

# Kanye west

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Kanye Omari West was born June 8, 1977) is an American rapper, singer, and record producer. West first rose to fame as a producer for Roc-A-Fella Records, where he eventually achieved recognition for his work on Jay-Z's album *The Blueprint*, as well as hit singles for musical artists including Alicia Keys, Ludacris, and Janet Jackson. His style of production originally used pitched-up vocal samples from soul songs incorporated with his own drums and instruments.

However, subsequent productions saw him broadening his musical palette and expressing influences encompassing '70s R&B, baroque pop, trip hop, arena rock, folk, alternative, electronica, synth-pop, and classical music. West released his debut album *The College Dropout* in 2004, his second album *Late Registration* in 2005, his third album *Graduation* in 2007, his fourth album *808s & Heartbreak* in 2008, and his fifth album *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy* in 2010. His five albums, all of which have gone platinum, have received numerous awards, including a cumulative twelve Grammys, and critical acclaim.

All have been very commercially successful, with *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy* becoming his fourth consecutive #1 album in the U. S. upon release. West also runs his own record label GOOD Music, home to artists such as John Legend, Common and Kid Cudi. West's mascot and trademark is "Dropout Bear," a teddy bear which has appeared on the covers of three of his five albums as well as various single covers and music videos. About.com ranked Kanye West #8 on their "Top 50 Hip-Hop Producers" list. On May 16, 2008, Kanye West was crowned by MTV as the year's #1 "Hottest MC in the Game."

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On 17 December 2010, Kanye West was voted as the MTV Man of the Year by MTV. Kanye West's first career productions came on Chicago rapper Grav's 1996 debut album *Down to Earth*. West produced eight tracks on the album. While the album did not attract much attention and would be the only album released by Grav, West would soon be producing for higher profile artists. In 1998-1999 he produced for well known artists such as Jermaine Dupri, Foxy Brown, Goodie Mob, and the group Harlem World. West got his big break in the year 2000 however when he began to produce for artists on Roc-a-Fella Records.

He produced the well received Jay-Z song "This Can't Be Life" off of the album *The Dynasty: Roc La Familia*. West would later state that to create the beat for "This Can't Be Life" he sped up the drum beat from Dr. Dre's song "Xxplosive". After producing for Jay-Z earlier, West's sound was featured heavily on Jay-Z's critically acclaimed album *The Blueprint*, released on September 11, 2001. His work was featured on the lead single "Izzo (H. O. V. A. )," "Heart of the City (Ain't No Love)" and a diss track against Nas and Mobb Deep named "Takeover"; West has worked with Mobb Deep and Nas since the track's release.

After meeting great commercial success and critical acclaim for his productions on *The Blueprint*, West became a sought after producer in the hip-hop industry, even before he became known as a rapper and solo artist. In the years 2002-2003 he would produce for artists such as Nas, Scarface, Talib Kweli, Mos Def, T. I. , Ludacris, DMX, and Monica. He also continued

producing for Roc-a-Fella Records artists and contributed four tracks to Jay-Z's follow up album to The Blueprint, The Blueprint? : The Gift & the Curse.

After great successes as a producer, West now looked to pursue a career as a rapper and solo artist, but struggled to find a way to get a record deal.

Chris Anokute, then A&R at Def Jam, said that when West regularly dropped by the office to pick up his producer checks he would play demos of solo material to Anokute in his cubicle and bemoan the fact that no one was taking him seriously as a rapper. Jay-Z admitted that Roc-A-Fella was initially reluctant to support West as a rapper, claiming that he saw him as a producer first and foremost.

Multiple record companies felt he was not as marketable as rappers who portray the "street image" prominent in hip hop culture. Beginning his career as a rapper, Kanye West rapped a verse on Jay-Z's The Blueprint? : The Gift & the Curse, an album he produced for, from the same label he was signed to as a rapper. At the start of his career, Kanye West's production style often used pitched-up vocal samples, usually from soul songs, with his own drums and instruments. His first major release featuring his trademark vocal sampling style was "This Can't Be Life", a track from Jay-Z's The Dynasty: Roc La Familia.

West said he sped up the drum beat of Dr. Dre's "Xxplosive" to use as a replacement for his drums on "This Can't Be Life". West has said that Wu-Tang Clan producer RZA influenced him in his style and has said on numerous occasions that Wu-Tang rappers Ghostface Killah and Ol' Dirty Bastard were some of his all-time favorites, "Wu-Tang? Me and my friends

talk about this all the time... We think Wu-Tang had one of the biggest impacts as far as a movement. From slang to style of dress, skits, the samples. Similar to the [production] style I use, RZA has been doing that. "

RZA himself has spoken quite positively of the comparisons, stating in an interview for Rolling Stone, " All good. I got super respect for Kanye. He came up to me about a year or two ago. He gave me mad praising and blessings... For people to say Wu-Tang inspire Kanye, Kanye is one of the biggest artists in the world. That goes back to what we say: 'Wu-Tang is forever. ' Kanye is going to inspire people to be like him. " After hearing his work on The Blueprint, RZA claimed that a torch-passing had occurred between him and West, saying, " The shoes gotta be filled.

If you ain't gonna do it, somebody else is gonna do it. That's how I feel about rap today. West accompanied by an eleven-piece chamber orchestra While his use of sampling has lessened over time, West's production continues to feature distinctive and intricate string arrangements. This characteristic arose from him listening to the English trip hop group Portishead, whose 1998 live album Roseland NYC Live, with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra inspired him to incorporate string sections into his hip hop production.

Though he was unable to afford live instruments beyond violin riffs provided by Israeli violinist Miri Ben-Ari around the time of his debut album, its subsequent commercial success allowed him to hire his very own eleven-piece string orchestra. For a time, West stood as the sole current pop star to tour with a string section. West has stated on several occasions that outside

of work, he favors listening to rock music over hip-hop. He cites Franz Ferdinand, Red Hot Chili Peppers, and The Killers as some of his favorite musical groups.

Additionally, on Graduation, West drew inspiration from arena rock bands such as U2, The Rolling Stones and Led Zeppelin for melody and chord progression. Both a fan and supporter of indie culture, West uses his official website to promote obscure indie rock bands, posting up music videos and mp3s on a daily basis. This musical affinity is mutual, as West has collaborated with indie artists such as Santigold, Peter Bjorn and John and Lykke Li while his songs have gone on to be covered countless times by myriad rock bands.