

CD REVIEW

Sophomore record serves up total knockout for Kanye



"Late Registration"

Kanye West
★★★★★ out of ☆☆☆☆☆

James Prince
FOR THE GAMECOCK

On Tuesday, Aug. 30, rapper Kanye West went toe-to-toe in a lyrical boxing match against his long-term opponent, "The Hater," with his second album, "Late Registration." This was the fight his fans have been looking forward to since his arrival in the rap game with the release of his debut album, "The College Drop-Out."

"The College Drop-Out," although a good first effort, cannot compare to what he brought to the ring with the release of his sophomore album. Now that he owns his own label, West's ability to stand on his own is clear through his hard-hitting rhymes. With "Late Registration" he proves to be the next Muhammad Ali of hip-hop.

The battle begins with "Heard 'Em Say," which will be a crowd-pleaser. As Adam

Levine of Maroon 5 harmonizes against high-pitch piano chords and low notes on brass instruments, West delivers lines about a black community where young men become confused about life because they idolize drug dealers. He also explains how drugs are distributed in these communities and who perpetuates the cycle of imprisonment of these young men.

With "Touch the Sky," he hits the Hater through samples from R&B great Curtis Mayfield. He strikes with lyrics such as, "gotta testify, come up in the spot looking extra fly, before the day I die, I'm a touch the sky." West displays the confidence any real fighter needs.

The battle continues as West slows it down for the crowd and for his opponent who, even at the sixth round out of 21, is dazed from his continued lyrical blows. "Drive Slow," featuring Paul Wall, is one of the smoothest tracks on the album.

Filled with background saxophones and repetitive drumbeats, it tells how West was protected by one of the most respected names in the community when he was younger. This explains to his opponent that he has been trained by the best and how he maintains his confident demeanor.

With a little help in the eighth round from West Coast rapper The Game, West delivers a powerful uppercut through "Crack Music," sending his opponent reeling with rhymes such as, "sometimes I feel the music is the only medicine, so we cook it, cut it, measure it, bag it, sell it, the fiends cop it, nowadays they can't tell it, that's that good s—t, we ain't

sure man, put this CD on your tongue, yeah that's pure, man!" The Hater almost passes out from the truth that West delivers.

West hits his opponent with a jab to the right with "you see, if you ever wanted to be anything, it'll always be somebody that'll shoot down any dream, that's the way it is" and he yells that Hater-men marry Hater-women and have Hater-kids. The beat grows faster and West passionately delivers a lyrical jab with "but they gonna have to take my life before they take my drive."

The bell rings and a new round begins with "We Major," featuring Nas. After the Hater collapses to the ground Nas delivers the final blow—"I heard the beat and I ain't know what to write ... about (girls) or the ice ... rap about big paper or the black man's plight ... look at the pen and pad and jotted what I feel ... and I love to give my blood, sweat and tears to the mic."

Total knockout. In "We Major" Nas summarizes West's entire reason for fighting the battle. The new champion is Kanye West. After the win, West thanks his mother, celebrates with his new son and continues to spit more degrading words to The Hater along with Rap comrades Cam'ron, Consequence and Really Doe.

He had these last words to say.

"(I'm) feeling better than I've ever felt today ... you know what this is, it's a celebration b—hes, grab a drink, grab a glass." With his altruistic nature and fighting spirit, West definitely has something to celebrate.

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Local rockers Baumer released an album on the Astromagnetics label of Eyeball Records.

'Come On, Feel It' with boys of Baumer

Dance rockers begin transition from local clubs to national stage

John Murray
THE GAMECOCK

Most bands spend their existence struggling to make ends meet, and after countless years in the local bar scene, many decide to call it quits.

But not only have Columbia-based, pop-rockers Baumer gone above and beyond the success of most local bands, but they have their sights set on a much higher calling. Don't believe it? Just take a look at their contract and see that their target audience is anyone and everyone and they "want to take over the world."

To kick off its conquest and satisfy its desire for world domination, the band had a CD release party Wednesday at New Brookland Tavern. Playing for a capacity crowd of friends, family and new fans, the band celebrated the release of its new album, "Come On, Feel It," which will be released nationwide Sept. 13.

Signed to a three-album deal, the band's CD will debut on Astromagnetics, a label owned

by Eyeball Records and founded by Thursday's lead singer, Geoff Rickley. On Oct. 18, the band will make its national radio debut. As if things could not get any better, the band will also release a music video which will most likely be aired on the FUSE music channel.

