

New York Folklore Society
2002-03 Documentary Heritage Program Project
Documenting Hip Hop

Collection creator:

Thembisa Mshaka-Morris

Title:

Wu-Tang Clan autographed record

Dates:

ca. 1994

Extent:

1 twelve-inch vinyl record mounted with a platinum record on a plaque

Biographical/historical note:

A native of Los Angeles, Thembisa Mshaka-Morris is a music promoter and writer. She began her career at Absolute Artists, a small but powerful booking agency, working with many music legends, including George Clinton, Etta James, Junior Walker and Gil-Scott Heron. From December 1993 to May 1998, Mshaka-Morris was Rap Editor for *Gavin Magazine*, a music industry trade publication, which is now defunct. She was the first woman to hold this position, and was instrumental in breaking many Hip Hop artists who became best-sellers, including, Busta Rhymes, The Fugees, and Timbaland. Since leaving Gavin, she has worked as a Senior Advertising Copywriter for Sony Music, and is responsible for developing advertising campaigns for the company's Hip Hop, reggae, rhythm and blues and crossover artists, including Lauryn Hill, Kenny Lattimore, George Michael and Babyface. She made a foray into music supervision with the award-winning independent film "Anne B. Real" (Urban Dream Productions, 2002).

As a writer, Thembisa Mshaka-Morris became widely known as for her controversial column, "The Monthly Flow," in the now defunct *BLAZE* magazine. The column addressed the convergence of gender and Hip Hop culture in a progressive, groundbreaking, journalistic style. Her writings have been published in, *Launch.com*, *Essence.com*, and *Honey*, and she is also editor-at-large for *The Hotness.com*, an online magazine for young women of color. Mshaka-Morris is at work on her first book, *Handle Your [music] Business: Her Guide To Entering, Navigating, and Exiting the Record Industry*, and contributes a monthly music business column with the same title to *Emixshow* magazine.

Scope and content:

The members of Wu-Tang Clan, a Staten Island, New York-based rap group, autographed a green vinyl copy of their first album on major record label, *Enter*

the Wu-Tang (36 Chambers), and gave it to Thembisa Mshaka-Morris of *Gavin* magazine, after the album was released on November 9, 1993. The autograph vinyl was mounted with a platinum record on a plaque by Loud/RCA records, signifying that it had sold one million copies. Mshaka-Morris was *Gavin*'s Rap editor, and was active in introducing the music of Wu-Tang Clan to a national audience. The group's association with *Gavin* began with Mshaka-Morris's predecessor, Kelly Wu, who had written about Wu-Tang Clan before they were signed to a major record label.

Wu-Tang Clan's members at the time this album was released, all of whom contributed rap vocals, were: Prince Rakeem "The RZA"; The Method Man; U-God; Rebel INS (also known as Inspecta Deck); Shallah Raekwon (also known as Raekwon); Ghostface Killah; Ol' Dirty Bastard; The Genius "The GZA"; and Masta Killa. Prince Rakeem also did programming; scratches were provided by The 4th Disciple.

Finding aid note:

There is no finding aid for this material. Information on this collection was gathered during an interview with Thembisa Mshaka-Morris by Chic Smith of Urban Think Tank in the Spring of 2003.

Additional physical forms:

Enter The Wu-Tang (36 Chambers) was released by Loud/RCA Records on November 9, 1993.

Location:

This collection is held by Thembisa Mshaka-Morris, Brooklyn, New York.

Restrictions on Access:

Researchers interested in using this material should contact Urban Think Tank; P.O. Box 1476, New York, NY 10185; telephone 718-679-3739; fax 718-596-1228; Email, urbanthinktank@usa.net.

Indexing terms:

Personal names:

The RZA (also known as Prince Rakeem, born Robert Diggs)
The Method Man (born Clifford Smith)
U-God
Inspecta Deck (also known as Rebel INS, born Jason Hunter)
Rakewon (also known as Shallah Rakewon, and Rakewon the Chef, born Corey Woods)
Ghostface Killah (born Dennis Coles)
Ol' Dirty Bastard (born Russell Jones)
The Genius (also known as "The GZA", born Gary Grice)
Masta Killa

The 4th Disciple

Corporate/organizational names:

Gavin magazine
Loud/RCA Records
Wu-Tang Clan

Subject terms:

Hip Hop
Rap (music)
Sound recording industry
Sound recordings – Awards

Form and genre/Form of material:

Sound recordings

Date of interview and survey: Spring 2003

Interview and survey by: Chic Smith

This summary written by: Nancy Johnson with information provided by Chic Smith