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Review of the NEW Debut CD from ST. MICHAEL



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Review from ChristianMusic.com

ST. MICHAEL CD: *PICK IT UP* (Christian Rap)

Mission Statement: Challenging illicit behavior and promoting an ethical lifestyle which is grounded in a spiritual base, Jesus Christ, St. Michael is on a mission to have his music heard! Through his faith inspired, Spirit led, straight-talking rap music songs, St. Michael will carry on a ministry for Jesus Christ, spreading the Gospel of good news like a spiritual virus, throughout our secular society, especially aiming at the youth culture found on the streets of the inner city and some suburbs as well.

*"Pick up ya cross and follow me. Together we'll part any sea,
J & General G, Charismatic, spittin' ah spiritual automatic...Direct connect to da Man no static."
(Chorus of title song, PICK IT UP)*

On St. Michael's soon to be released, debut CD, *PICK IT UP*, St. Michael (Michael Kapneck) does a terrific job doing just that, offering the listener a strong testimony to the love, hope, strength and faithfulness one finds in having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, that gives believers a new freedom from their past, and a new life in Jesus Christ.

Speaking from his own life-changing experiences, Michael Kapneck's rap songs are "powerful, street-wise and emotionally relatable" for those people from any economic background who have ever struggled with every day pressures and temptations; temptations that stem from common human weaknesses, which can lead one down the slippery slope to crime, drug addiction, a life of violence, pain, depression, immorality and hopelessness. His emotionally charged lyrics, which are clearly spoken / chanted in his own creative style, backed up with nicely produced, creative percussion, music, and chorus really punctuate his message.

Michael Kapneck started out being a child with a happy, comfortable life, growing up as one of four children with his Mom and Dad in an upper-class / rich neighborhood. Unfortunately, Mike experienced a rough childhood and youth, which started when Mike's father completely abandoned his four children and wife, for another woman. At the tender age of 9, Mike's life was drastically turned upside down, emotionally and economically, going from a very comfortable life to a life in poverty, eventually losing his remaining parent. As a direct consequence of his father's actions, his mother had a complete mental break down, winding up in a mental institution, suffering from schizophrenia.

Mike tried to escape from this unhappy reality by turning to dangerous elements in the inner city street life, which existed in his new neighborhood. Mike soon turned toward an illicit life of crime, drugs and violence. Following multiple overdoses and a conviction on drug trafficking charges, Mike wound up in the slammer, which probably saved his life.

While serving his time in jail, Mike met the Lord through His Word for the first time in his life, when Mike picked up a Bible and read it. He accepted Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior, and through mentoring by life long criminals and daily Bible study, Mike began the process of changing into a new creation in Christ (2nd Corinthians 5:17). Through the power of the Lord, the Holy Spirit, Mike turned from self-destructive ways, caused by his anger, his profound loss and his need for self-medication.

Instead, the Lord put him to work. Mike set for himself some positive goals, starting a musical ministry for his Savior, Jesus Christ through Mike's considerable musical rap talent. Taking the stage name, 'St. Michael', which reflects his dedication and love for the Lord, Mike Kapneck as St. Michael provides a refreshing rap message of the hope, love, support, faithfulness believers have in Jesus Christ, stressing how much we all need Him. He gives his personal testimony about what Jesus means to him, and his own struggles in walking in the light and what his life was like before he met Jesus.

In working through his own pain of abandonment by his father, Mike Kapneck wrote a rap called DADDY, which is a song that "goes out to all the fathers in the world whose bags are full, yet their hearts are empty." While the song explores all the hurt, anger, sadness that abandoned children feel and live with, he also raps about his street experience, his jail time, and how becoming a believer in Jesus, set him free from his anger and bitterness he felt about his father. He ends the rap with a personal message to his father.

(ST. MIKE) "DAD IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE THIS WAY.
GOD SHOWED ME THAT NO MATTER WHAT A MAN DOES
HE CAN BE FORGIVEN AND I FORGIVE YOU."

