

## = Enta da Stage =

Enta da Stage is the debut album of American East Coast hip hop group Black Moon , released on October 19 , 1993 through Nervous Records . The album was produced by DJ Evil Dee and Mr. Walt of Da Beatminerz . Enta da Stage features the debut of underground hip hop duo Smif @-@ N @-@ Wessun , as well as appearances from Havoc of Mobb Deep and Dru Ha , the co @-@ founder of Duck Down Records .

Despite being critically acclaimed and having two singles that charted on the Billboard Hot 100 ( " Who Got da Props ? " and " I Got Cha Opin " ) , the album sold poorly , and is often overlooked in favor of subsequent East Coast albums such as Enter the Wu @-@ Tang ( 36 Chambers ) , Illmatic , Liquid Swords , Ready to Die , Only Built 4 Cuban Linx ... , and The Infamous . Nonetheless , Enta da Stage preceded those releases and served as a precursor to the resurgence of the New York hip hop scene in the mid @-@ 1990s .

## = = Background = =

The roots of Black Moon go back to Brooklyn 's Bushwick High School , where 5 ft and DJ Evil Dee met and formed a group called Unique Image . The two later met Buckshot in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn , and formed a friendship based on similar musical aspirations . The newly formed group recruited Evil Dee 's older brother Mr. Walt , and began recording the pre @-@ production of their debut album at the Dewgarde Crib of Hits at Mr. Walt 's house . Their first group release was their 1992 single " Who Got da Props ? " , which is now hailed as a classic hip hop single . Black Moon signed to Nervous Records in 1992 , based on the strength of the debut single , which peaked at number 86 on the Billboard Hot 100 chart in early 1993 . Buckshot soon formed a close relationship with Nervous employee Drew Friedman , later known as Dru Ha . The two formed a management company named " Duck Down Management " , and oversaw the release of Enta da Stage as co @-@ executive producers . The group finished recording Enta da Stage at New York City 's D & D Studios between late 1992 and early 1993 , and prepared it for a late 1993 release date .

## = = Music = =

Much of the acclaim the album received was due to the performance of lead MC Buckshot , who originally went by the name Buckshot Shorty . Ten of the fourteen tracks on the album are Buckshot solo tracks , and he appears on every song but " Son Get Wrec " . Buck , who was eighteen at the time of the recording , was a young man trying to establish himself and his crew in the hip hop world . In a 2005 interview with MVRemix.com , Buckshot described a day in his life while recording his debut :

Enta da Stage was really rough for me . It was a really rough era . A lot of people don 't know what I went through personally . I think I had just turned eighteen and I had the pressure of running a management company as an eighteen year old shorter than 5 ' 6 . I had that problem of people taking my company and my representation seriously . So a day in the life around the Enta da Stage era was based on constant struggle and lettin ' people know you respect Duck Down management as a real management company and not just as some little cute thing that Buckshot is doing . Nah , for real , we 're management type deal . I was battling keeping Smif @-@ n @-@ Wessun in a good deal , I was battling trying to get Heltah Skeltah a good deal . I was battling trying to bring my record company into existence , so it was a really hard time .

## = = = Lyrics = = =

The mindset described in the above interview rules the content on the album , as the lyrics are loaded with violent narratives and braggadocio and little else , as Buckshot and 5 ft try to solidify their status in rap . Allmusic 's Chris Witt stated that " Emcees Buckshot and 5ft Accelerator attack

their verses with an aggressive nihilism not heard since Kool G Rap 's peak . " 5 ft , originally known as 5FT Accelerator , appears on three tracks here , and his lyrical content does not differ from that of Buckshot 's . Unlike later work by New York City peers like Nas , the lyrical content found here does not peer deeply into social issues or provide much substance . Allmusic 's album review stated that " Theirs is a grim reality , filled with guns , weed and violence . Buckshot displays none of the usual gangster remorse , he is a willful public menace . "

Buckshot was praised not only for his lyricism , but also for his lyrical delivery and breath control , with his flow and dramatic , conversational vocal tones being seen as original and entertaining . In a 2005 interview with AllHipHop.com , hip hop producer 9th Wonder stated that Buckshot 's style strongly influenced his current sound , and that the singles " Who Got da Props ? " and " How Many MC 's ... " changed his life .

