

The Roots Show Hip-Hop the Way

Written by Robert ID4651

Friday, 19 November 2010 18:21 -

Now that some time has passed, and the thrill of The Roots releasing a new album has subsided, it's time to kick back and discuss exactly what Jimmy Fallon's house band accomplished with their latest release, "How I Got Over."

Any of the typical compliments an album could receive would sell "How I got Over" short. Yes, the beats are stellar and groove in all the right places, and it's true that the lyrics are fresh, wise, and thoughtful. These descriptions can be used for any album released by The Roots, though, along with albums from other socially conscious hip-hop acts like Talib Kweli, Mos Def or Nas. "How I Got Over" is worthy of the aforementioned praise, but it also deserves more.

With "How I Got Over," The Roots have stretched the boundaries of hip-hop. They added indie rock to the cast of collaborators, including members of the Dirty Projectors, Monsters of Folk, and a Joanna Newsome sample. The Roots also pushed the limits of what is possible in hip-hop, working to ensure the genre avoids stagnation. It's as if Black Thought, Questlove and the rest of the crew decided step up and say that while there is nothing wrong with Drake and Weezy's new jam, there is an entirely different place hip-hop can take itself, a rarefied air it can inhabit.

In a lot of ways, "How I Got Over" is grown-man business, or rather, it informs hip-hop of what grown-man business is. It isn't being the richer or stronger person. Grown-man business is elevating yourself and the world around you. This concept is personified best in the second track of "How I Got Over," when Truck North raps, "The Devil wants me as is, but God, he want more."