One of Mike Kapneck's goals is "street teachin'", hoping to reach those in gangs and troubled youth, who are much like his old self, who are on the road to jail or an early death. In his emotionally charged rap songs, he points out in plain language the sins of sexual immorality, self-medication by the way of drugs, street crime and violence, as traps set by Satan, which lead to eventual death on the streets or jail. He then explains the freeing, power of belonging to Jesus, our Lord and Savior. (SECRETS, PICK IT UP, NEVER MAKE IT, SOCIETY, THESE R THE DAYS, J'S SOLDIERS)

His ministry and his gospel message to reach out to troubled youth is badly needed, in such places as Los Angeles, where as of November 21, 2002, 17 people have died as a result of street violence in the time span of only 7 days. His rap, J'S SOLDIERS, calls "Bible Holders, Social Molders, All J's soldiers" to "stand hand in hand," to reach out to "the souls that are bent".

The CD ends with a most energetic outreach, alter call song, ST. MIX, done Christian rap style; a la St. Michael, with high energy rap, interesting background rhythms/percussion, hot rock beat, electric guitars, great synthesizer work that all really cooks!

Lyrical Sample: OH YEAH YAWL, I'M FEELIN' IT, YOU'RE FEELIN' IT? SOMETHING
IS MOVIN' IN THE ROOM!! (rumbling effect of electric guitars.)
(Hard rock beat begins)... Who is it? JESUS... WHO? (that's right) JESUS.... WHAT? (that's
right)... JESUS... YEAH!(that's right!)... It's never too late to get with.... JESUS. Pick it up,
that's what's up, pick it up that's what up... St. Michael picking it Up!

ST. MIX repeats some of the themes found on this CD, intermixed with energetic praise rap. 1) Daddy so sad "G," Better repent, before you D.I.E, DADDY so sad "G", You're gonna be hatin' Satan... 2) Life chasin' stars from bar to bar, pushin' the nostrils only so far, getting social scars, yeah I'm not ashamed to share the game "pain".

SAMPLES OF ST. MICHAEL'S RAP SONGS

PICK IT UP — (CD Title Song)

Introduction: I don't know man, there are so many struggles these days. The only time I feel better is when I cry out. Jesus! Help me Lord I have forsaken you again Father... MY SON, YOU MUST....

Chorus: Pick up ya cross an follow me, together we'll part and sea, J & General G.
Charismatic, spittin' the spiritual automatic.....Direct connect to Da MAN no static....

(An unbeliever's view)

First stanza: A Jesus piece I never bring ya piece, Life's on lease, we never own it so, chill with the bag bangin', crack slangin', brag about sales, tags, a new Jag, jails smokin' crack, watchin' holes open in ya life like old rags, that's right.....

(Talks about spiritual warfare)

Second Stanza: Satan's mission, he's fishin', with a street nine, cheap wine, Who's the mad dog, dog. Devil stalkin', you think, that's the Heni talkin', kill 'em, smoke it, Just another hit, lights out, cast straight to the pit, It's never to late to get wit - Hey J, Son a "G", You really there for a wretch like me, I wanna see! I've killed, deceived for mills, slept behind bars in my window, sold indo and much mo!!!! Chorus.

Third stanza: (Burr) I'm cold, Gospel bringin' a chill to the hill, fillin' the void of a pill, dom, the bomb. I'm spiritually on... The Holy war not Nam...2002 with Osama, soldier, fightin' by His shoulder, sayin' no to the bolder, put childish ways behind me since I'm older. Out in the open lover, that's what it takes to recover. (1st Corinthians 13:1-13)

Definition my religion, soul fishin', Helpin' sway the decision on how we're livin', by givin' time to needy, PRAYIN' FOR THE GREEDY. OH YEAH! I'm feelin' spiritually speedy ate the word wheatie, never needy. GOD: I know you are weary my Son, you must guard your heart, the wellspring of life.- Chorus Come on yawl, feel me on this, don't be shy, feel the love from the Man above, St. Mike, PICKIN' IT UP on the spiritual flip ...peace.

SECRETS — One of his most personal, powerful songs, a favorite of this reviewer. Nice backup vocals by Bianca Holman.

The first stanza reflects on his childhood and what happened to the boys he hung out with after they all entered the hard core drug world around the age of 14.

First Stanza: Silly games, all fun when ya young, no guns, on the run from no one, 1st time, 1st puff, at the park after dark, flashlight tag: David, Greg, Tom, Mark. Dungeons 'n Dragons, we imagined, being fighters, elves, magic users not drug abusers, social losers, boozers, from 14 to morphine, it's a dream, a nightmare. Lord, it ain't fair, screamin' spiritual warfare, Tommy got the chair, David's slate states "Always Loved," Mark is servin' life from an under

cov., Greg's on his back, I'm beatin' on his chest from ah sack. Ah beat smack, hooked on crack, runnin' packs, cali back, New York, DC, 8 a key to CBD, no commissary, behind bars gettin' scary, from bankin' to shankin, How's ah poor white kid ever gonna make it?