The album features an original style of choruses , which are now known as " Black Moon hooks " , in which they gather a large number of people in the booth to simultaneously yell the lyrics . These vocals were provided by a number of artists , including Smif @-@ n @-@ Wessun , Mr. Walt , Mobb Deep 's Havoc and the trio themselves . " Niguz Talk Shit " , " Who Got da Props ? " , " Ack Like U Want It " , " Buck Em Down " , " Black Smif @-@ n @-@ Wessun " , " Son Get Wrec " , " Make Munne " and " U da Man " all feature " Black Moon hooks " .

= = = Production = = =

DJ Evil Dee and Mr. Walt of Da Beatminerz , who produced the album , put their samplers to use here , lacing the album with their signature basement sound , filled with hard drums , grimy horn arrangements and deep basslines . In the album 's liner notes , DJ Evil Dee stated : " This album was done on blunted terms . Anyone who is offended by the contents of the album , FUCK YOU . Nuff said . " Allmusic describes the dark production : " The Beatminerz production crew craft subterranean beats to match Buckshot 's mayhem . The tracks are dark , layered with muted jazz samples , and seemingly bottomless . " A few of the samples used here were later recreated by a number of hip hop artists in the 1990s . The single " Buck Em Down " features a sample from Donald Byrd 's " Wind Parade " , a sample which was later re @-@ used for Organized Konfusion 's 1994 concept track " Stray Bullet " . " How Many MC 's ... " features a sample from Grover Washington , Jr . ' s " Hydra " , which was used for earlier hip hop tracks like EPMD 's " Underground " . The iconic " Who Got Da Props " heavily utilizes a looped sample from Ronnie Laws 's jazz classic " Tidal Wave " , which was featured in several hip @-@ hop and R & B tracks , including Usher 's " Think Of You " from his self @-@ titled 1994 album . Evil Dee and Walt take a portion of the sample and craft it into a different loop .

An Enta da Stage review on OhWord.com praises the production work , stating " Though the album 's success is largely attributable to Buckshot 's performance , one cannot ignore the phenomenal production from the Beatminerz . They took the already dark sound of The Low End Theory and one @-@ upped it , filtering out almost all treble and using spare , hardcore drum samples . The compositions of Mr. Walt and Evil Dee are also cleverly structured , propelling Buckshot 's raps directly into the listener 's psyche . " ... " The crackle of scratched vinyl pervades the album , contributing to the feel of warmth and timelessness . Thanks to the Beatminerz , there is something inviting about Enta da Stage , despite its confrontational lyrics . "

= = Singles = =

Enta da Stage featured four singles and music videos , including their debut " Who Got da Props ? " . In mid @-@ 1993 , the " How Many MC 's ... " single was released ; it became popular in the underground rap circuit , but was not able to find success with mainstream audiences , barely breaking into the Top 50 on the Hot Rap Singles chart . The third single from the album was a remix of " I Got Cha Opin " , which utilized a smooth jazz sample , courtesy of Barry White 's " Playing Your Game Baby " . The remix featured a new chorus and all @-@ new verses to go along with the new production . The single became the group 's second Billboard Hot 100 hit in 1994 , peaking at

number 93 . The last single , " Buck Em Down " , was released in mid @-@ 1994 , with the music video featuring the remixed version . Both original and remixed versions featured sampled portions from Donald Byrd 's " Wind Parade " and similar lyrics , with the remix featuring a different vocal delivery and edited lyrics .

