



## Intense

### *The Bohemian Pimp Project*

Defend Music; 2005



Looking past the ill-advised moniker "Bohemian Pimp", Intense comes with a solid flow and a deck of nice beats for his solo debut. The man has graduated from Philly group Schoolz of Thought to craft a promising initial album, though a few of the concepts fall flat.

Let's get the bad out of the way first: the pimp thing is played out, and almost made worse for someone trying to intellectualize the concept. *The Bohemian Pimp Project* samples a few intellectuals going off about the mythos behind the pimp, comparing the stylistic profession with a pre-req for smooth talking against the art of the MC. Let's call bullshit on that, shall we? You can trot out a senior thesis that compares and contrasts Huggy Bear with the Shakespearean fool figure, it doesn't really alter the underlying reality of a profession that exists strictly by exploiting women. Moral grandstanding aside, if you're gonna include some movie samples, make sure they aren't the same ones I've heard a million times on Too \$hort and Kool Keith records. Honestly, any hip-hop figure that mentions the p-word should be forced to listen to The Coup's "Me and Jesus the Pimp..." ten times straight.

Concept-hating aside, Intense has some skills, his flow at times sounding a little like Talib Kweli with a small dose of helium. Lyrically he comes competent with just a few missteps (industry rule #4081: don't reuse that line about the number 3 on your phone spelling out D-E-F), but his flow holds up throughout and he even comes pensive on tracks like "The Truth About Me..." (backed with a nice harp) and "Cold Fusion". High-minded skits like "DRUGS!!!" are a nice stab at consciousness but when the subject's been covered in song form by Atmosphere's "Panic Attack" (or for

that matter in film form by "Requiem for a Dream"), the enlightenment falls short.

Fortunately the production raises the enterprise to another notch. "Force of Movement" plays a poor man's Roots orchestral track - that's not to insult, with its energetic strings and chanted hook the track kicks things into gear nicely. "Like Fire" continues the Philly tradition of melding hip-hop and soul without watering down the mix; the honky-tonk piano, skittering drumbeat and swooning delivery of Lady Alma make for a crisp track. Dropping the beat and flow on "Consecutive Seconds" makes for a nicely syncopated switchup, and the scratchfest à la Premier at the end provide some nice musical treats for the listener.

The deep intellectualism posed by the concept is dubious, but there is some intelligence behind *The Bohemian Pimp Project*, and Intense commands the mic with some nice production at his back.

– Eric Solomon