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2nd Period

22 March 2019

The Marshall Mathers LP Album Review

Who could have guessed a man violently screaming about brutally murdering his wife would be exactly what America needed to hear? Released on March 23, 2000, [The Marshall Mathers LP](#) caused the world-wide outrage over the white rapper, Eminem. The Detroit native was thrust into the spotlight after having the hit record, “My Name Is”, then proceeding to create one of the most controversial albums of its time in the *Slim Shady LP*. “My Name Is” being filled with lucrative lyrics, a catchy hook, and the hypnotic bass and guitar riff produced by one hip hops most respected producers, Dr. Dre, people patiently waited for Mathers sophomore project. If middle Americans were offended by the *Slim Shady LP*, they were for a rude awakening when the MMLP dropped. When listening to this project, the audience is immediately warned on what awaits as a brutally honest public service announcement prepares them for the “don’t give an eff” attitude Mathers is about to deliver. With the help of lyrics filled with venom and a dash of humor, complemented with [Dr. Dre](#) and [the Bass Brothers](#) stripped down beats, this album was the catapult to Eminem takeover America was about to endure for the next decade. Mathers was able to create one of hip hop's greatest albums through the lyrical complexity only the top tier mc’s could match, pristine production as well as the impact the album had the culture.

After the unsettling public service announcement, the first song “Kill You” is one of the strongest starts to an album, as the tone used gives the listeners an idea on how the rest of the

project will ultimately sound. The song is a pathway for topics Eminem is not unfamiliar with discussing, as it heavily emphasizes his hatred for his mother as well as critics. The over the top violence is not held back as Mathers fires off in the first verse depicting how he will choke, butcher, and rape females and his own mother, yet still make [the Rolling Stone cover](#) and receive a five star review. “Kill You” is the perfect introduction to Mathers as the confrontational vocal delivery and lyrics calling out media hypocrisies embodies the sole purpose of the album.

Mathers questions middle America on picking and choosing over what to be outraged about as well as confronting them about blaming him and other artists, such as Marilyn Manson, for acts of violence among the youth. The most commendable part of the album is Mathes refusal to tone down the content of lyrics to appease offended parents and the government, in fact, he went out of his way to create records that would make them that much more resentful. This defiant behavior made fans admire him, as some critics were concerned he would silence himself due to the backlash of his highly regarded freshman album. Audiences were amazed with him not silencing his beliefs, in fact emphasizing those opinions in lyrics that were composed of intricate rhyme schemes, various vocal deliveries and overall masterfully explaining his unique point of view.

Expectations were higher than ever for Mathers, as the success and classic stamp by hip hop critics for his first album left listeners craving for more. The lyrical content of the *Slim Shady LP* had a playful spirit, even when talking about subjects that were anything but joyous. Fans were excited to hear the quotables, and they were not let down. However, the playful tone was replaced with a violent delivery but still captured his humorous energy. The album gives an introspective glance into Mathers life, as he depicts through songs his struggle with adapting to

his new found fame and money. The line between the crude Slim Shady character and the real Marshall Mathers is blurred, as there is no direct answer on which persona is being portrayed in each song. The listeners can decide whether or not they think the song is depicting fiction or reality, as the lyrical matter was intended to fog minds. With the addition of controversial lyrics, Mathers knew receiving fair critiques on his work rather than biased reviews by writers who were offended would be a difficult task. Creating controversial lyrics that were defended by hip hop greats and critics was seemingly effortless, as Mathers tackled this task by using controversial things he said in an intelligent way. The song "Who Knew" perfectly calls out outrage culture by comparing his lyrics to novels, television shows and movies that dealt with subject matter of his previous songs. While parents did not have an issue with children watching violence in other forms of entertainment, hearing vulgar cussing and acts of aggression from the rapper made them spiral into a frenzy. His lyrics also were put to use to create a stories that sent chills down the listeners spine with the inclusion of his highly regarded song "Stan". Mathers lyrical ability was proven to be at the greatest of all time level once audiences heard this song, as it depicts a character named Stan who is obsessed with the Slim Shady character, unable to tell that Slim isn't real. Stan writes letters sharing his darkest secrets with Slim and becomes enraged when there is never a response. On one fateful night, Stan records a message for Slim saying why he is going to kill himself as well as his pregnant girlfriend. The moment where critics and casual listeners began to get goosebumps is when the fourth verse reveals Eminem's response to the letters, as he had not been able to reply previously. The most haunting moment is when he discovers that the deliousnal man on the news he is worried about Stan becoming, was really Stan. The song is brought to life with Mathers changing is voice to portray Stan, the eerie sample

performed by Dido as well as the simple bass line that is heard throughout. The lyrical ability included onto each song is near flawless, making critics have to give high ratings even if the content was disturbing. With the groundbreaking lyrics and production with this album, the impact the album had on the culture was impeccable as it forever changed Mathers career and opened doors for other white and controversial rappers.

