

# Rap goes back to basics

by John Amorose  
staff writer

Rap music was a pretty radical notion in the early Eighties. Rock music, as defined by MTV, was something made by and for white people. African-Americans' biggest musical icons were Michael Jackson and Prince; hardly around-the-way-guys, for their appeal was their larger-than-life persona that each possessed. The life stories of the children of America's urban cities simply were not showing up on the radar screens of the day's popular culture. Indeed, except as they figured in late-night TV news reports of inner-city murder and mayhem, these kids were largely invisible to the rest of the world.

Far away from the mainstream, a handful of youth from the Bronx and Harlem were cooking up something that had nothing to do with Bruce

Springsteen or Bill Cosby and everything to do with the lives that they were living. In tiny night-clubs, in youth centers, in skating rinks and on park playgrounds, pioneering deejays like Africa Banbaataa and Grandmaster Flash—having rejected the gooey sentimentality of rock and the robot sterility of disco, not to mention such pop amenities as melody and most instrumentation other than drums—were stitching together a new music, based on funk and hard-rock beats and incorporating only the most exciting patches of a given record.

The early MC's were even more radical, abandoning the traditional singing in favor of rapping. "The Furious Five," "The Funky Four plus One", and "The Treacherous Three" rejected the standard in favor of brand-new narratives about their lives and their dreams, written in their own

words. There wasn't an East Coast/West Coast rivalry, there weren't riots at concerts, and MC's didn't brag about their lavish lifestyles. It was rhymes and beats, and that's it.

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"In the Beginning...there was rap" is a tribute to these early pioneers of Hip Hop by the biggest names in the industry today.

The opening track, "Run D.M.C.'s" classic Sucker M.C.'s, is sped up and revamped by "The Wu Tang Clan,"

who really had no reason sampling this song. The lyrics are far too fast and nearly intelligible at times, doing one of the greatest rap songs from the greatest rap act a great injustice. But

the album only improves from here.

F—k the Police, originally recorded by "N.W.A." was masterfully redone by "Bone Thugs-N-Harmony." Bone dropped their signature harmony aspect and turned to rough, hard-core rhymes and slammin' beats; emulat-

ing their mentor, the late, great Eazy-E's raw, reckless attitude.

Recent Grammy Award winner Sean "Puffy" Combs does a 90's version of L.L. Cool J's classic Big Ole Butt. Some die-hard L.L. fans could be angered by Puffy's new, more sexually explicit lyrics, but the times have changed, and artists can get away with things like that now. All in all, Puffy kept the same tight beats and, coupled with a cameo by Lil' Cease, made the track almost as good as the original (almost!).

The most hype track by far is Rapper's Delight, remixed, but kept real by Erick Sermon, Kieth Murray, and Redman. The lyrics are kept virtually identical to the original, and Grandmaster Flash's beats are forever present in the background, further immortalizing the classic cut.

In the spirit of such eternal cover-anthems like Purple Haze and Anarchy in the U.K., Rapper's Delight is what put "The Sugar Hill Gang" on the map, and propelled rap music out of the ghetto and into limelight. Cover versions only let it evolve and

adapt, allowing future generations to "throw their hands up in the air and party hard like they just don't care." Other noteworthy songs include "The Roots" version of The Show, the mainly instrumental party-track by "Dougie Fresh and the Get Fresh Crew," featuring Rahzel, the Godfather of Noyze, reintroducing the world to the art of the human lindrom.

Also featured are Coolio doing Jimmy Spicer's Money (Dollar Bill, Y'all), and Mack 10's gritty remix of N.W.A.'s controversial track Dope-man.

The album, as a whole, bridges the generational gap. It allows young people new to the hip hop scene to hear rap's roots. And vice-versa, it allows all those O.G.'s to hear the old school redone by today's best.

On my classes-I'd-skip-to-go-seem-them-scale, this compilation of the hip-hop future is a no-brainer five out of a possible five. The torch has been passed and the new bearers are ready to carry on to the next millennium.

