

The Wu-Tang Manual Releases Feb05

Written by Robert ID736

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Long awaited and much anticipated, THE WU-TANG MANUAL (Riverhead Freestyle Trade Paperback Original; February 2005; \$16.00) is finally here. Delayed in the final stages of production by the tragic death of rap artist Ol' Dirty Bastard, THE WU-TANG MANUAL is which has been referred to repeatedly on Wu-Tang albums, from "Bells of War" (Wu-Tang Forever) to GZA's Liquid Swords -- is RZA's first written introduction to the philosophy and history of the Wu-Tang Clan.

Since the release of the revolutionary Enter the Wu-Tang (36 Chambers) -- over the course of four seminal group albums and a multitude of ambitious side projects -- the Wu-Tang Clan has constantly redefined what hip-hop can do and where hip-hop can go. Now, after a decade of dark beats and mysterious lyrics hinting at a larger whole, the RZA, the abbot of the legendary Staten Island hip-hop collective, fully reveals, for the first time, the complex, multilayered Wu-Tang Universe in THE WU-TANG MANUAL.

At the creative forefront of music for the past decade, the Wu-Tang Clan are hip-hop's true artists, shrouded in a fascinating self-made mythology. Taking their name from a mythical kung-fu sword wielded by a congregation of invincible warriors, rechristening their native island after the legendary Shaolin, and performing under a variety of pseudonyms, the nine members of the Wu-Tang Clan have, from the start, surrounded their public identities with an elaborate Wu-Tang Mythology and Cosmology that forms the foundation for all their work. Written in a style that is at once personal and philosophical, THE WU-TANG MANUAL unravels the intricate web of personalities (and alter egos), warrior codes, numerological systems, and Eastern spiritual ethics that define the Wu-Tang dynasty.

Packed with information that reflects the breadth and depth of the RZA's -- and rest of the Clan's -- intellectual interests and passions, THE WU-TANG MANUAL is divided into four books of nine chambers each, for a total of 36 chambers. All together, the book provides the breakdown of essential Wu-Tang components.

Book I provides basic information, backstory, and a complete list of alter egos for each of the nine core members of Wu-Tang Clan:

„X RZA

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„X GZA

„X ODB

„X Method Man

„X Ghostface Killah

„X Raekwon

„X U-God

„X Inspectah Deck

„X Masta Killa

Book II breaks down nine key themes of the Wu-Tang universe:

„X Spirituality: the spiritual journey through the Bible to Greek Mythology to Five Percent Nation to Chan Buddhism to a holistic spirituality.

„X Martial Arts: from a fascination with kung fu movies up through a serious study of martial arts Eastern spirituality.

„X Capitalism: from the now-famous original record deals that allowed the Clan to record together and as solo artists through the Clan’s later diversification, including Wu-Tang Records, Wu-Wear, the Shaolin Style Playstation, and more.

„X Comics: the influence of comic book heroes on hip-hop and Wu-Tang, including specific discussions of the bestselling Nine Rings of Wu-Tang comic books and Bobby Digital.

„X Chess: the importance of chess to Wu-Tang both as a game and as a multi-sided metaphor.

„X Organized Crime: Wu-Tang’s personal, cinematic, and structural affinities with the Mafia.

„X Cinema: includes both kung-fu and mafia movies, but also the cinematic sound of Wu-Tang music, plus sections on key filmmakers John Woo, Jarmusch, and Tarantino.

„X Chemistry: brief history, anecdotes, and information about Wu-Tang Clan’s experimentation, and how it has influenced their music.

„X Slang: a dictionary-like compendium of Wu-slang.

Book III provides the lyrics and densely annotated explanations of nine Wu-Tang songs:

„X "Protect Ya Neck"

„X "Bring Da Ruckus"

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„X "C.R.E.A.M."

„X "Triumph"

„X "Hellz Wind Staff"

„X "Impossible"

„X "Protect Ya Neck (The Jump Off)"

„X "Uzi (Pinky Ring)"

„X "Rules"

And in Book IV, RZA discusses the art and craft of hip-hop as it relates to Wu-Tang:

„X Wu-Tang Samples: RZA's unique, groundbreaking approach to sampling

„X Technology: history of key technological components RZA and the Clan had to master to make their music what they wanted it to be.

„X The Spirituality of Producing: what goes into producing Wu-Tang's music and what it has meant to the RZA.

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„X Voices as Instruments: how the nine members of Wu-Tang Clan function like a symphony, with each member playing an instrumental role

„X The Art of Rhyme: a discussion of Wu-Tang lyric-writing, with key contributions from GZA and U-God.

„X Live Performances: a brief history of the importance and the sensibility of Wu-Tang performances, up through their recent show in Los Angeles.

„X The Way of the Abbot: RZA on his role at the center of the Wu-Tang Clan

„X Wuman Resources: the career management behind the Wu-Tang Clan and the solo careers of the individual members

„X The Saga Continues: The future of Wu-Tang...

Elegantly laid-out and richly printed, the book is designed to reflect the Asian influence on the Wu-Tang universe, which, as the book explains, began with a fascination with kung-fu movies but quickly led to serious study of martial arts and Eastern philosophy and spirituality. The Book also includes a map of Shaolin; a trove of never-before-seen photos of the Wu-Tang Clan, including shots of RZA;’s trip to China with Sifu Shi Yan-Ming, live shots, and portraits-by Michael Lavine, Craig Wetherby, Sophia Chang, and Frank151; and original illustrations of many of the guiding lights of the Wu-Tang universe.

Before the death of ODB, the Wu-Tang Clan had recently played their first two group shows in years, one in Los Angeles and one in New York. They recently released a live album and DVD, Disciples of the 36 Chambers, and a Greatest Hits collection, Legend of the Wu-Tang Clan.

For the hardcore Wu-Tang disciple and the recent initiate alike, THE WU-TANG MANUAL is the definitive guide to the essence of Wu, one of the most innovative hip-hop groups of all time.

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The saga continues...

ABOUT THE AUTHOR The RZA is the Abbott of The Wu-Tang Clan, the multi-platinum-selling hip-hop group whose nine members have also released a number of platinum-selling solo albums. RZA is famous as a producer, rapper, and lyricist, and also for his recent working scoring movies; notably Kill Bill.

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