

# REVIEWS

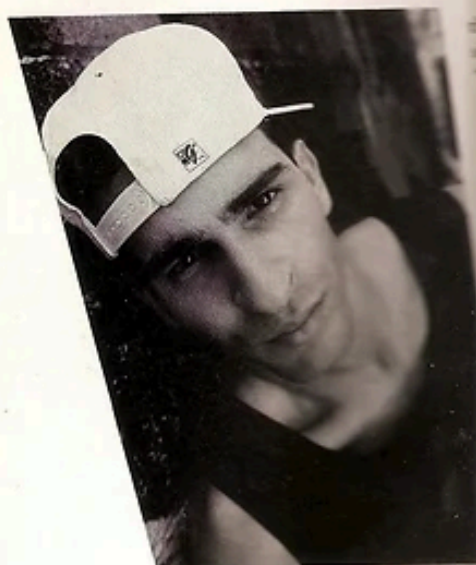
Reviews by Davlin Donaldson of Colorado Springs, a freelance writer and music program director for Compassion International; Paul Robb, freelancer and entertainment editor of Pilot News, Plymouth, Indiana; Randy Rocker of Rocker's Writes, Scottsdale, Arizona; and David Thomas of New Jersey, a recent Yale graduate who holds a degree in Afro-American studies with a specialization in music.

pace, enhancing Becker's increasingly emotive vocals. Overall, the song evokes a unique feel in the listener—a quiet feeling that is at the same time highly soul stirring.

On the lighter side, the track "All I Ever Wanted" includes nice background vocals by Chris Eaton, who has been absent from popular Christian recordings for far too long. "Steps of Faith" is seasoned with a bit of country/gospel, and an enigmatic assembly of sounds is featured in "I Will Not Lie Down." "Strangest Things," the most upbeat track, has a blues/rock sound backed by thick bass and drums.

Simple House is a compelling new addition to this artist's fine catalog of recordings.

—Randy Rocker



D-Boy Rodriguez

D-Boy is saying. It may take several listens to get used to it, but once you grab hold of the message, you'll find it won't turn you loose.

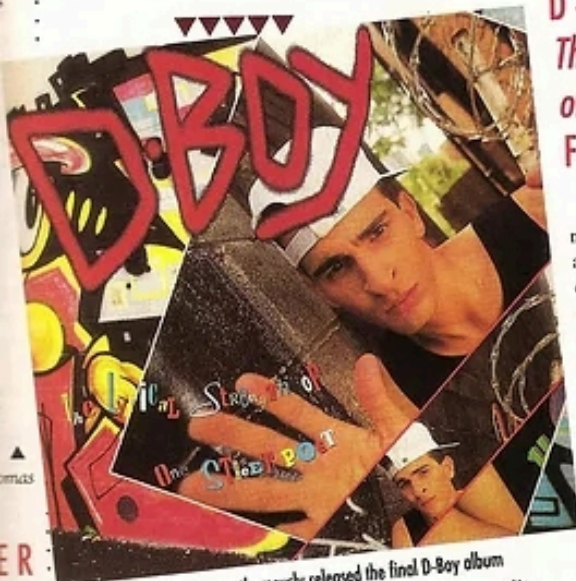
D-Boy lived and died on the streets, and this album was made in a language and style to which today's urban youth can relate. The album deals with several street issues, including gang violence. In fact, the song "Cease for Peace" is being used in a nationwide anti-gang violence campaign. Though his life was short, D-Boy's work remains, and *Lyrical Strength* makes a fitting testament to the impact of one lone street poet from Dallas who was blessed and sent from God.

—David Thomas

## MICHAEL W. SMITH Go West Young Man Reunion

Hoofbeats segue into strong pop/rock lyrics and right away we know that Michael W. Smith has returned with another effort, which perhaps may not be quite as consistent as *i2(EYE)* or the now-gold *Michael W. Smith Project*. Produced by Smith along with Bryan Lenox, and with lyrics by Wayne Kirkpatrick and Amy Grant, *Go West Young Man* doesn't offer many surprises and will doubtless please Smith's many fans.

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Frontline has posthumously released the final D-Boy album

## D-BOY The Lyrical Strength of One Street Poet Frontline

Frontline has posthumously released a final album, recorded before his death in late 1990, from avant garde rapper Danny "D-Boy" Rodriguez. D-Boy, who won over many hearts with his 1989 debut *Plantin' a Seed*, is more radical than ever on *Lyrical Strength*. Whereas *Plantin' a Seed* wooed us with producer Tim Miner's soulful accompanying vocals, pulsing rhythms,

storytelling, and compelling melodies, *Lyrical Strength* takes a much leaner approach. Relying heavily on the rhythms of the street, it comes much closer in style to secular rap efforts than any Christian rap album yet. D-Boy prided himself on being on the cutting edge of rap, and certainly this album is not for the uninitiated. Newcomers to rap might fare better with a tamer, more accessible offering like *Plantin' a Seed* or Stephen Wiley's *Rhythm & Poetry*.

*Lyrical Strength* challenges the listener on every hand. Its very style causes you to listen closely in order to catch exactly what

than previous works.

The title track sways with a deep bass and keyboard groove and a full sounding chorus. Thoughtfully written lyrics speak about truth and honesty: "This house looks the best when it's not cluttered with opinions/When only the words from the landlord's mouth have absolute dominion." "Look Me in the Eye" starts out with a soft vocal line mixed with light drumming and keyboard. The ballad then picks up the

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