

KRS-ONE Meaningful Rap

Written by Robert ID1011

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KRS-ONE begins - "Take off your coat, take notes, I am teachin'/ A class, or rather school, 'cause you need schooling/ I am not a king or queen, I'm not ruling/ This is an introduction to poetry/ A small dedication to those that might know of me."

KRS-ONE kick started his career in rap music on the opening track of 1987's "Criminal Minded" with a formula and a vision that has served him well over the years. The Poet, The Philosopher, The Teacha, The Blastmaster, Lawrence Parker: KRS-ONE is a man who is so well-established and yet so culturally adaptive that he requires — in fact, demands — perpetual re-introduction.

On his every album, on seemingly every song, there is at least one moment of self-referential reflection and a dogged insistence on once again bringing attention to the significance of his mission, his mantra and his name (Knowledge Reigns Supreme Over Nearly Everyone). This is the MC, after all, who has battled some of hip-hop's toughest turf wars on tape, claiming the origin of the music and culture in South Bronx — the South South Bronx — and who continues to strive for a universal education of a wider Hip-hop Kulture [sic].

Know this KRS-ONE, the founder of the Temple of Hip-hop, is really teaching people to love and learn about hip-hop as a way of life and a means of spiritual gratification.

Lawrence Parker left home at the age of 14 with a passion for knowledge and a curiosity about world religions, and wound up like many students of philosophy: homeless and shivering on the side-streets in New York City. According to lore, Parker split most of his time not spent in shelters studying in the public libraries and volunteering with the Hare Krishnas, where he allegedly first received the KRS of his nickname. Since it was New York City in the early 1980s, the streetwise KRS began beatboxing and rapping and tagging his name in graffiti all over the city, which can be seen today on the cover of 2004's "Keep Right." It wasn't until after he was arrested at 19 that he was finally put together with a real DJ: his social worker, Scott Sterling.

Along with DJ Scott La Rock, KRS-ONE formed half of Boogie Down Productions, one of the original and most influential hardcore hip-hop outfits in the late 1980s. Despite its name, the group gained notoriety for its incendiary depiction of urban realities rather than keeping with the trend of producing old-school party favorites. Back in the days when 808s reigned as gloriously bare-bones beatboxes, these rock-steady B-Boys cut cold silhouettes and gave stark visions of street violence and sexual misconduct and inner-city oppression to the backdrop of

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stripped-down, occasionally reggae-tinged, analog boom-bap rhythms. Although the message wasn't always clear, KRS-ONE's resonant voice was giving shape to the Teacher persona, an educator and cultural archivist, that would survive the aggression of the gangsta rap scene he helped create.

After Scott La Rock was shot and killed in a scuffle in the Bronx, shortly following BDP's record deal with Jive Records, KRS-ONE decided to turn his efforts toward uplifting the community and preventing violence, rather than candidly exposing it. His socially conscious and provocative lyrics, comparable only to Chuck D, have spawned a whole generation of imitators. But more importantly, KRS has been an active figure for political organizing and public lecturing, and even helped announce the Hip-hop Declaration of Peace at the United Nations Headquarters in 2001.

Eighteen years and 13 albums later, KRS-ONE has established himself as one of the most vocal figures for the preservation and empowerment of Hip-hop kulture. "Kulture" is a sign of affinity with many African languages that do not have an equivalent to C, and "Hip-hop," capitalized and as one word, is a sign of an entire system of being and thinking, as opposed to a type of music that is both popular ("hip") and bouncing ("hop"). After all, according to KRS-ONE, rap is something you do, Hip-hop is something you live.

[Source](#)