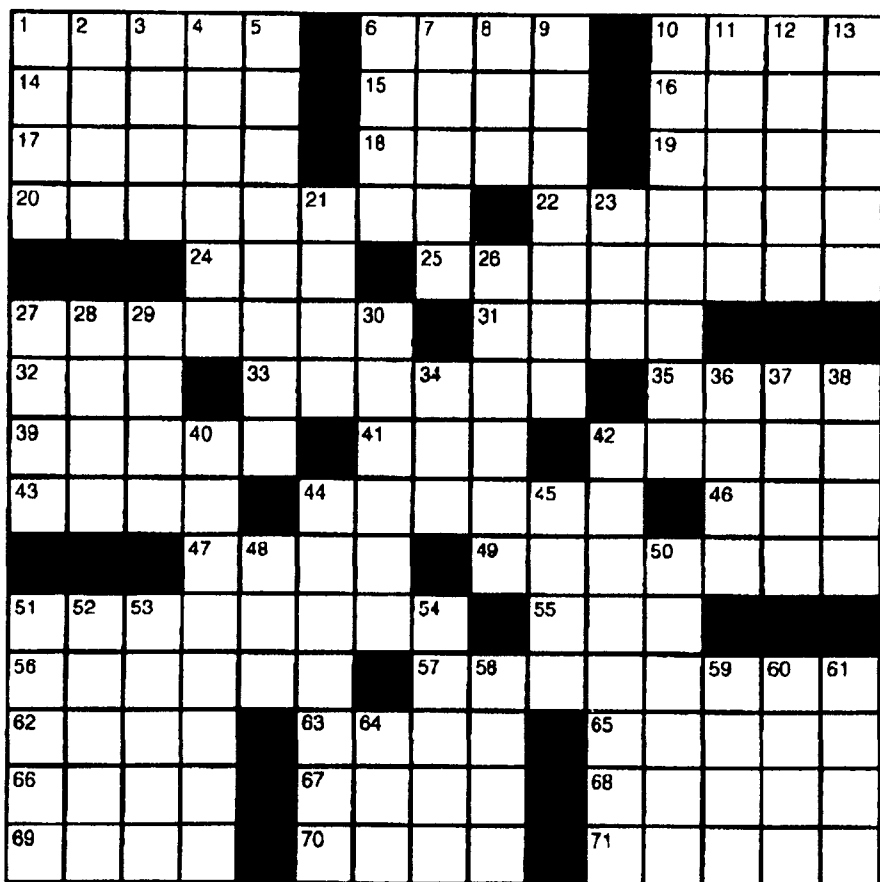


Frederic, the pirate apprentice, played by Michael Lechner, is about to have his way with the Major-General's daughters, played by (left to right) Dawn Mitchell, Tricia Michel, Jennifer Jacob, Amanda Pieper, and Gretchen Foust. The spring musical will be presented in the Reed Commons on March 25 through March 29. Tickets go on sale after spring Break.



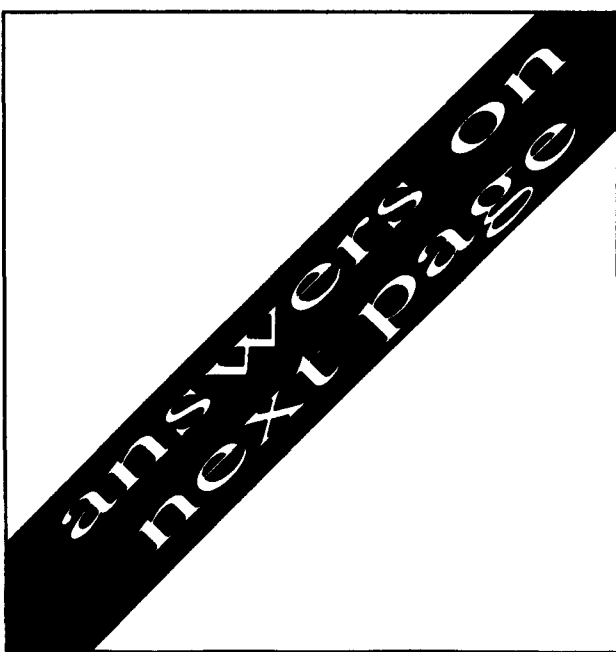
The pirates of Penzance gather for a rousing toast to their king. In the front row, left to right, are Joe Gross, Aaron Horneman, and Tom Burger. In the back row (left to right) are Michael Lechner, Jonelle Wilson, R.J. Frelin, (the pirate king), and Leo Hanley. The spring musical will be presented in the Reed Commons on March 25 through March 29. Tickets go on sale after spring Break.

- ACROSS
- 1 Paint layers
  - 6 Workplace honcho
  - 10 Open a bit
  - 14 Bucolic
  - 15 Asian sea
  - 16 Knight's aide
  - 17 Pygmy antelope
  - 18 Walloping wind
  - 19 Faultless
  - 20 Poet like David, e.g.
  - 22 Alerted
  - 24 Consummation
  - 25 United Arab
  - 27 Small sofas
  - 31 Opposed to: pref.
  - 32 Pub offering
  - 33 Adage
  - 35 Highlander
  - 39 Drinking vessel
  - 41 Go on snow
  - 42 Alabama town in '60s headlines
  - 43 Lawman Wyatt
  - 44 "\_\_\_ Dallas"
  - 46 Hearing organ
  - 47 Man or Wight, e.g.
  - 49 Sky Harbor or Dulles
  - 51 Biting midges
  - 55 Disfigure
  - 56 Banished
  - 57 Interruptions
  - 62 Actor Auberjonois
  - 63 Fed. agent
  - 65 Shaq or Tatum
  - 66 Color changer
  - 67 Merit
  - 68 V-formation flyers
  - 69 Stitches
  - 70 Spots
  - 71 Tacked on



