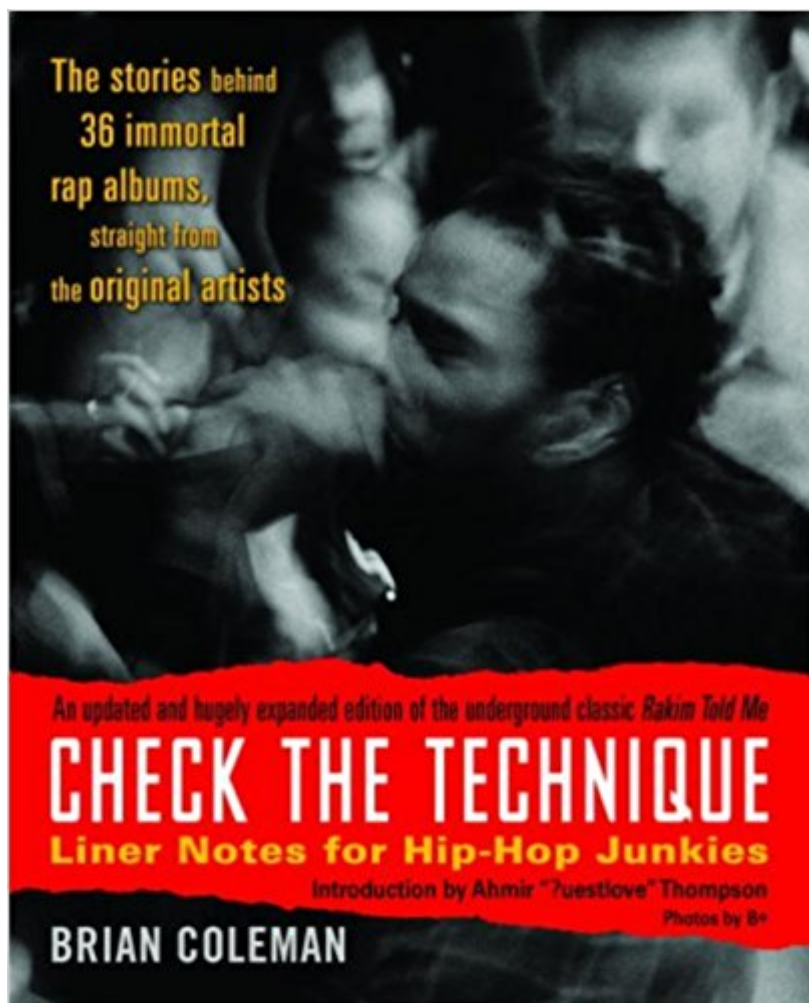


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# Check The Technique: Liner Notes For Hip-Hop Junkies



## Synopsis

A Tribe Called Quest • Beastie Boys • De La Soul • Eric B. & Rakim • The Fugees • KRS-One • Pete Rock & CL Smooth • Public Enemy • The Roots • Run-DMC • Wu-Tang Clan • and twenty-five more hip-hop immortals! It's a sad fact: hip-hop album liners have always been reduced to a list of producer and sample credits, a publicity photo or two, and some hastily composed shout-outs. That's a damn shame, because few outside the game know about the true creative forces behind influential masterpieces like PE's *It Takes a Nation of Millions*. . . , De La's *3 Feet High and Rising*, and Wu-Tang's *Enter the Wu-Tang (36 Chambers)*. A longtime scribe for the hip-hop nation, Brian Coleman fills this void, and delivers a thrilling, knockout oral history of the albums that define this dynamic and iconoclastic art form. The format: One chapter, one artist, one album, blow-by-blow and track-by-track, delivered straight from the original sources. Performers, producers, DJs, and b-boys—including Big Daddy Kane, Muggs and B-Real, Biz Markie, RZA, Ice-T, and Wyclef—step to the mic to talk about the influences, environment, equipment, samples, beats, beefs, and surprises that went into making each classic record. Studio craft and street smarts, sonic inspiration and skate ramps, triumph, tragedy, and take-out food—all played their part in creating these essential albums of the hip-hop canon. Insightful, raucous, and addictive, *Check the Technique* transports you back to hip-hop's golden age with the greatest artists of the '80s and '90s. This is the book that belongs on the stacks next to your wax. "Brian Coleman's writing is a lot like the albums he covers: direct, uproarious, and more than six-fifths genius." • Jeff Chang, author of *Can't Stop Won't Stop* "All producers and hip-hop fans must read this book. It really shows how these albums were made and touches the music fiend in everyone." • DJ Evil Dee of Black Moon and Da Beatminerz "A rarity in mainstream publishing: a truly essential rap history." • Ronin Ro, author of *Have Gun Will Travel*

