

J!-ENT INTERVIEWS

CHRIS

J!-ENT INTERVIEWS BBMC INC./PRIMARY RECORDS
RECORDING ARTIST CHRIS REGARDING HIP-HOP IN
JAPAN AND HIS ROLE IN POPULARIZING STREET BALL
IN JAPAN.



BY DENNIS A. AMITH
PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF BBMC INC. & PRIMARY RECORDS

P rimary Records (BBMC Inc.) hip-hop artist CHRIS has come a long way.

One of the known hapa (half American/Japanese) hip-hoppers in Japan that came from New York, CHRIS knew at a young age that hip-hop was in his blood.

After graduating from high school, CHRIS attended college at Aoyama Gakuin University and played basketball and eventually helping the team win at a major tournament.

CHRIS went on to help startup FAR EAST BALLERS, a group that is promoting streetball (basketball taking place outdoors in a park or school setting) in Japan.

In America, streetball has a strong correlation with hip-hop music and the same goes in Japan with the group promoting music and street ball through Freestyle and Ball Rockin' events.

Through FAR EAST BALLERS, CHRIS and crew has managed to promote Japanese streetball and their music at many high profile basketball events such as "LEBRON JAMES VISITING JAPAN" and "KOBE BRYANT ASIA TOUR in JAPAN" events.

In 2003, CHRIS had his first anime tie-in debut mini-album with "Love me or Not" which was used as the ending theme for the TV Tokyo anime "DEAR BOYS" and has collaborated with DJ MASTERKEY and Asian American hip hop artist JiN.

With CHRIS latest full length album "LENNON", CHRIS collaborates with producers JiN, DJ WATARAI, Focis, BUZZER BEATS, SUBZERO, John "Papa" Jube and Arden.

With CHRIS having his roots in New York and now in Tokyo, you get a very smooth competent flow of rhymes bundled with new school beats with a strong East Coast feel.

Make no mistake, despite being from New York, CHRIS has perfect command with rhyming in Japanese.

J!-ENT recently had the

opportunity to interview CHRIS about his latest album "LENNON" and also his role in promoting street ball in Japan.

J!-ENT: Before we talk about your new album "LENNON", let's get to know a little about you. Growing Up, who were your music influences?

CHRIS: My very first musical influence was Michael Jackson, then it changed to LL COOL J, Notorious BIG and Jay-Z and them.

J!-ENT: Since you have your roots in America but living in Japan for years, I guess you can say that you get the best of both worlds. What are your favorite things about living in New York and living in Tokyo?

CHRIS: Best of both worlds indeed. They are the greatest cities in the world. New York City... I love the variety of the energy and people. Tokyo... you can find anything you want.

J!-ENT: Growing up, was it always a dream to be involved in music or did you see yourself doing something else after college?

CHRIS: I always wanted to make a living by doing what I love. Rapping or balling I was determined to make it happen.

J!-ENT: Let's talk about your music. I know that people in the US got a taste of your music via "Love Me or Not" from the anime "DEAR BOYS" which you collaborated with DJ MASTERKEY and JiN. How was that experience to continue working with them and also to have a song on an anime series?

CHRIS: I was one of the most exciting moment in my life. Fo' sho making a song about balling and having to appear in the last moments of the show showing some of my ball handling skills was a dream come true.

J!-ENT: With the release of your awesome album "LENNON", I have to ask what is the main difference between your perspective of creating this album versus when you created the album "Ake no Myojo"?

CHRIS: I wanted to take my music to a whole other level. you can see the musical influence in my new album. I was more focused in making great music. not just

“I always wanted to make a living by doing what I love. Rapping or balling I was determined to make it happen.”



great Hip Hop. I just wanted people to listen to it and say this is great music even if they are not natural Hip Hop listeners.

J!-ENT: In your latest full-length album "LENNON", you continue with the collaborations and there are quite a number of them. What was it like to work with DJ WATARAI, Focis, BUZZER BEATS, SUBZERO, John "Papa" Jube and Arden?

CHRIS: In my definition they are all global producers. World wide musically you know? I wanted to work with them to bring out the border less sound that I believe I had and they did it perfectly.

J!-ENT: Now who would be your dream collaboration? Any artist or producer that you would love to work with?

CHRIS: I wanna work with those who bring that energy. Those that make me better and I make them better. In Japan it will be AI, PUSHIM, KREVA and ZEEBRA. In the States, Dr. DRE, TIMBERLAND, AKON, Lil Wayne, JAY-Z and so on. It's just a dream for now but I hope to make them come true....

J!-ENT: Let's talk about "LENNON", a well-done album that I enjoyed listening to a lot. How long was this album in development? Was it a challenge to create?

CHRIS: I believe every creation is a challenge but also an enjoyment. We started recording Dec. 2006 and every thing was done by March 2007. So, it took about four months. I can get the job done quick once I set my mind to it.