First Chorus Hook: Never knew what He was doin' to me, D3 treat me, it's the disease see, Just a young "g" on the run, getting fun, getting bun, Preacher I don't know about G's son. Cause...

First Chorus: Never knew what I was doin' to me, I was young, dumb, full Ah I'm older, getting over, life as a soldier, stories we hold alone in the cold, All life's secrets never told.

The second stanza tells of his rocky struggle without God, and how he found Jesus, after Jesus found him.

Lyrical Sample:...He's there...footsteps in the sand, sad its the plan, livin' life without the man, free will, getting lower with each pill, I feel the death chill, I'm alone...Doin' it on my own, thinkin' life's about a cell phone, pleasin' bone, pleasn' self destruct, just like that, on my knees He (Jesus) struck...swapped despair for luck, spent my cake foolishly "tapped" grace! His love doesn't cost ah face. Thank you God!

Second Chorus: Never knew what He was doin' to me, J helping me see the evil "G", just a young plea, getting real, see on the run. Never fill the void son, He made the moon stars and Son.

Third stanza speaks about opposition to the gospel message, and explains what is most important—your relationship with the Lord. Jesus will be coming back to this world as Lord of Lords, King of Kings and all will be judged.

Sample: "Lookin' the other way to all the signs knock. Apoc"o"lipse, revelations, it's the state we're in, "earth-soaked with sin.... Near the end see, 5, 10, 20, NOR YA MONEY it's about ya end "G", NO ONE IS JUDGED WITH FRIENDS B."

Third Chorus: Never knew what He was doin' to me, I'm eternally servin' "G," Helping you see the evil "B", Just a young plea, getting real see, off the run, fill the void son, stay true Christian...

NEVER MAKE IT — A favorite of this reviewer, aimed at youth on a self-destructive path of drugs, violence, crime which sooner or later leads to either jail time or an early death. He offers them a life-saving alternative, Jesus Christ. A great rap which is excellent "street teachin'."

Chorus: We're never gonna make it, Never make it, Never make it, We're never gonna make it. It's a fact unless we quit. Can Ya make it? Can Ya take this?

Lyrical Samples: I went from a crook to a King, listen to the story while I sing. Down in the Dumps, Doing bumps, takin hits from chumps, getting social lumps. Tryin' to fulfill my wants. (his old life). I'm just another man, I am, not Son of Sam...This is a holy jam..... Yeah I'm

after souls, street teachin' if you want call it preachin'. Quit Leechin', the Bloods gone....Its on!!! What's gonna protect ya till the mornin' my son, That gun?! The sin is anger, rage, livin' life like ya on stage. Wishin' you looked like a kid on ah magazine page. It's not a phase, it's a mess goin' out before ya.Been blessed, the Biblical test. Chorus.

2) I'm not back, I never went anywhere, kinda like the man upstairs, the way he loves and shares...To think there's really force that cares..... Settin' up road flares... "Look" ahead, that's you dead, empty bed.. covered by red, for ah ride, die, some clothes, a Hoe.....we need the Holy Ghoooooost! J.E.S.U.S. who needs a bullet proof vest, a soul that can finally rest, with the trinity on my side, leavin' watch tower tongue tied. God I'm pumped, just got spiritually jumped, whipped the devil outah me J & General G, makin' a full blown man see, partin the secular sea in this GO, NO GO...De-mons on the run, from the Sun/Son, the ONE next to None - Word His gun, charismatic, spittin a spiritual automatic Makin' Satan sick (St. Michael) The eternal last verses, sixteen bars from beyond the stars, it's heaven not mars, the inferno burnin' from within settin' a blaze to all sin, within Him we truly win. (Yup!)

SOCIETY —

Lyrical Samples: Man, I'm struggling these days...What's up these broads, what's up with my job, Man, what's up with me?

