

Hip Hop Album Review Pt 3 Pac's Life by Young Kurious

Written by Young Kurious ID3181

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Since he was a teen, hip hop icon Tupac has provided the world with great music and poetry, a lot which has brought a change to people's lives and the way in which they view life and society and their very many aspects, resulting in 2Pac being not only one of the most (if not THE MOST) controversial hip hop music artists, but also one of the most important music artists.

He's done it again! Our most beloved Tupac Amaru Shakur has come out with yet ANOTHER album, and rockin' it right once again. Pac's Life is the sixth studio album released since his death and although his previous one, Loyal To The Game, had received mixed reviews ranging from people calling it "his worst posthumous release" to "one of his best albums to date", I believe that Pac's Life will gain plenty of praise, as it has with me.

It's also great to see that so many hip hop and rap artists that knew 2Pac personally come back to contribute to his legacy on this album; such as hip hop and rap notables Bone Thugs, The Outlawz, Big Syke, and Snoop Dogg. Not to mention of course the several tracks that the late (and sorely missed) Yaki Kadafi appears on and a track from Quincy Jones (a.k.a. QDIII), one of the greatest musicians and producers to ever bless the music industry.

For songs which lacked production quality, they were still kept together with the legendary lyrics of Tupac. All the beats are original with no need for sampling, although the producers of some of those beats could have used that external inspiration from some old songs to improve their quality.

Here is a track-by-track breakdown of how I felt about the album:

1. Untouchable (Swizz Beatz Remix) (ft. Krayzie Bone) (Prod. by Swizz Beatz).

Honestly, I wasn't feeling this track at all when I first head it, simply because of the production (even though there have been some Swizz Beatz tracks that I have really enjoyed.) I thought

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"Damn, already there's a track which is only gonna be saved by Pac's lyrics." However, the more I've listened to it, the more I started to feel it and it's fairly enjoyable now. The appearance of Krayzie Bone could have been improved with a better verse. I give this track a 7.5/10.

2. Pac's Life (ft. T.I. and Ashanti) (Prod. by LT Hutton)

I was feeling this track since I first heard it, and nothing has changed. Even though 2Pac's 3rd verse is in fact the 1st verse from the song 'This Life I Lead' which was featured on the Better Dayz album, it still does the job well and was a good choice made by LT Hutton, who also deserves great credit for a very spiritually uplifting beat. T.I. contributes a sufficient verse, although I think someone else could have done it better. But nobody could replace Ashanti's voice on the track. I give this track a solid 8.5/10.

3. Dumpin' (ft. Hussein Fatal, Papoose and Carl Thomas) (Prod. by Sha Money XL and Canei Finch)

This is another track which I was really feeling since I first heard it. Captured by the hook and then 2Pac's opening verse, it left me hanging and impatiently waiting to hear Fatal and Papoose's verses, which were both spectacular. The song is a deep and dark track, full of themes about death, especially with some pretty graphic metaphorical descriptions from Papoose. Sha Money XL provides a strong beat which works very well with 2Pac's pre-recorded verse. This track deserves a strong 9/10.

4. Playa Cardz Right (Female Version) (ft. Keyshia Cole) (Prod. by Karma Productions)

This beat had me hooked from the start so powerfully that it led me to write my own rap to this (called True 2 You...which you can all check in the Poetry section in the Forums), especially the piano. 2Pac delivers a strong and very loving verse which really moves the listener with words such as "Visions of prisons, maybe I'll be forgiven, I know it's better in Heaven 'cause being here ain't livin'" and "Broken promises, a sacred bond broken, I know I'll die alone, but yet and still I'm hopin'..." Keyshia Cole also delivers a very soulful verse and hook. It is tracks like this where you believe that, as Afeni Shakur said, "Tupac sends these artists." I give this track a very confident 10/10.

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5. What'z Next (ft. A3 and Jay Rock) (Prod. by Salih)

This is an example of one of those tracks which is pretty much saved by 2Pac's verse, which is exceptionally well-crafted. Unfortunately I can't say the same for A3 and Jay Rock's verses which are not that bad, but are definitely far from great. The beat itself is not a bad one, although it does get pretty repetitive quickly. I give this track a 6/10.

6. Sleep (ft. Young Buck and Chamillionaire) (Prod. by Sha Money XL)

2Pac has once again put down a hot verse for us, and we see it in play here. I wasn't expecting much from this track when I saw who was appearing on it, as I'm personally not a big fan of either Young Buck or Chamillionaire, but I was really surprised at how good Young Buck's verse was and I was fairly satisfied by Chamillionaire's, as they make good references to the ghetto, riches, and politics. The beat is another good accomplishment from Sha Money XL. I give this track a 7/10.

7. International (ft. Nipsey Hustle and Young Dre the Truth) (Prod. by LT Hutton)

I enjoyed 2Pac's verse on this track and it did save it, along with a hook that sounded alright considering the beat was not very favored by me but it was tolerable. The guest appearances really went nowhere with their verses. There wasn't much to say about this track, so I give it a 5.5/10.

