

INTRODUCTION TO HIP-HOP STUDIES

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lyrical analysis

1. Artificial amateurs, aren't at all amazing
2. Analytically, I assault, animate things
3. Broken barriers bounded by the bomb beat
4. Buildings are broken, basically I'm bombarding
5. Casually create catastrophes, casualties
6. Canceling cats got their canopies collapsing
7. Detonate a dime of dank daily doin dough
8. Demonstrations, Don Dada on the down low
9. Eatin other editors with each and every energetic
10. Epileptic episode, elevated etiquette
11. Furious fat fabulous fantastic
12. Flurries of funk felt feeding the fanatics
13. Gift got great global goods gone glorious
14. Gettin godly in his game with the goriest
15. Hit em high, hella height, historical
16. Hey holocaust hints hear 'em holler at your homeboy
17. Imitators idolize, I intimidate
18. In a instant, I'll rise in a irate state
19. Juiced on my jams like jheri curls jockin joints
20. Justly, it's just me, writin my journals
21. Kindly I'm kindling all kinds of ink on
22. Karate kick type brits in my kingdom
23. Let me live a long life, lyrically lessons is
24. Learned lame louses just lose to my livery
25. My mind makes marvelous moves, masses
26. Marvel and move, many mock what I've mastered
27. Niggas nap knowin I'm nice naturally
28. Knack, never lack, make noise nationally
29. Operation, opposition, off, not optional
30. Out of sight, out of mind, wide beaming opticals
31. Perfected poem, powerful punchlines
32. Pummeling petty powder puffs in my prime
33. Quite quaint quotes keep quiet it's Quannum
34. Quarrelers ain't got a quarter of what we got uh
35. Really raw raps, risin up rapidly
36. Riding the rushing radioactivity
37. Super scientifical sound search sought
38. Silencing super fire saps that are soft

39. Tales ten times talented, too tough
40. Take that, challengers, get a tune up
41. Universal, unique untouched
42. Unadulterated, the raw uncut
43. Verb vice lord victorious valid
44. Violate vibes that are vain make em vanished
45. ? well would a wise wordsmith just
46. Weaving up words weeded up, I'm a workshift
47. Xerox, my X-ray-diation holes extra large
48. X-height letters, and xylophone tones
49. Yellow back, yak mouth, young ones yaws
50. Yesterday's lawn yards sell our (yawn?)
51. Zig zag zombies, zoomin to the zenith
52. Zero in zen thoughts, overzealous rhyme ZEA-LOTS!....

“Alphabet Aerobics”, *A2G EP*, Blackalicious (1996)

Like a few other West Coast rap acts, including the Pharcyde and Jurassic 5, Blackalicious has generally favored what hip-hoppers call the "positive tip"; in other words, its lyrics have often been spiritual and uplifting rather than violent or misogynous. Like a lot of experimental alternative rappers, Blackalicious can be quirky and eccentric; nonetheless, spirituality is a big part of the group's music. Although Blackalicious wasn't formed until the early '90s, its members had known each other since the late '80s. Founding members Gift of Gab (Timothy Parker) and Chief Xcel (Xavier Mosley) first met in Sacramento, CA, in 1987 when they were students at John F. Kennedy High School. Neither of them was originally from Sacramento; DJ/producer Xcel (who was going by DJ IceSki at the time) was a native of the San Francisco Bay Area, while rapper Gift of Gab was from Los Angeles' suburban San Fernando Valley.

The two went their separate ways after Gift of Gab (also known as Gabby T) graduated from Kennedy High in 1989, but they were reunited in Davis, CA, in 1992. By that time, Xcel had become a student at the University of California at Davis and the Gift of Gab had moved to Davis to form Blackalicious with him. UC Davis was where Xcel had started working with a hip-hop crew named SoleSides, whose members included DJ Shadow, Lateef the Truth Speaker, and Lyrics Born. SoleSides Records was the name of the SoleSides Crew's Northern California record company and in 1994, that label released Blackalicious' debut single "Swan Lake." Although not a triple-platinum smash, the single was a small underground hit that fared well among alternative rap audiences. The following year, SoleSides Records released a Blackalicious EP titled *Melodica*. By late 1997, SoleSides Records had transformed into Quannum Records, and in 1999, Quannum put out another Blackalicious EP, *A2G*.

In 2000, Quannum released the group's full-length debut *Nia* (whose title is the Swahili word for purpose). After being together eight years, Blackalicious finally signed with a major label when, in late 2000, the Californians were added by MCA. In April 2002, Quannum/MCA released *Blazing Arrow*, which boasted guest appearances ranging from vocalist Zack de la Rocha (of Rage Against the Machine) to the Roots' ?uestlove to veteran soul singer Gil Scott-Heron. After the requisite tour, both Xcel and Gab began developing solo material; Quannum released both Maroons' *Ambush* (Chief Xcel with Latyrx's Lateef the Truth Speaker) as well as a Gift of Gab solo LP, *Fourth Dimensional Rocketships Going Up*. The pair returned in 2005 for their third

album, *The Craft*, with a contract in hand from the Anti- label. ~ Alex Henderson, All Music Guide