Sing About Me: Kendrick Lamar in Posterity

BRANDON APOL
Kendrick Lamar Duckworth

- Born in Compton in 1987
- Rapping since age 13
- Signed at age 16 to Top Dawg Entertainment
- Reached widespread recognition for major label debut *Good Kid, m.A.A.d City* (2012, Aftermath & Interscope Records)
- Discography:
  - *Section.80* (2011)
  - *Good Kid, m.A.A.d City* (2012)
  - *untitled.unmastered* (2016)
In the Public Eye...

- Seven Grammy Awards
  - Eleven nods in 2015, second only to Michael Jackson
- MTV's Hottest MC in the Game in 2013
- 2012's *Good Kid* and 2015’s *To Pimp A Butterfly* certified platinum
- ASCAP Vanguard Award for composing
- CA State Senate Generational Icon Award
- 15 Black Entertainment Television (BET) Awards
- 4 MTV Awards
- NAACP Image Award Nominee
- *The Colbert Report, Saturday Night Live!, Jimmy Fallon, the BET awards, and the Grammy awards*
- "Greatest of All Time" award from Complex Magazine
- Top Ten Rappers of All Time from Billboard
Lyrical Prowess: Kendrick as Poet

- Began with poetry
- College classes
- Concept albums: Program music...
  - Popularity of GKMC
  - Heads up: Skits
Good Kid...

- Sherane
- Don’t Kill My Vibe
- Backseat Freestyle
- The Art of Peer Pressure
- Money Trees
- Poetic Justice
- Good Kid
- m.A.A.d City
- Swimming Pools
- Sing About Me, I’m Dying of Thirst
- Real
- Compton
m.A.A.d City

- Sherane aka Master Splinter's Daughter
- Don’t Kill My Vibe
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A Film of the Life of K-Dot

- Introduction: Compton
  - Sherane
  - Freestyle, Peer Pressure
- Inciting Moment: K-Dot’s Romance Sours
- Revenge, Bad Choices, Grace
  - Dave Dies, Kendrick is Dying of Thirst
  - Maybe Compton is not so great
  - Bloods vs Crips
  - Sinner’s Prayer
- Reality: K-Dot to Kendrick
- Back to the music...
m.A.A.d City

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Alright (2015)
- “I’m messed up, homie, you messed up, but if God got us, then we gon’ be alright”
- Cleveland: Black Lives Matter (July 2015)
- Washington, DC: 20th Anniversary of the Million Man March (October 2015)
- Chicago, Illinois: Donald Trump Rally (March 16, 2016)

How Much A Dollar Cost (2015)
- Obama’s Favorite of the year
Kendrick Lamar, MC Musician, Composer, Arranger

- Insanul Ahmed, Editorial Producer at COMPLEX and editor at Genius.com
- Ab-Soul, fellow rapper and Top Dawg Entertainment signee
- Section.80 vs GKMC vs TPAB vs untitled.unmastered
- “Producer”
Grand Staff

- Digi+Phonics aka Tha Bizness
  - Sounwave, Tae Beast, Dave Free, Willie B
  - Top Dawg Entertainment production crew
- Terrance Martin
- Kamasi Washington
- Robert Glasper
- Flying Lotus
- George Clinton
- “Sput”
- Thundercat
- Egypt
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- Ab-Soul, fellow rapper and Top Dawg Entertainment signee
- Section.80 vs GKMC vs TPAB vs untitled.unmastered
- “Producer”

- Not important, unless...................

- “I’m very hands-on [with producers] and that’s why my projects come out so cohesive. I don’t just go out there and just find a bunch of instrumentals and rap over them. I have a specific sound in my head I want to convey. I really sit down with producers, I come up with ideas, and give them ideas. Truthfully, I should get some co-production on these tracks.” –Kendrick Lamar, 2015
untitled.unmastered: pushing it

- *King Kunta* “We want the funk!”
- *untitled.06* Bossa Nova and Soul
- *untitled.04* Funk
- *untitled.02* Trap
- *untitled.07* Mix…
- Throughout *untitled.unmastered*, contemporary classical bits thrown inbetween segments of pieces
- Bringing less popular genres forward
"I will say, in my personal experience, after good kid came out, every time a rapper would come to the Complex office to play me their album, for a while they'd ALWAYS mention good kid. Like, ‘you know albums are wack these days, except for good kid’ or ‘I would compare this album to like Kendrick's good kid.’” – Insanul Ahmed

Kendrick has become a critical, cultural, contemporary sweetheart

Publicizing neo-jazz, contemporary classical, funk, and bringing oldies back