

Hip-hop and Hollywood unite for fine cinema

by Douglas Smith
features co-editor

In a nation where Hollywood has so much influence, it's a wonder that the topic of this article has not been discussed in a more in depth way to this point. We can all agree that music and movies go together like America and apple pie. However, the stars of these two worlds of entertainment often do not overlap, excluding Will Smith. However, the focus of this article is the influx of hip-hop music stars into the film industry today.

It can date back to the mid-80s, when *Krush Groove* came out. It was filmed in a high school, but was about artists like the Fat Boys getting known. This was back in the days of "The Message," and hip-hop was just catching on. However, you cannot say this was the beginning of hip-hop and Hollywood as a team. First of all, with the exception of LL Cool J and Will Smith, no hip-hop star has been a prominent figure in cinema and television over the past 15 years. Also, this was a film produced with rap stars in mind. They did not fill roles after it was written.

In the past few years *Belly* and other small films featured stars from the hip-hop music genre. *Belly* starred DMX and Nas along with other artists that were also featured on its popular soundtrack. Method Man has also been trying his hand with anything

Hollywood. Some of this acting experience may even come in music videos that have a storyline.

This article was written with a new movie in mind. *Romeo Must Die* is an action film that stars Asian film actor Jet Li. The story line focuses on Han Sing (Li) and Trish O' Day, who come from different sides of the world. Han Sing goes from a prominent figure on the Hong Kong Police to a resident in the nearest penitentiary. Joel Silver produces the film through Warner Brothers Studios.

The premise of the story is how Han feels the need to avenge the death of his brother Po. This requires mental discipline and martial arts skills, but Trish becomes a pivotal part. She too has lost her brother and helps Han, though for her it's not about revenge, but making terror end before everyone else close to her is dead.

This is a major motion picture that features a respected star, but is giving a female from the hip-hop world her chance to shine. Aaliyah Haughton stars as Trish. Most of her fans are not familiar with her last name. She has been in the music business for about six years and has released two albums and numerous soundtrack songs. Her beauty and charisma make for a good acting basis to start from.

What makes the film even more overwhelming is that it is getting played all over the world with American hip-hop stars pulling their

weight on the big screen. France, the Philippines, Malaysia, Australia, Korea, and Thailand are among the countries that will have this film in theaters across their respective countries. With the eccentric presentation of its trailer and television commercials, hopes are high for impressive box office numbers.

Other hip-hop stars make an appearance in the film. The popular rap star DMX plays Silk. This role is an expansion on his small cameo role in *Belly*. Also, the pop/hip-hop group TLC plays a role. Obviously, hip-hop is represented well in the film.

Of course these stars do not shy away from their roots as they contribute to the soundtrack for *Romeo Must Die*. Aaliyah contributes four songs to the album, including the first single, "Try Again." She also shares duties on "Come Back in One Piece" with co-star DMX. Others on the album include a member of the popular Cash Money millionaires as BG places his rapping expertise on the album. Ginuwine, Destiny's Child, Joe, and Timbaland and Magoo also pace this fast swinging album. Dave Hollister, formerly of Blackstreet, adds the soulful feel to the soundtrack. So, as you can see, hip-hop artists bring added flavor to films with hip-hop stars.



Rap star DMX plays Silk in *Romeo Must Die*.

FILE PHOTO

athletes. It is the story of a documentary filmmaker that follows privileged uptown teenagers that are drawn to the hip-hop lifestyle.

There will be more to come from this genre of film. You can expect a lot more influx of hip-hop stars and Hollywood. This is the chance for these musical artists to show their all-around talent.