With the impressive debut of the *Slim Shady LP*, predictions for the *Marshall Mathers LP* were exponentially higher. Although no one could have predicted the absolute riot Mathers would cause. From selling 200,000 copies first week of *SSLP*, his first week sales rose the record breaking numbers for a hip hop album. Selling a little over 1.7 million copies first week, Mathers still to this day holds the record for highest first week sales of any rap album. The singles released caused buzz around the album, especially due to success of “The Real Slim Shady”. People awaited to hear the new Eminem, and on this album they were not disappointed. The maturity level rising from his previous work was easy to hear due to his newer lyrical content and tone. In this album, Mathers shocked everyone by creating a new sound as well as a whole new lane of rappers. Controversial rappers were often silenced, but due to success of Eminem, many other “problematic rappers” got the opportunity to make it more mainstream. Even artists who aren’t as controversial were inspired by this work and gave them hope that one day they too could be considered hip hop's greatest. From Big Sean to J Cole and Kendrick Lamar, this piece of work shaped influential modern day artists. In one of the most competitive industries, Mathers was able to create something so unbelievably unique and classic. The album isn’t for the faint of heart, although that was purpose. People should listen to this album to hear the stripped down truth of Eminem’s upbringing and why he is the way he is. The brutal honesty, perfect

production and overall quality of the songs will make anyone listening understand why Eminem has the legacy he does.

The Marshall Mathers LP revolutionized the hip hop genre and marked a new era for how music was created. The blend of lyrical complexity and perfectly composed beats birthed an unheard of atmosphere to middle America. People from different backgrounds all over the country could agree on the masterful work Mathers, as he delivered a feeling that Mathers was directly talking to you when listening to the album. The evolution of Mathers work has created a space for him to create a name for himself. This album single handedly catapulted Mathers to top tier, as today people still wait to hear what Marshall Mathers opinions and ground breaking work.

Rules for Writing Review

Rob Sheffield is a music critic for Rolling Stones. His style of album reviewing was influential to me as I wanted to follow his rules when writing my review on *The Marshall Mathers LP*.

#1. Sheffield starts to review albums by mentioning other work and comparing their previous projects to the project they are review. He also likes to talk about the differences between their personal life and other music news that occurred in the time period from their last album to the new one. This not only helps the reader understand the perspective of the artists new project especially if they are new to that artist, but also establishes credibility to Sheffield. It shows he is knowledgeable on the artist and understands what they are capable of musically. The reader can also appreciate this because they know that the review is researched and that the author is knowledgeable.

#2. Sheffield then begins to go into a description of the most important songs of the album. He breaks down their lyrics, production, and why the song has either a positive or negative effect on the project. This shows the reader that the author has listened to the project and digested it due to the fact that they can properly break it down. This rule is important because it further pushes the author's credibility by showing that the author is comfortable enough with the work to expand on the songs meaning.

#3. Throughout the reviews, Sheffield makes sure to include the history of the project and where the history is incorporated. In his Ariana Grande *Thank U, Next* review, he includes a lot of

researched information to explain why this album talks about her past relationships as well as her relationship with the music industry. The reader can then take this information and hopefully agree that the message and content delivered in the album made it great.

#4. Sheffield makes sure to include in depth imagery to describe the music in a way where the audience can almost hear it. The language that he uses make his reviews unique from other critics because it gives him an unique style of writing. It engages the readers due to the vivid picture they are giving. If someone is reading the article but haven't listened to album, the authors language may persuade the reader to check out the project.

#5. Lastly, the author makes sure to talk about the albums impact and what it means to the current music industry. An album may be good, but it can be considered a classic if it brings a new aspect to the culture. He does a phenomenal job on explaining why an album came close or did not make the mark on having an unique impact. He also explains what the artist could do to improve on their next album if he felt that the artist was missing key elements.