All this is evidence the guys are serious about their music, and if they conquer the world at the same time, they are OK with that, too. This is an admirable beginning for a group that started off as a side project. The members of Baumer all came from other successful bands in the Columbia area.

Kenny McWilliams, guitarist, and Chris Corley, bassist, were originally in local band Courage Riley. Bored with that band, McWilliams began to experiment with a drum machine and his guitar. Not much of a vocalist, he asked his friend and recent USC graduate Nate Boikin to sing and play synthesizer. At the time Boikin was in local band Tigerbot Hesh. Surprised and

excited about the material they were writing, they quit their bands and rounded out the sound by adding Caleb Weathersby on drums.

With a full band in place and a name to boot ("Baumer" comes from a character in the cult-favorite "The Royal Tenenbaums"), the band played its first show in May 2004. Things progressed quickly from there, as they landed a chance to play in front of executives from Columbia Records.

Although things did not work out with Columbia, the band's budding notoriety drew attention from Universal Records, who showed more interest. Through Universal the band received its distribution deal.

With its CD release, the band is continuing on its warpath.

Aside from inundating the airwaves with catchy, dance-influenced melodies, Baumer is planning its second wave of assault.

The band will be featured in the October issues of Guitar Player and Alternative Press magazines.

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Professor's exhibit explains art through 'mimicry and magic'

McKissick gallery showcases Voros' inspired dark tones, strong contrast

Julia Sellers
FOR THE GAMECOCK

Lovers of art might lack a sense of the artist's message — either the artist is dead or refuses to offer an explanation

about his or her work — but USC art professor David Voros' exhibit, "Mimicry and Magic," gives viewers a rare chance to see an artist's explanation for his work's references.

McKissick Museum chief curator Jason Shaiman said the

exhibit was created with panels offering explanations of the art for the viewer.

"There is a lot of symbolism, and we felt it was necessary to talk to him about inspirations for works. To use it as food for thought," Shaiman said. "We use the passages that relate to the painting more than just visual understanding, but to literary, art, psychologically and social (understanding)."

Shaiman said Voros leaves vagueness in his work that allows the viewer to "look into the piece," but knows Voros is drawing on life experiences to create the art.

"You don't sense that it is autobiographical; it is something he is familiar with, but shying away from giving you the whole story," Shaiman said. "He lets the viewer interpret it on their own terms."

Shaiman said Voros' artwork contains religious context and symbols, drawn from the literary references from Dante's "Inferno," but it is not overt iconography.

"What David has done in some works, by using surface level of religion, he is hiding his identity," Shaiman said.

Voros mainly uses a tenebrism

style for his works. Tenebrism, a process of using a strong contrast of light and dark tones, creates an emotionally evocative and mysterious piece. Much of Voros' work reflects the baroque time period when tenebrism developed.

"I like the look of (tenebrism)," Voros said. "It was a way to direct people's attention to things and away from things that weren't important."

Although Voros' work takes on a different time period in composition, the context of his work still resonates with modern life. Voros' influences include his Hungarian-American family literary works.

The painting "Ecce Homo," meaning "here is the man," remains widely used in McKissick's published materials about the exhibit. Shaiman said it is one of Voros' most well-painted pieces, showing real sorrow. It creates a contrast of emotion and embraces the meaning of the exhibit.

"It encourages people to not just be a viewer, but a participant," Shaiman said.

Voros said although he drew on personal experiences for his work, he likes to make literary references because it takes him

out of the picture.

"(The references) sort of cloak it," Voros said. "Surely other people can appreciate this story. There is this intimacy, and they'll go along on the journey."

Most of Voros' exhibit was produced in the 1990s with some from last year.

The first part of the exhibit in the gallery hallway presents graphic-photo art with collages, presenting Dante's "Inferno." The six pieces from his Inferno series are the most recent.

Shaiman said he did not expect students to have to see the exhibit for class credit, but he received many inquiries about the exhibit. He hopes it will be something people can look at as visual art, separate from literal art.

"I like his style, and I wanted to investigate his tenebrism style," third-year drawing and painting student Evelyn Wong said. "The tones and values are one of the hardest things to get right."

Voros' exhibit is on display through Oct. 15 in the North Gallery.

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