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In his introduction to Coleman's new volume, recording artist Ahmir "Questlove" Thompson laments the lack of liner notes in hip-hop recordings, and it's this void that Coleman seeks to fill in this significantly expanded and updated version of his 2005 title *Rakim Told Me*. Each of Coleman's 36 "liner notes" cover one album by a particular artist, beginning with a thorough background essay from Coleman and continuing with comments on individual tracks by the artists, which range in length from a single line to page-spanning dialogue. Covering the period between 1986 (Schoolly D's *Saturday Night! The Album*) and 1996 (Fugees's *The Score*) sometimes described as the "golden age" of rap, Coleman's introductory essays are easy to read and informative, but the artists' comments are the more enlightening read. The artists focus largely on lyrics and their origins, but make many references to budgets, studio techniques, drum machines and sample sources (and the occasional lawsuit they engender). Though words like "genius," "masterwork," "legend" and "immortal" are tossed around too liberally, Coleman's volume, covering 400 tracks and 75 artists all told, is a valuable, entertaining inside look at the creative processes behind some of the best-selling albums of their (or any) time. (52 b/w photos) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Brian Coleman has been mesmerized and energized by hip-hop since he first heard Run-DMC's "Rock Box" in 1984. Over the past decade, he has written hundreds of reviews and features for a wide variety of publications including *Scratch*, *XXL*, *Wax Poetics*, *Complex*, *CMJ Weekly* and *CMJ Monthly*, *URB*, the *Boston Herald*, the *Miami New Times*, the *Boston Phoenix*, and *NY Press*. Brian was a nationally recognized jazz publicist with Braithwaite & Katz Communications in Boston. Questlove, cofounder of hip-hop superstars the Roots and bandleader for Jimmy Fallon's *The Tonight Show*, is one of our great cultural commentators—a wide-ranging mind whose interests span from music to politics to race to design to food. He is the

author of *Something to Food About: Exploring Creativity with Innovative Chefs*. To learn more, visit [questlove.com](http://questlove.com).

The first half of the book is stronger than the second half, despite the fact that I believe the second half features better albums. I expected the book to get even farther into the details of the making of some of these albums, but other than the Beastie Boys chapter I thought most everything was pretty surface level. There was more information given on the actual artists, and not as much given to the making of the albums in my opinion. If you love hip-hop and have an interest in many of the artists featured in the book it's still probably worth checking out, but I had hoped for more detail.

This book initially wasn't what I had expected. But it gives a detailed account of critical junctures in hip hop's past and accompanies them with pictures & photos of the subject at hand. Definitely would recommend to anyone who wants to brush up on Rap Culture's History and keep as a reference guide.

This book is essential for any fan of hip hop. It goes through classic albums track by track, and the forwards at the beginning of each chapter, describing where the artist, the music, and America was at the time of the album's creation, are very interesting themselves. The writing is competent, which is all we need since it is mostly interview style writing and the words are coming directly from the artist (and in some cases, industry execs) involved. Of course the choice of albums could have been different, some were unnecessary (the Marley Marl record which only made it because of the track "The Symphony") and some just weren't classic (Poor Righteous Teachers? huh?) but most are undeniable classics and have so much lore and mystery surrounding them it is nothing less than a blessing that Brain Coleman uncovered the story behind these records. Of course there are crucial records he left out, but I assume that he's saving those for the sequel.

I've wanted this book for years, finally got it. Wow, it's so interesting. If you don't care about these records, why are you reading this? If you do, then you will love this book as much as I am.

The Kindle version is full of typos and formatting errors. Three stars for content but stick to the print version.

I just received the book last night and had to tear myself away after 80 pages and get some sleep!

This is truly a captivating experience that author Brian Coleman has assembled. It's refreshing to see someone who is passionate about documenting the period of hip hop music that was so essential in the genre's life cycle. As an owner of many of the albums that are covered (sorry, never did like 2 Live Crew) it made me want to go back and listen to these classics (as another reviewer also pointed out). You will learn so many interesting tid bits of information that you had absolutely no idea were occurring when you were buying these LPs back in the day. This is a must read for all hip hop heads and those who need to be educated on the origins of Hip Hop's Golden Age. If you appreciate hip hop as art then this is for you!

A must read for anyone who want's to know about "Classic" hip-hop! Before all this garbage on the radio. Yes i am a "Hater". Stuck in the days of true lyrical hip-hop. From Hip-Hop's "Golden" Era, The Early 90's to Mid-90's, New York's Reign, The West Coast Resurgence & The South's Uprising. Most of it is in this book. A inside look to creation of true hip-hop classics. Would love a sequel.

I loved this book. My brother-in-law and I immediately started brainstorming on the albums that should be covered in the second volume of this.....hint hint hint to the author.

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