnessed Grandmaster D.ST performing onstage with the legendary Herbie Hancock. It wasn't just the Grandmaster's music that floored young Mike; it was his style and performance — both of which inspired Mike's later antics.

It wasn't long before Mike was fully into hip-hop and the art of DJing. He became a DJ-for-hire and started playing house parties, weddings and other assorted gigs for both experience and exposure. At one of the parties, he wound up with an admirer by the name of Richard Quitevis (AKA DJ Q-Bert). Joining together to become an unstoppable DJ force, the duo went on to crush all competitors at the prestigious *DMC World Championships* (an annual DJ competition) for three years in a row. Their domination led to their forced resignation from future tournaments, but they were awarded the opportunity to be honorary judges. Soon, they'd join forces with fellow turntablists Triple Threat — Apollo, D-Styles and Shortkut — with whom they'd become the now celebrated *Invisible Skratch Picklz*. They've all since gone solo, with Mike taking up the reins as the Beastie Boy's resident DJ and releasing a number of full-length solo projects. With his latest opus, *Bangzilla*, Mike proves that he's still a monster on the "1 & 2s." For those of you young cats out there who are used to producer-driven music, it's time for you to experience the *true* art of DJing.



YUNG WUN

The Southern-Fried DMX?

Yung Wun is like a professionally baked rap music cake fresh out the industry oven. J Records "discovered" a youth, dumped his "ghetto" essence into a large bowl to be mixed up with a stylish thug image, created an easily digestible batter, poured that into their Ruff Ryders mold, baked and topped their cake off with some Swizz Beatz icing. We've heard Yung's story a few hundred times before, but this time around, it seems to be good enough for uber-producer Swizz to have taken notice. "Yung Wun's unique sound and style sets him apart from other new artists I've heard," he claims. "He's edgy, dark and not afraid to be himself. He reminds me of a southern DMX. I couldn't walk away from the opportunity to work with him."

The story begins in the Eastlake Meadows housing projects, where young James (AKA Yung Wun) had to survive amongst the crime, violence and chaos of the streets they called "Little Vietnam." By the age of six (though, it's tough to believe), he had succumbed to the ways of the streets and was picked up for random acts of lawlessness that landed him in the juvenile justice system. Though, he wouldn't turn his life around until one day when his dear grandmother — the sole person to beg and plead that he put his God-given talent to use — passed away in his arms. He began writing and rapping feverishly, working the Dirty South's underground scene and workin' his way onto mix-tapes and collabos. However, being mistreated and exploited on that level made him uneasy with the ways of the industry until, that is, he met up with Swizz Beatz. Beatz put Yung on his label and got him to drop verses on various Ruff Ryder productions before droppin' his own debut, *The Dirtiest Thirstiest*. Not exactly the most original origin for a rapper, this Yungin' is positive that his skill and "southern DMX" cadence will make him become the "next living legend."

CRIME MOB

Crunk For Kids?

Crunk — it's not just for adults anymore. Sure, a majority of crunk music has lyrics and themes that are quite objectionable and not all that kid-friendly, but that doesn't mean the record industry can't aim their crunk energy at a younger target audience. Soon enough, infants will be drinking crunk juice from their gold and diamond-studded baby bottles. Until that time comes, however, we'll all have to settle for the current wave of teenage crunksters. Leading the pack is the crunk sextet, Crime Mob.

While still hot from the success of Lil Scrappy's full-length debut and breakthrough single, "Head Bussa," the folks over at the Atlanta-based label/management team Crunk Incorporated decided it was too soon to jump off the crunk wagon and scouted states outside of Georgia for their next rowdy phenomenon.

With that in mind, they turned to the high schools of Cedar Groove, Tennessee to find their upcoming stars. This is where they found the six members of Crime Mob — Princess, age 17; Lil Jay, 18; Psycho Black, 18; Killa C, 18; MIG, 17; and Diamond, 16. At the very least, this isn't a group put together by some record label. "We were all in the same school. On an average day, we would be rapping in the gym, in the lunchroom, making beats in the hallway," explains the group's producer, Lil Jay. "That's how we started making music." Their first single, "Knuck If You Buck," featuring labelmate Lil Scrappy, has been a smash hit. Similarly, their singles "Stiletto (Pumps)" and "Crunk, Inc." are well on their way to becoming new crunk favorites. That's right folks; even our youth can partake in the crunk culture, even if the artists are too young to listen to their own "Parental Advisory" stamped LP and concerts.