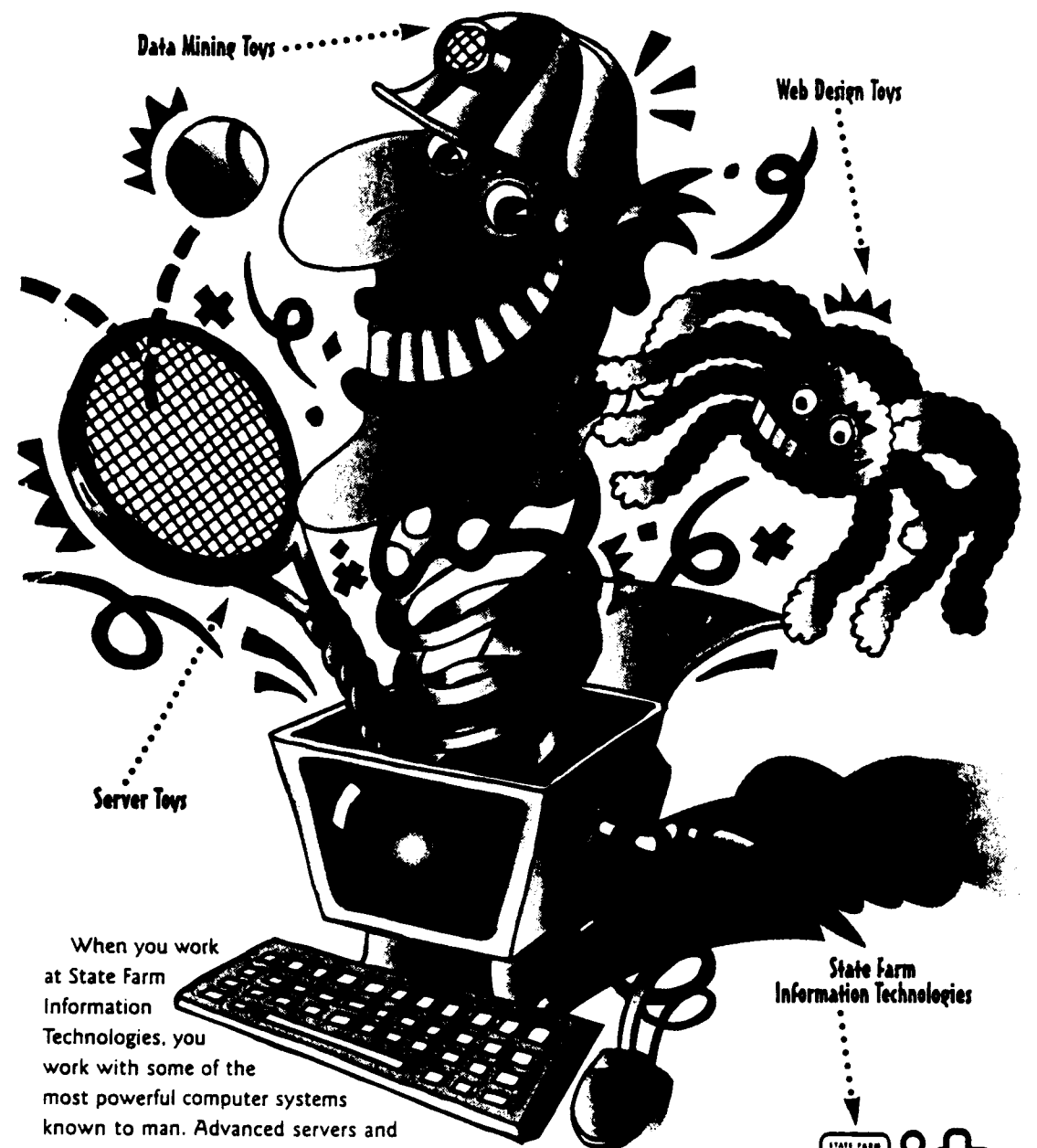
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- 8 Erie Canal mule
- 9 Turning on a pivot
- 10 Evaluate
- 11 Pleasure trip
- 12 Think alike
- 13 Orchestra section
- 21 Notion
- 23 Well-honed skill
- 26 City in the Philippines
- 27 Wise guy
- 28 Fitzgerald of scat
- 29 Sorrowful drop
- 30 Method
- 34 Eisenhower's nickname
- 36 Nile queen, briefly
- 37 Persian poet, \_\_\_ Khayyam
- 38 Floozy
- 40 Haranguers
- 42 \_\_\_ Springs, NY
- 44 Oozy sediments
- 45 Capital of Peru



- 48 Visualize
- 50 Lopped off branches
- 51 Geeks
- 52 Type of daisy
- 53 Tendon
- 54 Portion
- 58 Rustic hotels
- 59 Potential plant
- 60 Good life
- 61 Winter transportation
- 64 West of Hollywood

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