

# s Too Much for New Set

Scarcely. "Holding On" is sung with Gavin DeGraw-esque vocals characterized by anguished, raspy, elongated syllables; the chorus alone is enough to give the listener a chill.

Miller embodies the paradox that limits are possibilities; originality could be reaped from clichés. A message similar to the one expressed in "Love Me More" is found in "Charlie Brown's Lament": Materialism is a bad, bad thing and is always trumped by love. But here it's done so wryly, that the track becomes one of the CD's highlights. Miller surreptitiously alludes to the fleeting happiness that we experience during the holidays: "This time of year of lights and wrapping paper/ It's crystal clear we'll pay for all this later on."

If nothing else, the essential song any optimist should download is "You're Gonna Be Just Fine." His knack for triteness really shines here. "The glass is half full and the stars are aligned..." The best lines in this entire CD can be found in this song: "and time keeps slipping



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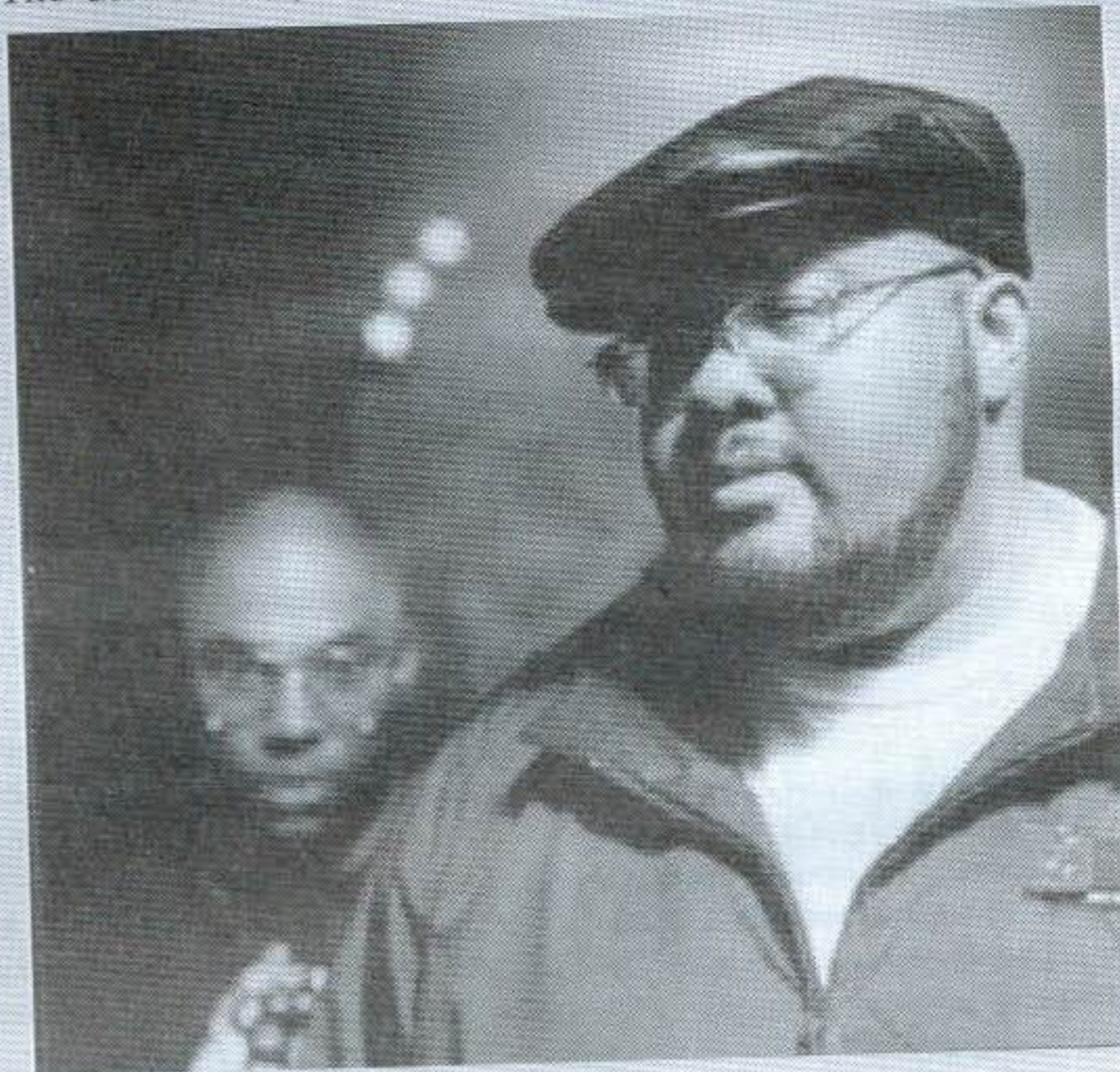
# Gift of Gab Doesn't Survive Jump to Video

By JOE AHEARN  
STAFF WRITER

Blackalicious is more deserving of attention than most MCs in the spotlight. He's got plenty of gimmicks when it comes to lyrics; themed-based songs about the alphabet, chemical elements or little kid games. He even lives up to his second pseudonym, The Gift Of Gab, with a constant flow of words circling around themselves. And most important of all, Blackalicious has that kind of distinctive voice recognizable in just a few seconds.

With all that going for him, it's hard to decipher what makes the *Blackalicious: 420 in Seattle* DVD so utterly boring. Maybe it's the production/distribution company's unbelievably low production costs. If you're making a music video, lighting the stage is always a good idea, even if it's only once in a while so that your viewer isn't watching a black screen for an hour and a half. Of course, that's only if you have something desirable on stage to light up. The fact is Blackalicious himself is so large he can't really move much, besides wiggle his fingers at different parts of the song. Blaming problems on Blackalicious wouldn't be fair, because the deck has been stacked against him. Producing an exciting live hip-hop performance is extremely difficult, and many of the most amazing artists in the genre fail all time. Why is hip-hop so difficult to transfer into the live medium? It's hard to say, but this

attempt is unfortunately no different. Hip-hop is supposed to be a live event. It's supposed to be about free styling, interacting with the crowd, and controlling the party. Somewhere along the way to translating this live event to video the party was lost. Even the most



entertaining member on stage- the wriggly piano player who played so fast behind *The Gift Of Gab* that you couldn't see his hands- was unable to save this video.

The *420 in Seattle* DVD has some extra features too, but they're all just as thrown together seeming as the concert production itself. A segment touring their bus done in a painfully obvious MTV *Cribs* imitation style and a music video with some cheap special effects doesn't make up for much. Overall, I'm just glad I didn't pay for this.

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