The album spawned additional remixes . Along with " Buck Em Down " and " I Got Cha Opin " , the tracks " Ack like U Want It " , " Son Get Wrec " , " Shit Iz Real " , " How Many MC 's ... " and " U da Man " all featured remixes , which were later included on Black Moon 's Diggin ' in dah Vaults compilation .

= = Reception = =

Enta da Stage has received generally favorable reviews from most music critics and publications . Allmusic gave the album 4 ½ stars out of 5 , while The Source gave it 4 out of 5 Mics . In 1998 , the album was selected as one of The Source 's 100 Best Rap Albums , and former Source magazine writer Cheo H. Coker stated in their November 1993 issue :

Enta da Stage is a stunning debut that does not disappoint by any stretch of the imagination . The only term that adequately describes Black Moon 's smooth combination of funky jazz rhythms and ferocious vocals is ' elegant madness . ' It 's nice to see that there are still shining spots of originality to be found in a genre that 's becoming increasingly overrun by bogus bandwagon jumpers just out to make a quick buck . Make this jammie a priority .

Though praised for its originality and production , Enta da Stage has also seen criticism for its monotony and lack of lyrical substance . Rolling Stone magazine gave the album a 3 @-@ star rating , and criticized the release for " ignorance " , and claimed that the release failed to capitalize on its promise , stating that " They leave blank the ultimate canvas ? the self . " In naming it the fourth greatest album on About.com 's list of the Best Rap Albums of 1993 , columnist Henry Adaso wrote of the album favorably , stating " Unlike most hip @-@ hop albums of its era , Enta Da Stage eschewed confrontational raps and opted for brooding , electrifying brand of hip @-@ hop . "

= = Influence = =

Though not as widely heralded as similar groundbreaking East Coast albums such as Nas ' Illmatic , The Notorious B.I.G. ' s Ready to Die , Wu @-@ Tang Clan 's Enter the Wu @-@ Tang ( 36 Chambers ) , Onyx 's Bacdafucup and Mobb Deep 's The Infamous , Enta da Stage was critically acclaimed on a similar level . Though all of the albums mentioned above were able to reach at least Gold status , Enta da Stage , released before all of these albums , has not sold nearly as well , selling just over 350 @,@ 000 copies in the U.S. as of June 2006 . Allmusic described the importance of the album : " It set the tone for much of the hip hop to follow . Biggie Smalls suicidal thoughts and Noreaga 's boisterous thuggery both have their roots here . The album marked a turning point in hip hop . " Enta da Stage has also been described as " Era defining " , and was one of the pioneering releases during the return of New York City 's street hip hop resurgence of the mid 1990s , after the West Coast 's reign of the early 1990s . Enta da Stage is still prominent among hip hop artists today , such as lyrics from " How Many MC 's ... " being used as a hook for Jedi Mind Trick 's song " Speech Cobras " .

The album also served as the introduction of the supergroup Boot Camp Clik . The collective was a prominent underground rap group in the 1990s ? also producing the acclaimed Smif @-@ n @-@ Wessun 's Dah Shinin ' , Heltah Skeltah 's Nocturnal , and O.G.C. ' s Da Storm . Enta da Stage heralded the debut of Da Beatminerz . After producing here , and on other Boot Camp albums Dah Shinin ' , Nocturnal and Da Storm , Mr. Walt and Evil Dee went on to expand their sounds , and produce for popular artists like Afu @-@ Ra , Big Daddy Kane , Craig G , De La Soul , Dilated Peoples , Eminem , Flipmode Squad , Jean Grae , KRS @-@ One , M.O.P. , Naughty by Nature , O.C. and Black Star . The album is extensively broken down track @-@ by @-@ track by Buckshot , DJ Evil Dee , and Mr. Walt of Da Beatminerz in Brian Coleman 's book Check the Technique ( 2007 ) .

= = Track listing = =

Track listing and producer information is taken from the CD .  
" Ack Like U Want It " was not on the cassette or the vinyl release .  
" Slave " was not on the vinyl release .

= = Personnel = =

= = Chart history = =

Album  
Singles