

REQUIRED AUDIO

HEARD BEFORE THE HERD TEXT BY JOEL MARASIGAN

Be Common

Kanye West says this Common album will be a classic—a Black Star or Run DMC-type classic. 'Ye doesn't use that word frivolously and his guess is a good bet; he did predict



his album would reach the status it has reached. Common's new 11-cut joint doesn't disappoint; it makes you want more. Four of the tracks hover around the 3-minute mark. In this new-music world, skits last that long. He makes up for it with a 9-minute cut at the end. Common gets lyrical duets with Bilal, John Legend, Last Poets and Kanye. West might be wrong in this case. Not a classic (because John Legend's and Kanye's album got all the hype) but a really, really good Common album.

A Tribute to Sublime Various Artists

The next time you think "LBC" think Sublime. The band members were gangster, but in a punk rock/ska/reggae/hip-hop way. They were no regular group—the trio cre-



ated a lifestyle in the same way Ozzy and Bob Marley did. At 5,000 units sold per week (yes, they are still selling) they have cleared about 15-million records worldwide. Lead singer and guitarist Bradley Nowell overdosed on heroin seven days after his wedding and 11 months before the band's 1996 self-titled release—the album that would make them famous. This collection of covers was done by an array of fans including: No Doubt, Jack Johnson, Michael Franti and Spearhead, Fishbone, Greyboy Allstars, Ozomatli, AWOL One, Abstract Rude and Pennywise. FYI: They want to be your friend. —www.myspace.com/sublimetribute

Who is Mike Jones? Mike Jones

Mike Jones is yet another emcee from Houston. G'head and ask "Who?" because that is his trademark—that and his screwed versions from his Swisha House Label.



Screwed music stems from Houston's DJ Screw who liked to sip on the codeine. He slowed down songs and then intermixed them with double-claps, double-kicks and record stops to simulate tippin' the Vicks 44D. Screw died of an overdose. Mike Jones' first single "Still Tippin'" is a nice cut to bang around in the car but we can't say we like all his cuts. The repetitive "Mike Jones who?" thing gets a little old but overall it's different enough to make your head turn. Call him and tell him what you think at 281/330-8004. —www.whomikejones.com

First Lady Faith Evans

We know this is a mainstream soul record. We don't want to hear it from any of you; it's soul nonetheless. More than that it's Biggie's girl! The fact of the matter is this album is



funky, and soulful and—for some of you—it may even affect you to the point that you'll close your eyes and walk backwards. The Neptunes and Jermaine Dupri help to make it a tight album. Then again, at under an hour, so does the album's length. Blowing out such a good album after a four-year hiatus shows she still has pipes and writing skills—in fact she's getting better at it.