8. Don't Sleep (ft. Lil' Scrappy, Nutso, Yaki Kadafi, and Stormy) (Prod. by E.D.I.)

2Pac once again laid down a brutal and compelling verse on this track, which kind of echoed his older tracks like All Out and M.O.B. The guest artists also put down sufficient verses, with a fairly acceptable hook. The real surprise for me here is that E.D.I. produced this track and I thought he did quite a good job, and should have probably also appeared on it to drop a verse. This track gets a 6.5/10 from me.

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9. Soon As I Get Home (ft. Yaki Kadafi) (Prod. by QD3)

This is the only track on this album which is the original, and I am very happy to see that they left this track untainted...then again, why would anybody want to tweak anything produced by Quincy Jones, who I loved all through his jazz and other people's music, especially Michael Jackson (after all, QD3 DID produce Thriller, the best-selling album of all time). Not to mention it is good to see that the team for this track were 2Pac's associates so they knew how he worked, which is the reason why this track is absolutely sizzling. 2Pac lays down two excellent verses and a compelling and addictive hook, and Kadafi lays down one of his best verses I've ever heard, while Quincy works his unique magic with the instruments. I give this track a very well-deserved 10/10.

10. Playa Cardz Right (Male Version) (ft. Ludacris and Keon Bryce) (Prod. by Sha Money XL)

Although not as good as the Female Version with Keyshia Cole, it still does the job well beyond measure. 2Pac delivers the same verse which is great, and Ludacris seems to shine more than usual when he's on a track that has anything to do with 2Pac...and I don't mean with diamonds, because 2Pac's and Ludacris' verses are both diamonds. Keon Bryce is no Jodeci of course, as they appeared on the original, but he does do a very good job at singing a soft and soothing hook. Sha Money XL put down a beat which is heavy but at the same time very soft, which goes very well when considering that 2Pac raps soothing soft lyrics in a rough voice on this track, so he deserves much props for that. I liked this track a lot so I give it a 9.5/10.

11. Don't Stop (ft. Big Syke, Yaki Kadafi, Hussein Fatal, E.D.I., Young Noble and Stormy) (Prod. by LT Hutton)

This is a great track going out to all those people who hate rap and can't appreciate the positive side of it, so this track is something special. 2Pac, giving out the second verse lyrically puts this track in motion. While it's a fairly good beat, the first verse by Young Noble has a few good lines but should have not been put first. However, everybody delivers good verses on this track, and it's really good to see a track with 2Pac and his Outlawz again. However, there is something this track is missing, possibly a better hook and some upgrades that could be made to the beat to make it seem less repetitive. Otherwise, this track is lyrically very good. I'm giving this one a 7.5/10.

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12. Pac's Life (Remix) (ft. Snoop Dogg, T.I. and Chris Starr) (Prod. by LT Hutton)

I have no idea why they put Chris Starr on this track because he simply sounds like a hooting owl, which gets extremely annoying. The beat is the same as the original so that's good...although I was curious to see what another version of this would have sounded like. 2Pac's first verse is the same as the original. Snoop Dogg puts down a simple but meaningful verse in which he speaks to 2Pac. T.I. puts his same verse down on the third verse. I give this track a 6.5/10 only because Chris Starr's voice ruined it.

13. Untouchable (ft. Yaki Kadafi, Hussein Fatal and Gravy) (Prod. by Sha Money XL)

2Pac puts down the same verse as the first track, which is of course hot as hell. Gravy's verse doesn't leave much to the imagination, but this is soon remedied with Hussein Fatal's verse which is absolutely powerful, followed by a very short but sufficient verse from Yaki Kadafi. The beat is also pretty good, although it gets repetitive quickly. Still, I enjoyed this track better than the Swizz Beatz Remix. I give this track a 8/10.

14. Dear Mama (Remix) (ft. Anthony Hamilton) (Bonus Track)

For those lucky enough to cop the album with this on it, it is a track to be enjoyed a lot. A remix of one of the most beautiful and most meaningful tracks ever made has been done very successfully. I think it may have been DJ Vlad that produced this remix, as I did hear it on his mixtape A Devil's Advocate with The Game and Nu Jerzey Devil. 2Pac puts down the same verses we loved to hear in the original Dear Mama, over a slightly different yet still very soulful beat, with Anthony Hamilton singing a hook which could not be done better by any other R&B artist. This track is a remix to be cherished and easily cops a 10/10 from me.

Overall, I enjoyed the album very much and hope that it keeps getting better, and hopefully the next album will be a bit longer. Altogether, apart from the total score, I give the album a 9/10.

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*Young Kurious is a long time Tupac (2Pac) fan and a member of the ThugLifeArmy.com community. He can be reached on his MySpace at www.myspace.com/youngkurious