Below: Aaliyah and Jet Li attend a release party for *Romeo Must Die*

FILE PHOTO

A new trend seems to be developing from Hollywood. *Romeo Must Die* is the second film in as many months to star prominent figures of the hip-hop world. *Black and White*, a film by James Toback, was released last month. The film starred Method Man and Raekwon of the Wu-Tang Clan. The film was a searing, comedic, and exhilarating look at race, sex, and hip-hop in Manhattan at the turn of the century. The soundtrack is just as hard driving as the film. Power from the Wu-Tang Clan also makes an appearance in this film starring cultural icons, hip-hop stars, and



Power and Raekwon of Wu-Tang Clan star in *Black and White*. PHOTO BY THERESA DILLON (SCREEN GEMS)

Pace your laughs with *The Whole Nine Yards*

by Kelly Walsh
staff writer

If you need something to get your mind off of finals, watching *The Whole Nine Yards* will certainly do the trick. This gangster comedy has twists and turns everywhere. It is a never-would-happen but suits its purpose movie featuring the pursuits of Mr. Nice Guy finding himself in trouble because he just can't stand up to anyone.

Nicholas "Oz" Oseransky is a dentist who is supporting his wife and mother-in-law's extraordinary spending habits. His deceased father-in-law/business partner racked up a serious debt with the mob. His wife thinks Oz owes her his life because she thinks the debt was also his. She thinks her husband is worth more dead than alive because of the insurance

policy. So she has tried to find a contract killer to help her out on this mission. What she doesn't know is that the one she hired to do the job thinks her husband is adorable and hates her.

When Oz recognizes his new neighbor, Jimmy "The Tulip" Tedaski, as a Chicago mob member, he mistakenly tells his wife. She wants him to go to Chicago and tell the gang that has a contract out on Jimmy that he lives in Montreal. This way she thinks they will get a reward and have more money to burn. Well, Oz gets himself in trouble in Chicago and calls the Tulip to tell him he rattled him out. Now he is the middle man. He tells the Tulip everything and now the ex-con is excited because the enemy is coming to him. This way the upper hand is his.

One theme in the movie that I really liked is nice guys really do finish

first. Oz ends up with a beautiful lady and money up the wazoo. He didn't care about money; he cared about people. Everything that he does is for someone else, except when he finds the woman of his dreams. He thought he was going to have to live the rest of his life paying off debt, living with two crazy woman. Little did he know what was in store for him.

Contract killers are everywhere and they end up working with each other instead of against each other. What is expected happens, but there is still some mystery. Director Jonathon Lynn (*My Cousin Vinny*) doesn't give away the ending too early. This is not the greatest mob film, but it has its laughs. It will allow you to relax while being entertained, definitely a good film for escaping reality.

Pearl Jam reemerges onto the musical scene

by Kelly Walsh
staff writer

Pearl Jam will be releasing their sixth album *Binaural* on May 16. It is being supported by tours in the U.S. and Europe; they will be in Pittsburgh on September 5 for the last date of the first leg. On May 11 they opened to a select crowd in Vancouver and they are promoting a tour in Europe now. On April 25 "Nothing as it

Seems," their first single off of the new album was released with a B-side of "Insignificance." "Rival," written by guitarist Stone Gussard, is a reflection of the Columbine incident of last year. "[There was] just kind of a melody that went through my head right after Columbine happened. It kind of maybe took on a little of that, where I put myself in the mindset or tried to think about what those guys may have been thinking

the night before." This is almost serendipitous to the group's "Jeremy" video which showed a young boy shooting himself in front of his classmates.

BillBoard reported that this is the most "headphone-friendly album." It features many different instruments that have never debuted on previous albums. Buy the album and see if there are any BillBoard hits this time around!

LEX

by phil flickinger (www.l-e-x.com)



H

Aries (March 21-April 19). Do something productive this summer, and no, video games are not productive.



T

Taurus (April 20-May 20). If you actually would have gone to class you might have been able to pass your finals.



R

Cancer (June 22-July 22). Caffeine will make finals week go by much faster, and twitching is lots of fun.



O

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22). Being late for class is ok, being late for finals is not.



S

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). If your teachers don't know your name by now, don't count on getting that A.



C

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Coconuts, they're not just for breakfast anymore, nudge, nudge, wink, wink.



O

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). "Bongo ate my paper" will not go over big with your teacher as an excuse.



P

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Finals week would not be a good time to go on a week-long drinking binge.



E

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb 18). Beer will not help you study better.



S

Pisces (Feb 19 - March 20). Deep thought — 2+2=?, new question on the Penn State application to raise admission standards.



by Bongo the three legged monkey

