

Album Review: Ghostface Killah '36 Seasons'

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Tis the season for Wu Tang Clan fans, just in time for the holidays the group re emerged to bring us *A Better Tomorrow*. Less than a week later the *36 Chambers* storytelling veteran, Ghostface Killah, will release his 11th solo album *36 Seasons*, for yet another lyrically cinematic experience.

As a follow up to last years *12 Reasons to Die*, executively produced by RZA and featuring an array of Wu Tang Members, you won't find any more than a few *C.R.E.A.M* references on this project. Don't worry, this is yet another solid combination of a small group of producers and artist that act more as composers and characters to create audible scenes. Its funk and groove rhythms align with the score of a 1970s blaxploitation film with most album credit given to modern vintage soul band, The Revelations based out of Brooklyn, NY.

Ghostface Killah - The Battlefield (feat. Kool G Rap, AZ & Tre Williams)

The albums exposition, a fiery intro caled *The Battlefield*, features a few familiar artist, Kool G Rap and AZ. Ghostface alias, Tony Stark returns as he makes his way back to the streets of Staten Island after being locked up for 9 years. His home is no longer what it used to be, with an abundance of drugs and violence he vows to 'clean up' the city. Following *The Battlefield* we are introduced to the beautiful R&B soul singer Kandace Springs who takes on the roll of Stark's lost lover Bamboo, who has given up on their relationship while Stark was away. She is perfectly featured on two tracks *Love Don't Live Here No More* and *Bamboo's Lament*.

A turn in the story occurs halfway through the album when Stark is sent to the hospital. The album takes a break from its original characters with a cameo from the legendary Queens MC Pharoahe Monch. In the song *Emergency Procedure*, Monch who acts as a frankenstein like inventor named 'Dr. X' who develops a custom face mask for Stark that rids toxins to give him the ability to breathe again. The two truly complement each other as Pharoahe Monch channels his inner mad scientist alongside Ghostface's climatic flow.

After recovering Stark finds out AZ's character, Raj, who becomes a cop while he was away befriends him. Raj is out to put Stark back in jail. The song *Double Cross* with AZ sets the scene as friends turned enemies battling with each other. The song is a highlight on police brutality and even references the death of Eric Garner, a man from Ghostface's home town of Staten Island who died by the hands of a police officer in an illegal chokehold earlier this year but was most recently denied as a homicide.

The climax occurs in the song *Homicide* when Stark finds out someone killed is friend Mick which channels him to get refenge. What happens next... just know it gets good. *36 Seasons* is set to release December 9th but it is currently available online as a no-skip stream. You will never have to press shuffle on this hip hop street soap, this album was meant to be built on a climactic structure; storytelling at its finest.