

# The Game

## Untold Story: Volume II

Fastlife



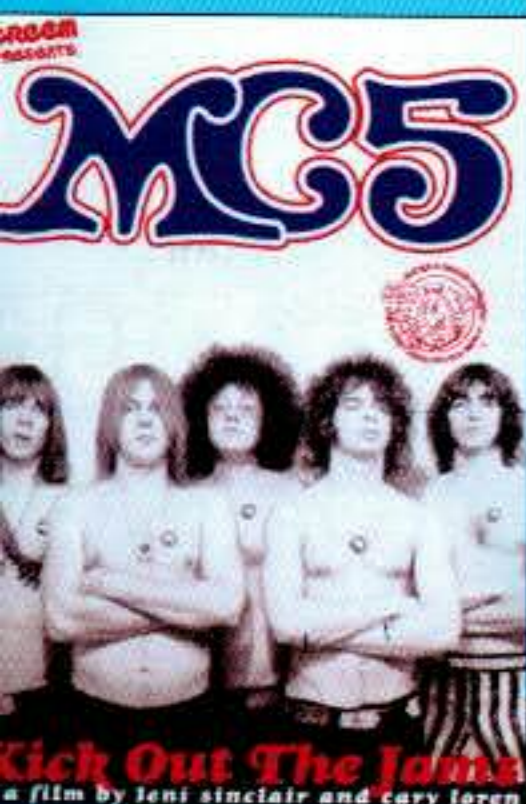
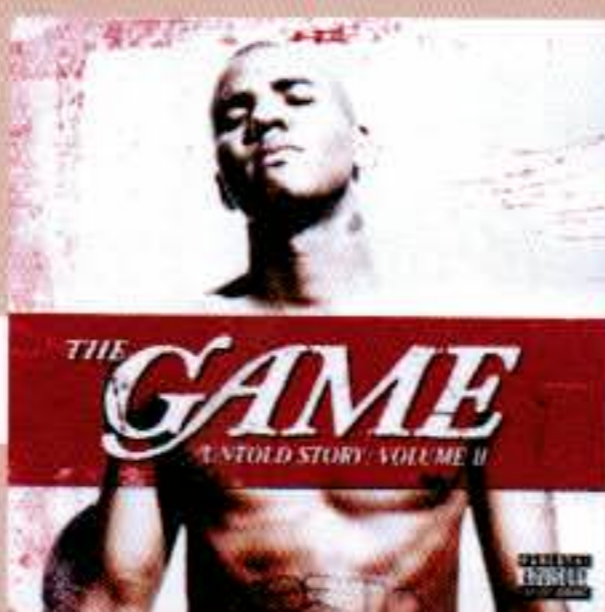
It seems like decades ago that The Game was the next big thing. The protégé of the last big thing, 50 Cent, it seemed like The Game, with his heartfelt single "Dreams," was about to break out in a major way. The formula was there: tattoos, totally bald, bad attitude, ghetto all the way. And then, well, he disappeared. Call it another victim to the rap game.

His latest album, *Untold Story: Volume II*, is not so much a retread of his past work as it is a disintegration of the elements that made him a rising star. Gone is his passionate delivery, fiery rhymes, and rat-a-tat beats. Instead, we get a slew of repetitive rhythms offered as the backdrop to generic rap braggadocio, and this time, The Game is all

talk with nothing to back it up.

Whether it's a "sophomore slump" (although technically this is his fifth album) or just an off night at the line, The Game now finds himself in a precarious position. No longer perceived as 50's boy and a sure-fire hit machine – which, after only one hit, happened pretty fast – he faces the challenge of distinguishing himself from all the other rough-ridin' emcees whose bark is worse than their bite. Or he needs to at least muster the personality to remain on the radar. Trouble is, there ain't no shame in this game, cuz he'll always be the same.

