Mortal Man: A Book Review About The Inner Thoughts Of Kendrick Lamar Through His Rap Lyrics

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Abstract

Are you a music lover? A fan of hip hop? Do you enjoy wordplay? If so, this book might interest music and hip-hop fans alike! Lewis shares exciting insight about a modern hip-hop star. Although the times have changed, the definition of perseverance and determination remains the same. Lewis explores the ups and downs of life and fame associated with Kendrick Lamar's rise to fame in the hip-hop world. The story centralizes a young kid from Compton, California, named Lamar, who becomes aware of his influences upon his generation. Lamar wants to become successful and does what he can to ensure he takes care of himself and his community. Promise That You Will Sing About Me: The Power and Poetry of Kendrick Lamar examines the life and words of Lamar. Lamar is known as a prominent rapper of his generation. In addition, he uses his words as a weapon to combat his circumstances.

Introduction

Lamar is a larger-than-life figure; despite the obstacles, he overcame to reach his level of success. This book is the third book written by Miles Marshall Lewis (2021). Lewis is an author and pop culture writer. He has written several books and memoirs, but this book hits something different. Lamar is more than a rapper. He is a living, breathing poet in the eyes of many people who listen to his body of works. Lamar is also a songwriter (author), a rapper (poet), and one of the most sought-after record producers on the hip hop and music scene. Additionally, he is widely known for his powerful musical consciousness, his defining lyrics.

Promise That You Will Sing About Me, Lewis dives in deeper and explores the ins and outs of Lamar’s life. Music critics say he is one of the “last real rappers” (Hollinger, 2021). Lewis does a personal experience dive into his connection to hip-hop culture. Lamar is a hip-hop and pop culture phenomenon in his own right, providing his insights about the rapper Lamar came to know as the powerhouse rapper he is today. Lamar has seemed to revolutionize the recording industry from the inside out; He held a mirror up to society. The mirror to society is
reflected in his music. However, society has not changed much in terms of equality. This theme is also a reoccurring theme in Lamar’s music.

Review

Lewis organizes the book based on some of Lamar’s popular song titles. There are several chapters, such as “Hood Politics,” “Sing About Me,” and “Mortal Man,” that reveal the inner thoughts of Lamar. Lewis kept it raw and honest in these chapters. These chapters reflect how Lewis concentrated on Lamar’s most vulnerable thoughts in his interviews. These inner thoughts are demonstrated clearly in Chapter 2, “Hood Politics,” and Chapter 4, “All The Stars,” respectively. “Hood Politics,” and “All The Stars” flow similarly to Lamar’s raps.

Chapter 2, “Hood Politics,” is a play on words. It is taken from Lamar’s poetic album titled “To Pimp A Butterfly,” produced in 2015. I noticed how Lewis does not have comments in the opening pages, as the book opens with a picture of Lamar meeting [former] President Barack Obama at the White House during his visit to the Capitol within the time frame. The image is symbolic. Lamar symbolizes hope and makes it out of one’s circumstance when the odds seem stacked against an individual (Vernallis et al., 2021).

Lewis does a great job tying in Lamar’s political involvement and making political statements in the process while comparing one of his most memorable performances, the 2016 Grammy Awards (Evans, 2021). The 2016 Grammy Award performance sees Lamar coming to the stage handcuffed and shackled. Lewis alludes to how powerful of a statement Lamar makes in this performance (Lewis, 2021). At the same time, it should be noted how Lamar is consistently raising the bar with this performance. The performance is electrifying from the stage layout with proper props, picture layouts in the backdrop, and Lamar positioning himself on stage in bondage (Lewis, 2021). The chapter stands out as he is seen as a vanguard of hip-hop.

Discussion

Lewis brings his points home about Lamar, who had overcome many obstacles in his life. No other chapter brings this together like Chapter 4. This chapter stands out in Promise, which is the apex of the book. Consequently, this chapter brings it all together for him. Despite his difficulties in life, Lewis points out how Lamar was able to take all the past pain he had experienced and turn it into triumph! (Lewis, 2021). Diving deeper, it speaks of activism in the chapter, specifically how he was instrumental in supporting the Black Lives Matter Movement (Hollinger, 2021). The book has gained several praises since its release. Promise That You Will Sing About Me is an ode to Lamar overcoming and turning his downfalls into success in which he makes his community proud. ‘Promise That You Will Sing About Me is so prompt. The book is icing on the accomplishments of both Lewis and Lamar. The story in this book causes one to focus on life when you feel like throwing in the towel; do not do it; hang in there!

Conclusion

Generally, I recommend Promise That You Will Sing About Me. Lewis does his job of opening the reader’s eyes through all the details to help focus on the bigger picture: culture. In addition, Promise You Will Sing About Me also uses part of Lamar’s background to parallel Lewis’ own background. Lewis does an incredible job infusing (remixing) several writing genres
(almost like a mixtape is to music). The book is part biography, part autobiography, and mixed with a personal essay.

The content presented is based on Lewis’ personal experiences and interviews with rapper Kendrick Lamar. I conclude my research gathering does align with Lewis’ opinion of Kendrick Lamar: He is one of the essential lyricists who has developed a critical mindset. The words he composes to his music allows us to CONNECT, THINK, and ANALYZE how we often view our daily lives.

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**References**


