

# THE PRODIGY

## ← INVADERS MUST DIE →

Released March 3<sup>rd</sup>

Take Me To The Hospital/Cooking Vinyl/Rocket Science

The claustrophobic confines of a west London attic hideaway. Walls, covered in heavyweight purple curtains seem to bring the dimly lit room's parameters collapsing in as a huge computer screen's wallpaper radiates the green glow of long hot summer. Its pastoral image of feudal tranquility is the room's only window on the world. Look closer and there's a twist in this Constable painting. In the middle of the painter's rustic overtures sits a stolen burnt out car. It's an urban blight on England's countryside, a twisted interruption on this green and pleasant land.

More than just a screen saver though, the image, one of Banksy's infamous reworkings of old masters, is the perfect visual accompaniment to the aural assault that is pounding from the room's speakers. Sweat soaked b-lines thunder with adrenalised breakcore attitude; rushing keyboard hooks come on like a futurebound flashback; guitars crack and vocals snap.

It's the sound of The Prodigy mixing up genres, contorting the past and rewiring the future. The Prodigy ramraiding through the tranquility of music's status quo like a blot on the landscape of England's dreaming. The Prodigy with a short, sharp and brutal declaration of intent. Still underground after all these years. Still true to the dream.

**Invaders Must Die** is the fifth album from a band long synonymous with bringing urban disruption to the countryside. Like uninvited guests dirtying up the landscape they've long trodden paths supposedly to them.

On debut album **Experience**, their rough-around-the-edges, renegade-break psychosis soundtracked rave's free party antics at a time when dance artists weren't supposed to release albums. The follow up **Music for the Jilted Generation** dragged guitars from rock's bloated grasp, fused metal to dysfunctional beat alchemy and stormed the heartland of rock music's venues at a time when dance acts were only supposed to play raves.

With 1998's **The Fat of the Land** and it's brace of radio and MTV hogging singles ('**Firestarter**', '**Breathe**', '**Smack My Bitch Up**') The Prodigy stormed the world's festivals, headlined stages usually reserved for rock's establishment and walked like Gods where other press-friendly artists failed to tread - and dance artists were previously uninvited.



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With 2004's ***Always Outnumbered Never Outgunned*** the vibe turned its back on live shows and arena exposure and took the music back to an underground that had tried to turn its back on them. Gatecrashers once more, The Prodigy answered nay sayers with an astounding set of dumb ass electro punk classics. A DJ beats album that couldn't be played out live, from an act that had taken the live gig by the scruff of its neck, redefined it and made it its own. This wasn't what The Prodigy were meant to do.

***Always Outnumbered Never Outgunned*** acted as much as a catharsis for Liam Howlett as it was a chance to reset the Prodigy programme. The following year's greatest hits package ***Their Law*** not only came as a timely reminder as to just how epoch defining the band were, but also reintroduced the world to the greatest live show on earth. In the arena tour that followed ***Their Law*** the band played voodoo with their rave classics, reworked and rewired their smouldering best and reminded old ravers and young rockers alike just how potent a force they actually are. And if that wasn't all, it reminded The Prodigy how important it is to rock it live.

The tour provided some of the greatest performances of their career and gave the inspiration for their next set - an album designed to play live, an album of short, succinct tracks with none of the over indulgent frills normally associated with electronic dance music. A set of tracks that arrive like an unwanted carbuncle on the over designed veneer of contemporary culture and go out like glorious victors in a war against the negativity of outsiders. Once again The Prodigy aren't playing to the script others have written for them.

The first thing you notice about ***Invaders Must Die*** is how complete it sounds. Previous albums have always had weak moments, tracks that don't quite fit, or even the feeling that the set was a couple of tracks short of its goal. ***Invaders Must Die*** though is all there, a consistent collection of bangers firing from the same canon.

The next thing you notice about ***Invaders Must Die*** is just how melodic it is. Not just melody in the vocal sense (although both Keith and Maxim both turn in their finest vocal performances to date), but in the heyday-of-hardcore keyboard-hookline sense. Oh yes, if The Prodigy had learned anything from the ***Their Law*** tour it was that those old skool rave anthems still rock hard - and are every bit as iconic to their generation as punk was to the nation's forty-somethings.

So ***Invaders Must Die*** then is awash with references to the free party generation. It thunders like the mother of all E-rushes, all hairs tingling, spine jumping and lips buzzing. But it ain't no retroactive arms-in-the-air, water-sharing nostalgia trip. This set is fuelled by the dog-thunder of punk's saliva-dripping rabid snarl. In fact its canines are so thoroughly bared that it's more likely to snap at your jugular and steal your water. Laughing all the while. In fact, the often overlooked dumb-assed humour that has always been at the heart of the band is has a full force presence here.



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Take **'Colours'**, the first tune The Prodigy recorded for this set with its 1992 polysynth riffing that sounds like The Stranglers' 'No More Heroes' parachuted into the middle of a Perception rave. Or **'Thunder'**, the bastard child of the Devilish threesome of **'Out of Space'**, Studio 1's finest roots rockers and switchblade ambience.

**'Take Me to the Hospital'** finds Keith and Maxim flexing over a vintage Prodigy riff. Suitably rusted, distorted and in need of urgent medication it bites like the soundtrack to Dante's Inferno. While the live favourite (and band website download) **'World's on Fire'** resurrects a 'flaming' theme and applies it to a groove straight out second album **'Music for the Jilted Generation'** and slices it down the middle with a sample of R&S classic rave tune 'Vamp' by Outlander. It's the kind of fucked up twist that you quickly come to expect on this album. **'Omen'** is beamed straight into the moshpit from rave central, while 'Piranha' rips the threads from the back of 60's garage and pussy whips it into the scumbag guttercrawl of modern urban life.

Any old skool *bon homie* floating around the riffs of this album are quickly slaughtered by **'Run with the Wolves'** where The Prodigy's self assured, gang-minded campaign turns into a maniacal, nose bleeding, heads-against-the-wall warzone. Added pounding energy here supplied by Dave Grohl.

"There's no collaborations on this album as such." says Liam "But toward the end of recording Dave Grohl called me and said he was thinking about laying down some drums for me to use. Soon after this hard drive arrived with loads of drum tracks. I hadn't asked him for them, it was his idea, but when I put his drums on this track and used a Keith vocal that we'd done it seemed to give the album a focus. Nothing about this album was planned in terms of what I wanted it to sound like. We just recorded stuff and then looked at it at the end. I really wanted to have fun with it."

After 40 minutes of having your head battered by future nostalgia, serotonin levels twisted by feel-good horrorcore and your synapses snapped by whiplash attitude, **Invaders Must Die** delivers its final, brilliant twist - a horn drenched sunrise anthem that aches with the positivity of a new dawn. That track, **'Stand Up'** laughs aloud like a victor, spreads its arms around its comrades (the unit, the family) and walks the line of a burning horizon with the swaggering look of satisfaction that only comes when you instinctively know you've achieved what you set out to do.

Cocky? Sure - but wouldn't you be if you'd seen off all of the invaders with your most complete album yet, the first for your own record label?

**Invaders Must Die** is the unique sound of The Prodigy, still trespassing after all these years, walking the path they've created for themselves. And with that free party attitude still breaking and entering where other's can only dream of following.

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"We represent all that is great about Britain, and we should be protected like a national heritage," laughs Liam as **'Stand Up'** fades into the distance. He may well be right! The question is, are the established overlords of our green and pleasant land ready for this particular juggernaut to be jetisoned into the middle of Constable's finest.

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