

Ice Cube etches an acid portrait.

BY ADAM BLOCK



When is the hip-hop community going to learn that real men, even rap fans, take it up the ass? The latest so-called outlaw disc to scale the charts trailing an ignorant stench of homophobia is former N.W.A. lead singer Ice Cube's *Death Certificate* (Priority).

The disc's *Death Side* etches an acid portrait of today's lethal ghetto, while its *Life Side* professes to point the way to a better day. It's the latter side that includes Ice Cube's suggestion that N.W.A. shoot their Jewish manager and threaten Korean markets with arson. Los Angeles's Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies has already called for a boycott of the disc; *Billboard*, in an unprecedented editorial, suggested that the industry "strongly protest the sentiments on the album."

The ugliest aspect of the disc is its numbingly blasé homophobia. In Ice Cube's celebration of black pride, faggots are a de-

graded species. Anyone he wants to assault, he calls a faggot. On "No Vaseline," he accuses his former band members of "getting fucked at night by Mr. Shit-packer/Bend over for the golden cracker." On his harangue against race mixing, "Horny Little Devil," he insists, "true niggers aren't gay." He then goes on to rant, "You can't play with me—you fuckin' homo/Cause we'll blow your head off." Hell of a radical political agenda, huh?

At 22, Ice Cube is outspoken and imperiously platinum-selling, but when the *Los Angeles Times* asked him if he was a member of the Church of Islam, his response sounded weirdly like R.E.M. singer Michael Stipe's reply to being asked if he considers himself gay.

"It's really nobody's business," Ice Cube bristled. "Talking about my religion would spook some people. . . some people are so misinformed about this religion. I don't want to say what I am, because people won't understand." Tell me about it, Mr. Cube.

It's ironic that the plainspoken rage of Ice Cube's LP recalls the in-your-face fury of queer activists. In a better world, they'd find common cause.

Boy George already has. During his recent stateside club tour, George was healthy, bemused, and out: as both a queer and a Hare Krishna sympathizer. There was something to baffle or offend everyone.

George outed himself, selling brilliant T-shirts featuring himself and the slogan ABSOLUTELY QUEER (designed after the celebrity-outing poster developed by the New York group OUTpost). Playing with a live band, he offered a supple set, with only two Culture Club songs, unexpected covers of "You Can't Always Get What You Want" and "Knockin' on Heaven's Door," and a half set of still-unrecorded originals. He called local Krishnas to bless the stage and join him in a cloud of taffeta and finger cymbals on his Euro-club hit "Bow Down, Mister."

I'm looking forward to hearing the queer-rap number that George has penned (as an antidote to the bigotry of rappers like Ice Cube and Public Enemy). He plans to cut it for his label (More Protein) over samples of Diana Ross's "I'm Coming Out." He's just looking for the right black gay rapper for

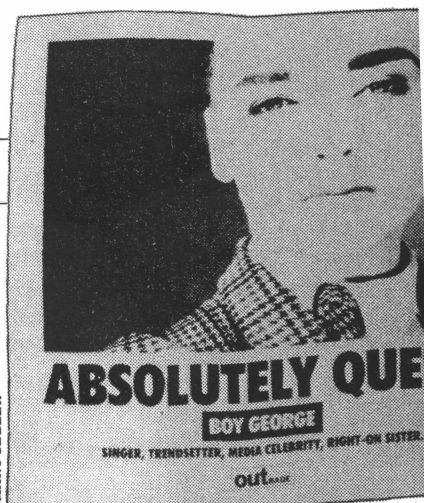


Image on Boy George T-shirt

The singer fronts new queer openness.

the job. Did I hear you say Vaginal Creme Davis?

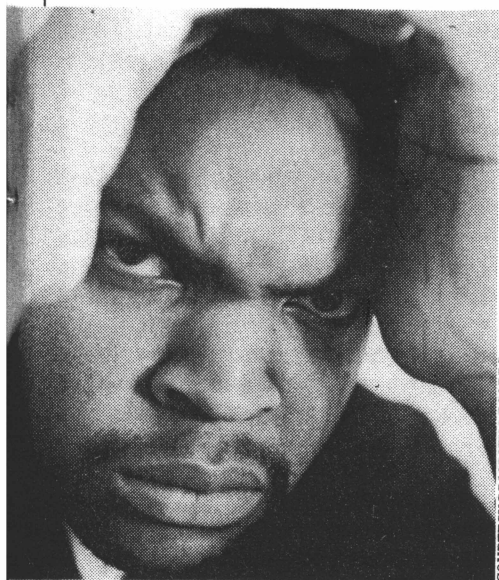
Another hero, k. d. lang, has been lying low lately. Her next LP (will she finally forswear country?) won't be out until March. In the meantime, check out her video scrapbook, *Harvest of Seven Years (Cropped and Chronicled)* (Warner/Reprise). It's the year's most inspired video collection.

Glasses perched on her nose, a casual k.d. at home offers wry introductions to 19 clips that trace her career: opening with her Canadian TV debut as Kathy Lang; through a jaw-dropping dyke-a-billy cover of Mel Tillis's "Bopaleena (She's My Baby)"; on to her first radical buzz cut (which left her looking eerily like Lyndon B. Johnson); then to her show-stopping cover of Patsy Cline's "Three Cigarettes in an Ashtray," her epochal duet with Roy Orbison on "Crying," and the "Honky Tonk Angels Medley" sung with Brenda Lee, Loretta Lynn, and Kitty Wells. The video concludes with the unreleased track "Barefoot," which lang wrote for *Salmonberries*, the feature film she recently starred in as a lesbian Eskimo girl.

Lang has carried the spirit of Cline to places Nashville never knew existed, places where *we* live. She is an artist still opening up territories. This cozy compilation charts her early blazing trails.

For another trailblazer, check out Jon Ginoli's band, Pansy Division, on its 13-song cassette, *Undressed*. Imagine a brash young Lou Reed for the Queer Nation generation. It's horny, hilarious, and now available by mail. (Send \$7 to Ginoli, 903 Guerrero St., San Francisco, CA 94110.)

Stay queer for the new year. ▼



COURTESY PRIORITY RECORDS

Singer Ice Cube

Chilling raps preaching hatred of gays