

## CYPRESS HILL Biography

Cypress Hill is undeniably one of the most influential and durable names in the world of hip-hop.

The group continues to rack up some of the most impressive and consistent sales records in the business: "Cypress Hill," the group's debut has sold some two million copies in the U.S.; the blockbuster follow-up, "Black Sunday," has generated sales in excess of three and a quarter million; "III (Temples Of Boom)," without help from radio or MTV, has sold a million and a half copies in the states.

In fact, over the course of the group's thriving career, Cypress Hill has sold more than seven million albums in this country alone, resulting in a total of eight gold, platinum and multi-platinum RIAA certifications.

From the groundbreaking watershed beats and rhymes of the group's self-titled 1991 debut to the "Smokin' Grooves" of tomorrow, Cypress Hill is a beacon at the crossroads of hip-hop and alternative music, an ongoing testimony to the lasting power and ever-evolving qualities of this music.

Cypress Hill was formed by Muggs, an Italian-American transplant from New York City, B-Real, a South Gate native of Mexican-Cuban extraction and the Cuban-born Sen Dog, after Muggs' stint with rap outfit 7A3 and B-Real's and Sen Dog's turns in DVX.

The group's name comes from Cypress Avenue, a street that runs through the South Central L.A. hood where the group came together. The trio recorded early versions of "Real Estate," "Light Another," "Phunky Feel One," "Psychobetabuckdown" and "Trigga Happy Nigga" (which later became "How I Could Just Kill A Man") attracting frenzied label attention and a deal with Philadelphia's RuffHouse label (with distribution via Columbia Records) in 1990.

Their self-titled debut album came out the next year with re-recorded versions of their initial efforts as well as new material, including "Stoned Is The Way of the Walk," "Latin Lingo" and "Hand on the Pump."

On the strength of college radio play, "How I Could Just Kill A Man," the B-side of the first single, "Phunky Feel One," was added to New York's WBLS and became the station's #1 requested song, prompting RuffHouse to rush out a video.

With songs like "Light Another," "Hits From The Bong," "Legalize It" and "Blunted," Cypress Hill made no bones about where the group stood; the members became conscientious supporters of hemp legalization and official musical spokesmen for NORML, the National Organization to Reform Marijuana Laws, in 1991.

In the words of High Times, Cypress Hill "ignited a revolution," and national newsweeklies like Newsweek and Entertainment Weekly cited the trio's stance as cultural icons.

By 1993, Muggs had consolidated the innovative production techniques he'd developed, producing and re-mixing material for other rappers, including House of Pain, Funkdoobiest and the Beastie Boys, and created a hard-hitting but kaleidoscopic sound.

Cypress Hill's second album, "Black Sunday," was preceded by the unequivocal hit, "Insane In The Brain," and debuted at #1 on the Billboard charts that summer, registering the highest first-week sales for any rap album in the history of SoundScan up to that point. The album's cover art and the video for the second single, "Ain't Goin' Out Like That," initiated the use of horror movie imagery in hip-hop, which reigned supreme for the next year.

Following the album's release, Cypress appeared on "Saturday Night Live," causing mayhem when DJ Muggs toked up on-air before performing "Insane In The Brain" and the group trashed their equipment during "When The Ship Goes Down."

Cypress Hill headlined the sold-out "Soul Assassins" club tour with House of Pain and Funkdoobiest and afterwards toured colleges supported by 7-Year Bitch and Rage Against The Machine.

Cypress Hill performed on the '92, '94 and '95 Lollapalooza tours (they appeared on the side stages in '92 and '94 and were one of the headliners in '95) and at Woodstock94; they also collaborated with Pearl Jam and Sonic Youth on the "Judgment Night" soundtrack.

They have the largest crossover following of any rap group this side of the Beastie Boys, which has led to a heated dialogue within the hip-hop community.

"What people don't understand is, if we take the music as high as we can," says B-Real, "we're not leaving it behind to do another kind of music. We're taking it with us.

"You can't limit yourself," he continues. "That's not what life's about. As long as you don't sell yourself short or sell yourself out, if you change who you are to try and sell records -- you fucked up. But, if people accept you for what you are and what you're doing, so be it. Take advantage of the doors that were kicked the fuck open."

A few months after headlining Lollapalooza '95, Cypress Hill released the group's third RuffHouse/Columbia album, "III (Temples of Boom)," and third-consecutive platinum album release.

Cypress didn't celebrate "the bud" lyrically so much here, preferring to make you feel its effects via a spacey, muted, atmospheric sonic undertow. Among special guests on the album were Wu-Tang rappers U-God and The RZA on "Killa Hill," with RZA having produced the cut.

Throughout the album, heady rhythms were supplied by Cypress' newest regular member, Bobo (son of Salsa legend, Willie Bobo), who'd initially met the group while touring as part of the Beastie Boys' live band.

Shortly after the recording of "III (Temples of Boom)" was finished, Sen stopped touring with the group to pursue other musical interests.

In early '96, Cypress Hill toured the U.S. headlining shows with 3 11 and The Pharcyde also on the bill. Later, Cypress was one of the featured acts on the inaugural "Smokin' Grooves" tour, described by some as the "urban Lollapalooza."

They spent Summer96 playing sheds with the Fugees, Ziggy Marley, Busta Rhymes and A Tribe Called Quest and released a nine-song EP, "Unreleased & Revamped" which compiled some of their most inventive, highly sought-after re-mixes, many never commercially available before.

Following the "Smokin' Grooves" tour, group members took time to undertake a number of special projects and recharge their creative batteries. Muggs recorded the "Muggs Presents ... The Soul Assassins" solo album, recruiting the likes of Wu Tang Clan, Dr. Dre, KRS-One, Wyclef (from the Fugees), Mobb Deep and the rest of Cypress Hill to rap over some of his most hard-hitting and innovative grooves yet.

"Muggs Presents ... The Soul Assassins" was released on February 28, 1997, to overwhelming critical acclaim; the album has gone on to sell more than a quarter of a million copies.

In the meanwhile, B-Real had collaborated with Busta Rhymes, Coolio, LL Cool J & Method Man on "Hit'Em High" from the "Space Jam" soundtrack album, as well as with Dr. Dre, Nas and KRS-One on "East Coast Killer, West Coast Killer," on Dre's "Aftermath" album.

He then teamed up with two other L.A. based Latino rappers, Duke and Jacken, to record a eponymous debut album, "The Psycho Realm."

Duke had rapped on-stage with Cypress Hill throughout the '96 "Smokin' Grooves" shows with Jacken appearing with the group on a number of these dates as well.

"The Psycho Realm" was released on October 24, 1997, on RuffHouse/Columbia. Duke and Jacken performed again with Cypress Hill on the 1997 edition of "Smokin' Grooves," which featured Cypress Hill as well as George Clinton And The P-Funk All Stars, Erykah Badu and others.

Cypress Hill online: <http://www.cypressonline.com>

RuffHouse Records online: <http://www.ruffhouse.com>

Columbia Records online: <http://www.columbiarecords.com>