

SUMMER ENTERTAINMENT PREVIEW

Rap albums dominate new releases

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Staff writer

Those who are waiting for rap's reign at the top of music sales to come to a disco-esque crash need to take heed: last year's genre-leading album sales and Grammy success may only be the beginning.

The summer forecast for new releases shows in music shows a constant storm of hip-hop albums and a relative drizzle of rock and country.

Classic rap act EPMD kicks off the selling spree tomorrow with its final album, "Out of Business." From there, the summer releases sound like a who's who of rap.

Puffy's main protégé, Ma\$e, offers his final album before retiring to pursue religious causes with the double disc "Double Up." Juvenile's "Solja Rags" and Public Enemy's "There's a Poison Goin' On" should roll in the Benjamins as well.

Also in June alone is Wu-Tang Clan member Genius/GZA's "Beneath the

Surface," Missy Elliott's "Da Real World," and Too \$hort's "Can't Stay Away."

Looking ahead to July, Sugarhill Gang, who appeared at University of Nebraska-Lincoln last fall, is releasing a children's album titled "Jump On It." Noreaga will be on the other side of the spectrum with "Melvyn Flynt the Hustler."

However, the brightest point of hip-hop's summer releases is The Roots human beatbox, Rahzel, releasing his first solo record "Make the Music 2000." Rahzel's style of thumping his throat and making DJ sounds with his mouth should take hip-hop to a creative new level.

While hip-hop records will be at the forefront, there are some rock and pop records that are sure to make some noise.

Pennywise's "Straight Ahead," Jamiroquai's "Synkronized," and Red Hot Chili Peppers "Californication" shouldn't be slouches at the counters when released tomorrow.

However, only few artists such as Limp Bizkit, MxPx, Chemical Brothers and ex-Spice Girl Geri Halliwell will release records that will be looked ahead to by fans.

Otherwise, this should be a summer where up and coming bands break out. One such artist is Omaha's own Mulberry Lane. The recent release of Rizzuto sisters' major-label debut

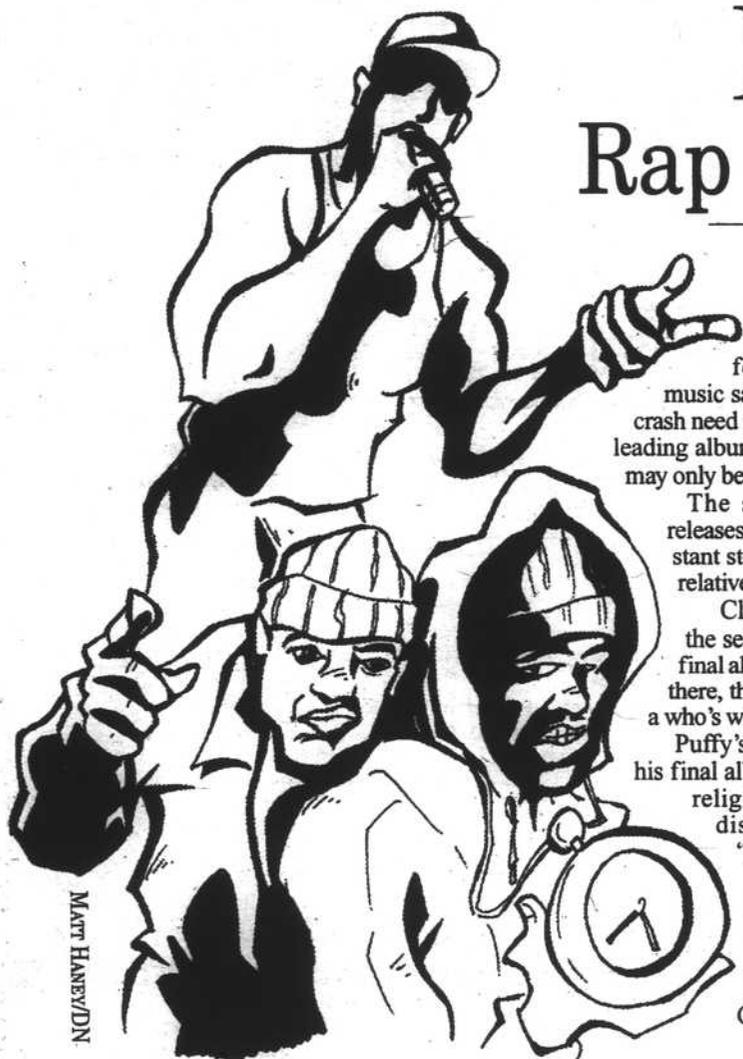
"Run Your Own Race" and single "Harmless" are making some noise nationwide.

One album that should be looked for is Widespread Panic's "Til the Medicine Takes." While the band has drawn comparisons to Phish, it is branching its music out by collaborating with a brass band and a gospel singer for this one.

Unfortunately for country fans, the summer album schedule doesn't look too promising. Some albums such as John Michael Montgomery's "Home to You" should do very well however, and fans can look for Alabama's "Twentieth Century" and a tribute to Gram Parsons before summer's end.

This summer's releases, while mostly rap-centered, should give music fans the opportunity to look for some lesser known acts in the music stores. New albums from bands such as the Gadjits and Pavement, while overlooked in past summers, should be given an ear at the listening booth at the local record store with the lack of quality rock albums this year.

With little hip-hop radio in the area, MTV's promotion of Ma\$e should help his cause considerably. However, for those who want to hear some albums with quality lyricists, wait for three De La Soul albums due out this fall and the first solo venture of former A Tribe Called Quest frontman Q-Tip by year's end.



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