Chorus: Society's got me livin' on my knees, Need the help of Jes's we believe "us," Paid with blood not DUBs, "What," Yeah, that's right. to free us. (Hebrews 9:11-15) Still in pain, social game for gain, branded in my brain, pullin' her main in the Rain, takin' the blame, For shame on you, we ain't livin' true, to who? Thought by now you knew, get a clue: Blues Clue, Huh!: Anger, lust, greed, drivin' ya to smok a blunt, speed, the need for dees, end up dead. "Attention: All souls without a soul" at the club sellin' rolls, "Want One"? Russian Roulette with the social gun, PUN intended, stick aorund you're gettin' offended, finally learning what the Man intended, It's love, love, not gonna get it from an under CUV... Lock that ass to Ya past, counting court dates, grains ah sand thru the hour glass, maybe it 'll come quick, next ah kin cryin' came this week.

THESE ARE THE DAYS —

Lyrical samples: Every day you're denying you're dying... Jesus is real ya know. Feel Him feel you.

Chorus: THESE ARE THE DAYS TO PRAY, DON'T DENY WHAT I SAY LET YA HEART LEAD THE WAY...TO A BETTER DAY. HANDS TOGETHER AND PRAY, "THANK YOU JESUS WHO FREES US."

Life chasin' stars from bar to bar, pushin' the nostrils only so far, getting social scars, yeah I'm not ashamed to share the game "pain" backed up in my brain, blood stained. The deed, my needy, my greedy, contemplating over a bag ah seedy, in the city, thinkin' cruddy, can't be alone, hotel phone, yellow pages goin' escrow tryin' to get ah- ya know, Ho. "What's up!!" Perpin like I'm what...the white nut, the right cut, pills to the gut, Satan's rut. Chorus.

Change ah heart, change as fate, ah new state, Life's sweet, one the street, life's lessons teach
"What I preach," what He gave me, unslaved me, and saved me, couldn't quit, I admit. Day
day, night, night, things getting down right sinister, ugly, prayin' to the one above me, I don't
care if ya'll don't love me, feel the love from the one above "G", No shame livin' for his
name, puttin down the paper game...its...kids killin', baby villains, makin' pennies not millions,
locked up, spillin' soul sellin' at the goldern gates yellin' raising hell N... Don't celebrate His
B-Day, If its the way, ya say, better day, put ya hands together and pray, these are, these are,
these are... Chorus.

J'S SOLDIERS — Backed up with a catchy, syncopated synthesized beat.

Lyrical Samples: ATTENTION MEN! Chorus (rapped with a chorus of men, military style):
BIBLE HOLDERS, SOCIAL MOLDERS, ALL J'S SOLDIERS, SONG FOR YAWL (you all)
LIVIN' OLDER. TIME TO STAND HAND IN HAND.... WHY? CAUSE RIVERS AH
BLOOD DIVIDE THIS LAND BY THE HAND AH MAN. BIBLE HOLDERS, SOCIAL
MOLDERS, ALL J'S SOLDIERS, SONG FOR YAWL LIVIN' OLDER. TIME TO STAND
HAND IN HAND...WHY? CAUSE JESUS BLOOD WAS SPILLED BY MAN

What? You ain't gonna listen, cause I'm Christian, Just another Bible thumper, soul fishin',
keepin' kids out ah prison, His mission, livin' What you givin' How You livin'? What you hit-
tin'? Yawl got no sentiment for a souls that's bent, Life for rent, wonderin' where it all went.
Show's St. Mike know how it go. DRESSED UP. MESSED UP, FAKE HOES, TO CHECK
THE NEW FLOW.... I was once blind, now I see....Its time to take off them glasses "G", dilat-
ed, My O My, Eniolated, G ain't gonna tolerate it... ..See, eternal, infinity, where you gonna
find knowledge don't cost a penny, what annie up, That's what up, Life aint gotta to so rough
(Nah!) TIME YAWL STAND TALL REPRESENTING J & G'S CUT. - Chorus

(Raps about spiritual warfare: See EPHESIANS 6:10-13; 17) What you want, it's real, this
ain't ah stunt, Ya heads the ball, D's (Devil) getting ready to punt. Game time, man's blind,
stick to J's line, Pass the Words, my bond, spiritually on. The Mission, I'll keep sayin' it, soul
fishin', eternally livin' J's soldiers truly givin', helping those spiritually bent. Now remember
men, IT'S ALL ABOUT SERVING HIM SO THAT WE MAY GET IN. (James 2:14-26)