-Matt Pais



## MC5

### Kick Out the Jams



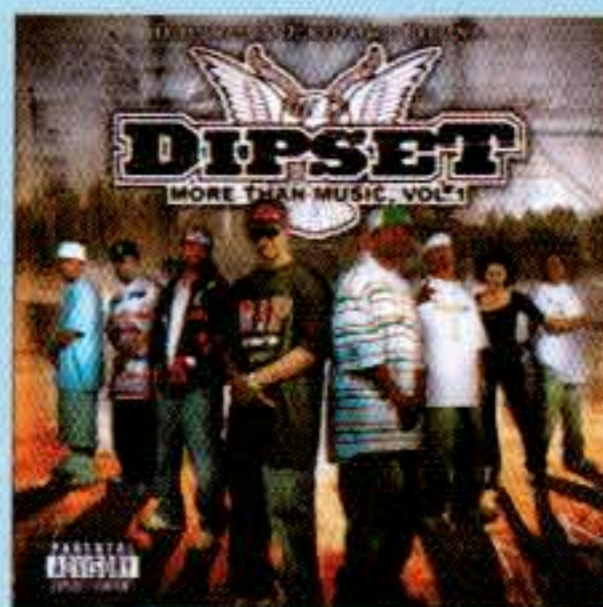
On one hand, it's necessary to give credit where it's due: little moving picture footage of the MC5 exists, and *Kick Out the Jams* co-producers Leni Sinclair and Cary Loren have done a commendable job of synching clips of that footage to (often bootleg-quality) audio of the band. Vocalist Rob Tyner did them an unintentional favor by always holding the microphone high, obscuring his mouth. For all we know, the images might be a performance of one song, grafted onto audio of another.

It's true also that for fans of MC5 (and make no mistake – they're the intended audience), there aren't many opportunities for viewing any footage at all of this seminal late Sixties group. While the recent theatrical release *MC5: A True Testimonial* is well produced, exhaustive, and poised

to win over those who don't like or know of the group, that film's DVD release is held up pending litigation. Indeed, it might never come out (though pirated copies do circulate).

Viewers prone to seizures are hereby advised to avoid the DVD. The swirling, pulsing light show serves as glue to hold the project together and is appropriate and effective, but wears out its welcome after awhile. Further, the audio edits are jarring and seemingly arbitrary. Even fans of Detroit rock (see also: Amboy Dukes, Frijid Pink, Alice Cooper, The Rationals etc.) might find this disc tough going. Still, as a rare artifact of an important band just now getting its due, *Kick Out the Jams* is, alas, essential.

-Bill Kopp



## Dip Set

### More Than Music

#### Vol. 1

Koch Records



As far as crew compilations go this effort by Dipset entitled *More Than Music* is above average fare, but it fails to really strike a chord or leave any sort of indelible impression. The fact is it lacks true character; just scratch the glossy surface and all you get is hot air, empty and devoid of substance.

The more veteran rappers of the crew, Cam'ron and Fabolous, step aside most of the album (save for a couple brief appearances) and allow the lesser-known members let loose and show their skills on the mike. The highlights come in raps by Juelz Santana with his gangster vibe and boasting lyrics, sounding a lot like Fat Joe: he showcases an impressive lyrical versatility and style. We will be hearing more of this guy.

The production on "Santana's Town II" is an interesting blend of guitar

riffs and heavy drums leaving you wanting more of that unique sound. On most tracks, up-tempo hooks are laced with heavy beats, which create a grandiose sound; it is shiny production at its best and worst.

It is almost too high and lofty, pompously floating inside its world of over-production. The lyrics are boasting and bragging without real substance, hence, no connection between the emcee and the audience.

However it does manage to hold together for what it is, which is where most crew efforts fail; they are too disjointed or unfocused. *More Than Music* holds it together and the sounds and lyrical styles remain consistent throughout the album. A focused crew album: you walk away with at least a sense of the Dipset crew.

-Shaun Flagg