

## Jay-Z Music Review by Staff Writer

The King of Hip hop is back with his most anticipated album in years. *The Blueprint 3*, released September 8, is Jay-Z's 11<sup>th</sup> studio album and has critics buzzing. The talk of the music world for over two months, first week sales of 476,000 put Jay-Z back on top and broke Elvis Presley's record of an 11<sup>th</sup> number one album. Second week sales were an additional 298,000.

Released on Jay-Z's new label, Roc Nation, BP3 features artists Drake, Alicia Keys, J.Cole, and many others, each appealing to different type of music lover. Throughout Jay-Z's career he was known for more of a raw, edgy rap style, but on this particular album he changed to a more grown up style, moving past his early struggles. This album shows Jay-Z has not lost a step.

Also, Jay-Z gets top producers to help contribute to BP3, including Kanye West, Timberland, No ID, and many other notables.

One of the most interesting things about the album happens to be its cover art. The Cover highlights three red lines which symbolize the number 3. Also, the instruments in the background warn certain rappers of using Auto-Tune instead of live music.

On *D.O.A (Death of Auto-Tune)*, the street classic, Jay-Z sends a message to rappers to stop using Auto-Tune and get back to the hard hitting lyrics of early hip hop. On another, *Empire State of Mind*, accompanied by Alicia Keys, Jay-Z uses the cut as an anthem for NYC and raps about the obstacles he hurdled to reach his dream. Alicia Keys' vocals add a richness to the entire song.

*Off That*, produced by Timberland, has a futuristic dance beat that features rapper/ singer Drake. Jay-Z raps about wealth and drastically changing things in his life. For *A Star is Born*, Jay-Z showcases his new artist J.Cole, a young rapper from North Carolina. Throughout the song Jay-Z picks out rappers who have shined through their careers and are still going strong.

Listeners agree that the Blueprint 3 is one of the best hip hop albums to date. It's clearly different than his last couple of albums. It deserves credit where credit is due.