

## West Coast Hip-Hop on 'Rize' Soundtrack

Written by Robert ID1366  
Friday, 13 May 2005 14:54 -

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The film 'Rize' was snapped up at the Sundance Film Festival and received standing ovations at Tribeca, and the powers that be are sure that the music from David LaChapelle's highly anticipated documentary "Rize" will be embraced just as warmly, both by film audiences nationwide, and the streets that generated the movement this film brings to light.

Featuring a single and tracks from Richmond, CA emcee and award-winning choreographer Flii Stylz, and tracks from the likes of Christina Aguilera, UK hip-hop rap artist Dizzee Rascal, Five Blind Boys of Alabama, The Caravans, The Edwin Hawkins Singers and fellow West Coast street hip-hop icon Planet Asia, the album encompasses the many moods and emotional landscapes audiences will find themselves traveling as they watch the film.

"Rize" takes you on a journey to the streets and projects of South Central where, to quote one of its featured dancers, "You are either in a gang, or a clown group." To these very neighborhoods enters ghetto superstar Tommy the Clown, who gains local notoriety for the hip-hop dancing, children's birthday parties he is booked to host. As his reputation grows, he becomes a father figure to many of the city's children and forms his own 'Clown Academy' complete with dance troupe. The kids learn to dance, paint their faces, each with their own unique identity, and work the parties right alongside Tommy. In order to become one of the academy's members, a kid has to stay in school, keep their grades up, do their homework and most importantly, renounce all gang-related activity.

In many cases, Tommy has more influence over the children than their often single parents. He is the only positive role model in their lives, in addition to each other. This makes their troupe almost like family. As the movement grows, mimics of Tommy's troupe begin to shoot up all over the city, crossing racial boundaries, with each dance troupe embellishing the style with moves, face paint, costumes and emotion from their own life experiences. This is where Krump Dancing comes in. Taking the premise of Tommy's clown dancing to the streets, the Krump dancers meet whenever and wherever they can and have dance-offs, similar to battle rapping, with movement. This is not clowning folks. It is a way to express and cast off the frustration they feel with the lot that life has handed them and their families. To the casual viewer their movements seem combative, almost frightening, but as you listen to the kids voice the closeness they have with their fellow dancers, and the freedom this cathartic art form gives them, you begin to have a new-found respect for their ability to excise their frustrations through such a positive channel given their surroundings.

As is the everyday reality for these kids, the film is not without its tragedies, but the emotion is genuine and the viewer never feels as if they are simply being manipulated. It is truly the tale of an oppressed people trying to create beauty in an environment where there is none.

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The music undercuts this story beautifully. It is the music of the streets, chosen by David himself, with single artist Flii Stylz's tracks being written specifically. "I had to become one of them to make the songs work the way they do and that was not difficult. I grew up in the projects myself." Flii told me. "We spent a lot of time together and I wrote them from the kids' point of view. As a dance choreographer I related to them perfectly. I feel their spirit." All involved with the project agree that the tracks are organic to the film. Anything else would have cheated the audience. "The music is built on the film and vice versa." states Music Supervisor, Jonathan McHugh. "Keeping hip-hop pure, keeping it real is the message here." "There are not many opportunities in our business to be a part of a movement from the beginning." Jonnie Forster, Forster Bros Entertainment's CEO points out. "Once we saw how David LaChapelle chronicled the movement's origin, told the story and used the music in such a compelling manner, we had to have the soundtrack."

From a hip-hop purist's perspective, this project is a wet dream. There's no single from rap or hip-hop artists 50 Cent or Nelly and it features primarily West Coast hip-hop rap, which has struggled to stay in the game over the last few years, getting little or no recognition from the media. Neither Music Supervisor nor the Forster brothers see this as an obstacle. "This whole project is real. There are no gimmicks here." Evan Forster emphasizes. "Flii Stylz embodies this movement in every way and the Red Ronin crew produced tracks that people anywhere can feel." Flii Stylz agrees. When asked if he thought the West Coast's current standing in hip-hop would impact the public's interest in the album, he had this to say. "This story is a universal one of expression through oppression. This is the music these kids dance to. Everything these kids do is from the heart."

With plans for a video for Flii's title track, directed of course by David LaChapelle himself, and giants like Sony Playstation and AOL Sessions on board for promotion, this album will have ample exposure to drive the word of mouth to fans of good music everywhere. This album is the soundtrack to a movement and no one should be at all surprised when they come across a Krump dancing session in a suburb near them. On that note, the CD will have an enhanced "How To Krump" instructional video teaching kids how to dance like the stars of the movie. It may have all started in South Central, Los Angeles but as it was put so succinctly, great music really has no address.

### SOUNDTRACK INFO

Label: Social Capital/Forster Bros/EMI

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Release Date: June 21, 2005

Executive Producer: David LaChapelle

Music Produced and Mixed by: Red Ronin

Music Supervisor: Jonathan McHugh

Soundtrack Album Producers: Martin Shore, Jonathan Platt, Stu Song & Jonathan Scott Miller

Marketing Gurus: Jonnie, Evan & Darren Forster

### TRACK LISTING

1. "Rize" w/dialogue snippet Flii Stylz
2. "Break It On Down(Battlezone)" Flii Stylz & Tenashus
3. "Fix Up, Look Sharp" Dizzee Rascal
4. "Clownin' Out" Flii Stylz & Dap
5. "I Krump" w/dialogue snippet Flii Stylz

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6. "Soar" Christina Aguilera
  
7. "Oh Happy Day" The Edwin Hawkins Singers
  
8. "Get Krumped" Flii Stylz, Lil' C & Bloezart
  
9. "Make You Dance" Flii Stylz, Dap & Tenashus
  
10. "Beaztly" Flii Stylz
  
11. "Ready to Brawl" Dap & Planet Asia
  
12. "Recognize" \* Flii Stylz
  
13. "Seek Ye The Lord" The Caravans
  
14. "By and By" Five Blind Boys of Alabama
  
15. "Amazing Grace" Alice Ridley/Tonex (Remix)
  
16. "Rize Score Suite" Amy Beauchamp, Jose Cancela, Flii Stylz & Red Ronin

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