

= Paid in Full ( album ) =

Paid in Full is the debut album of American hip hop duo Eric B. & Rakim , released on August 25 , 1987 , by Island @-@ subsidiary label 4th & B 'way Records . The duo recorded the album at hip hop producer Marley Marl 's home studio and Power Play Studios in New York City , following Rakim 's response to Eric B. ' s search for a rapper to complement his disc jockey work in 1985 . The album peaked at number fifty @-@ eight on the Billboard 200 chart and produced five singles , " Eric B. Is President " , " I Ain 't No Joke " , " I Know You Got Soul " , " Move the Crowd " , and " Paid in Full " .

Paid in Full is credited as a benchmark album of golden age hip hop . Rakim 's rapping , which pioneered the use of internal rhymes in hip hop , set a higher standard of lyricism in the genre and served as a template for future rappers . The album 's heavy sampling by Eric B. became influential in hip hop production . The record has sold over a million copies and the Recording Industry Association of America ( RIAA ) certified it platinum in 1995 . In 2003 , the album was ranked number 228 on Rolling Stone magazine 's list of the 500 greatest albums of all time .

= = Background = =

Eric B. and Rakim met in 1985 after Eric B. looked for a rapper to complement his turntable work at the New York City radio station WBLS . After Rakim responded to Eric B. ' s search for " New York 's top MC " , Eric B 's friend and roommate Marley Marl allowed him to use his home studio . The first track they recorded , " Eric B. Is President " , was released as a single on the independent Zakia Records in 1986 . After Def Jam Recordings founder Russell Simmons heard the single , the duo were signed to Island Records and began recording the album in Manhattan 's Power Play Studios in early 1987 . Rakim wrote his songs in approximately one hour while listening to the beat . He then recorded his vocals in the booth by reading his lyrics from a paper . In 2006 , Rakim revealed , " When I hear my first album today I hear myself reading my rhymes but I 'm my worst critic . " The duo completed the album in one week . They have said that they worked in 48 @-@ hour shifts and recorded in single takes in order complete the album within budget . In a 2008 interview with AllHipHop , Eric B. stated , " [ T ] o sit here and say we put together this calculated album to be a great album would be a lie . We were just doing records that felt good . "

The album 's success led to a contract with Uni Records and MCA Records in 1988 , who released their second album , Follow the Leader . Eric B. & Rakim are credited as officially producing Paid in Full . Although Marley Marl claimed to have produced two tracks ( " My Melody " and " Eric B. Is President " ) , Eric B. has argued that Marley Marl was only an engineer . In 2003 , Eric B. alleged the duo had not been fully paid for their work , and filed a lawsuit against the Island Def Jam Music Group , Lyor Cohen , and Russell Simmons .

= = Music = =

Rakim 's rhyming deviated from the simple rhyme patterns of early 1980s hip hop . His free @-@ rhythm style ignored bar lines and had earned comparisons to Thelonious Monk . The New York Times ' Ben Ratliff wrote that Rakim 's " unblustery rapping developed the form beyond the flat @-@ footed rhythms of schoolyard rhymes " . While many rappers developed their technique through improvisation , Rakim was one of the first to demonstrate advantages of a writerly style , as with for instance his pioneering use of internal rhyme . Unlike previous rappers such as LL Cool J and Run @-@ D.M.C. who delivered their vocals with high energy , Rakim employed a relaxed , stoic delivery . According to MTV , " We 'd been used to MCs like Run and DMC , Chuck D and KRS @-@ One leaping on the mic shouting with energy and irreverence , but Rakim took a methodical approach to his microphone fiending . He had a slow flow , and every line was blunt , mesmeric . " Rakim 's relaxed delivery resulted from his jazz influences ; he had played the saxophone and was a John Coltrane fan . His subject matter often covered his own rapping skills and lyrical superiority over other rappers .

Allmusic editor Steve Huey characterized Rakim for his " complex internal rhymes , literate imagery , velvet @-@ smooth flow , and unpredictable , off @-@ the @-@ beat rhythms . " Pitchfork Media writer Jess Harvell described his rapping as " authoritative , burnished , [ and ] possessing an unflappable sense of rhythm " . Paid in Full , which contains gritty , heavy , and dark beats , marked the beginning of heavy sampling in hip hop records . Of the album 's ten tracks , three are instrumentals . As a disc jockey , Eric B. had reinstated the art of live turntable mixing . His soul @-@ filled sampling became influential in future hip hop production . Music critic Robert Christgau noted that Eric B. had incorporated " touches of horn or whistle deep in the mix " of his sampled percussion and scratches .

= = Singles = =

" Eric B. Is President " was released as the first single with " My Melody " as the B @-@ side . It peaked at number 48 on the Hot R & B / Hip @-@ Hop Singles & Tracks and number forty on the Hot Dance Music / Maxi @-@ Singles Sales . The track sparked debate on the legality of unauthorized sampling when James Brown sued to prevent the duo 's use of his music . PopMatters ' Mark Anthony Neal called it " the most danceable hip @-@ hop recording " of 1986 . According to Touré of The New York Times , " It is Rakim 's verbal dexterity as well as his calm , deep voice and dark tone that has made this song a rap classic : ' I came in the door / I said it before / I 'll never let the mic magnetize me no more / But it 's bitin ' me / Fightin ' me / Invitin ' me to rhyme / I can 't hold it back / I 'm looking for the line / Takin ' off my coat / Clearin ' my throat / The rhyme will be kickin ' it / Til I hit my last note . ' " The second single , " I Ain 't No Joke " , peaked at number 38 on the Hot R & B / Hip @-@ Hop Singles & Tracks . Described as one of the album 's " monumental singles " , Michael Di Bella wrote in the All Music Guide to Rock that " Rakim grabs the listener by the throat and illustrates his mastery of the rhyming craft " .

The third single , " I Know You Got Soul " , peaked at number 39 on the Hot Dance Music / Club Play chart , number 34 on the Hot Dance Music / Maxi @-@ Singles Sales , and number 64 on the Hot R & B / Hip @-@ Hop Singles & Tracks . The track 's production contains " digitized cymbal crashes , breathing sounds , and a bumping bass line . " The song popularized James Brown samples in hip hop songs . The British band M | A | R | R | S sampled the line , " Pump up the volume " , on their number one UK single , " Pump Up the Volume " . Rolling Stone ranked it at number 386 on " The 500 Greatest Songs of All Time " . The fourth single , " Move the Crowd " , peaked at number three on the Hot Dance Music / Club Play chart and number 25 on the Hot Dance Music / Maxi @-@ Singles Sales . The track 's B @-@ side , " Paid in Full " , was released as a single in 1987 and later remixed by the production duo Coldcut . The remix used several vocal samples , most prominently " Im Nin 'Alu " by Israeli singer Ofra Haza . In 2008 , the song was ranked at number 24 on VH1 's " 100 Greatest Hip Hop Songs " .

= = Reception and influence = =

In a contemporary review for The Washington Post , Mark Jenkins highlighted the single " Eric B. Is President " but was unimpressed by the rest of Paid in Full : " Its beats are monotonous , and the attempts to take ' jazz and the quiet storm ' and ' convert into hip @-@ hop form ' fall flat . " Robert Christgau from The Village Voice said it has " four groundbreaking masterworks " in " I Ain 't No Joke " , " I Know You Got Soul " , " Paid in Full " , and " Eric B. Is President " , but was less enthusiastic about the other six songs : " They 're pure , innovative , in @-@ your @-@ face--no doubt . But they 're also turntablism with spoken decoration , of small use to anyone who hasn 't internalized the ' real ' hip hop aesthetic . " In the newspaper 's annual Pazz & Jop critics poll , it was named the 27th best album of 1987 .

Paid in Full was released during what became known as the golden age hip hop era . In The Rolling Stone Album Guide ( 2004 ) , Sasha Frere @-@ Jones called it " one of hip @-@ hop 's perfect records " , while Alex Ogg considered it to be the duo 's magnum opus in his book The Men Behind Def Jam . Rakim 's rapping on the album set a blueprint for future rappers and helped secure East

Coast hip hop 's reputation for innovative lyrical technique . Author William Cobb stated in To the Break of Dawn that his rapping had " stepped outside " of the preceding era of old school hip hop and that while the vocabulary and lyrical dexterity of newer rappers had improved , it was " nowhere near what Rakim introduced to the genre " . The New York Times ' Dimitri Ehrlich , who described the album as " an artistic and commercial benchmark " , credited Rakim for helping " give birth to a musical genre " and leading " a quiet musical revolution , introducing a soft @-@ spoken rapping style " . Allmusic 's Steve Huey declared Paid in Full one of hip @-@ hop 's most influential albums and " essential listening " for those interested in the genre 's " basic musical foundations " . MTV ranked it at number one in " The Greatest Hip @-@ Hop Albums of All Time " , stating it raised the standards of hip @-@ hop " both sonically and poetically " and described it as " captivating , profound , innovative and instantly influential " . The album is broken down track @-@ by @-@ track by Rakim in Brian Coleman 's book Check the Technique .

In 2003 , Rolling Stone listed Paid in Full at number 228 on " The 500 Greatest Albums of All Time " , calling it " Ice @-@ grilled , laid @-@ back , diamond @-@ sharp : Rakim is a front @-@ runner in the race for Best Rapper Ever , and this album is a big reason why . " Similarly , Blender magazine included the album in its " 500 CDs You Must Own Before You Die " . Time magazine listed it as one of the eighteen albums of the 1980s in its " All @-@ TIME 100 " albums ; editor Alan Light acknowledged the record changed the " sound , flow , and potential " of hip hop and that if Rakim is " the greatest MC of all time , as many argue , this album is the evidence " . Jess Harvell of Pitchfork Media complimented Rakim for an " endless display of pure skill " and described the album as " laidback and funky " , but believed it contained " too much filler to get a free ' classic ' pass " . Pitchfork Media placed Paid in Full at number fifty @-@ two in its " Top 100 Albums of the 1980s " ; editor Sam Chennault wrote that Rakim inspired a generation of MCs and " defined what it meant to be a hip @-@ hop lyricist " . Slant Magazine listed the album at # 32 on its list of " Best Albums of the 1980s " saying " For his part , Rakim didn 't need to rely on macho jargon and trite gangsterisms for his self @-@ aggrandizing sermons ; he would simply reel off line after line of spellbinding wordplay , influencing an entire decade of tongue @-@ twisting MCs in the process . "

Rakim is credited with influencing rappers including the Wu @-@ Tang Clan , Jay @-@ Z , 50 Cent , and Nas , who cited Paid in Full as one of his favorite albums . 50 Cent told NME that Paid in Full was the first album he bought : " I used to get my grandmother 's tape recorder ? the one she used to tape church services ? and record hip @-@ hop off the radio . And , with Eric B. & Rakim , I think that was the first moment where I felt like , ' I 've got to own this . This is crucial . "

On July 11 , 1995 , the Recording Industry Association of America ( RIAA ) certified the album platinum . As of December 1997 , it has sold over a million copies .

= = Track listing = =

All songs written and officially produced by Eric B. & Rakim .

= = Personnel = =

Information taken from Allmusic .

Art direction ? Ruth Kaplan

Engineer ? Patrick Adams

Executive producer ? Robert Hill

Mastering ? Herb Powers

Photography ? Ron Contarsy

Producer ? Eric B. & Rakim

Remixing ? Marley Marl

= = Chart history = =

= = Reissues = =