J!-ENT: Of all the songs on the album, which one is your personal favorite and why?

CHRIS: Damn.... that's a tough one. They are all my favorites...but I would say "Konomichi". The song reflects myself and my emotions every well. Ahaaa! Forget it, they all my favorites man!

J!-ENT: One of my favorite songs on the album is "Stand Up!". I guess why I dig it is because it's different from most Japanese hip hop tracks and it also had a East Coast or Western vibe to it. Would it be proper for me to say that you bring



that East Coast feel to your music?

CHRIS: "Stand Up!" is definitely for my core listeners the "heads" no doubt. but also in my own way. There ain't no other, can do it like that in Japan fo' sho! It's that fire. The energy is like nothing you can find in Japan.

J!-ENT: Because it's targeted towards a Japanese audience, does it go through changes to appeal to a certain audience? In other words, do you get to make the music that you want or do you need to alter your music to be more commercial?

CHRIS: Well some times you need that song that brings you the mass appeal, to deliver your music to a wider range of people. You know?

J!-ENT: It's one thing to create a song in English but listening to your album, how difficult for you was it to craft a hip-hop songs in Japanese. Or is it challenging either way?

CHRIS: When I first started rhyiming, it was in English back in high school. Then I began writing in Japanese when

I was 21 or 22, it was tough trying in Japanese. Then I got used to Japanese and lost my English. I think I finally got the both together with this album in a level I can present to the world and be satisfied. So, now my challenge is all musical. Writing a song in its self is a craft.

J!-ENT: What is your opinion on the current state of Japanese hip-hop? Does the underground hip hop artists in Japan still have a voice and a venue to show off their talent or do you see a lot of undiscovered talent out there that just don't get noticed?

CHRIS: I think Japan should embrace good music period. Hip Hop or not, underground or not.

J!-ENT: I always wondered with Japanese hip hop, do they look at trends in America of what's happening on the East Coast or West Coast?

CHRIS: A lot of MC's that claim to be hard and underground look to the East and you can find a lot of West Coast

**“There ain’t no other,
can do it like that in
Japan fo’ sho! It’s
that fire. The energy
is like nothing you
can find in Japan.”**



“The crew is all about street
basketball/streetball and
here in Japan. F.E.B. is
a role model. To show
It makes it easier
ever that way
play street
spread the
Determined
movements



spreading
s a culture
s some thing like
ow how it's done.
er for who
ches and tries to
et ball. We try to
e joy of playing.
ned to make a
nt.”

influences in low riders and the crew.

J!-ENT: Let's talk about basketball. Aside from the music, you were also pretty much one of the people who helped pioneer the street ball scene in Japan by the startup of "FAR EAST BALLERS". For our readers not familiar with F.E.B., can you explain what the group is about?

CHRIS: The crew is all about spreading basketball/streetball as a culture here in Japan. F.E.B. is some thing like a role model. To show how it's done. It makes it easier for who ever that watches and tries to play street ball. We try to spread the joy of playing. Determined to make a movement.

J!-ENT: What are the major differences of streetball in Japan and America. Does the Japanese streetball competition have all the trash talking and showmanship?

CHRIS: Not as hard in the streets of NYC. But we "FEB" bring the showmanship every day on the court. Hoping that a kid watching will pick the moves up and create his own. That's how the culture should be passed on and developed.

J!-ENT: Now, I know there are people who have curiosity of the Japanese streetball scene. Is there Japanese streetball merchandise or videos from FAR EAST BALLERS that are available for purchase for people outside of Japan?

CHRIS: DVD's.. I don't know but we just started a new streetball web site featuring ballin' footage at www.tokyostreetball.tv should check it out.

J!-ENT: I have always felt that street ball and music have always had this unique balance and here in the US, we have seen certain leagues have their "mix" CD's or "compilation tracks". Do you and your friends involved in street ball try to bring that music balance to the sport?

CHRIS: Definitely! They are both our lives. I'm constantly trying to bring the two cultures together.

J!-ENT: Because you are originally from New York, are you a big Knicks

fan? If not, who's your favorite team?

CHRIS: I just pick my team depending on their style. Pistons and the Nuggets our my favorite now.

J!-ENT: I was reading your bio and you were involved with events in Japan for Lebron James and Kobe Bryant. How was that experience?

CHRIS: They were both unbelievable... Lebrons jams were just off the hook. And Kobe, I actually played against him when I was in high school, but I could feel how mature he got as a human. I got even more fond of him. Great guy!

J!-ENT: OK, let's get to know a little more about yourself. If we were to look in your CD or MP3 player right now, who would we catch you listening to?

CHRIS: ME!!! No just kiddin'. I got all of Jay's albums on my I-pod, & Biggies. Lil Wayne, T.I, Fat Joe. A little reggae to spice it up. Some R&B, soul & blues music and some salsa.

J!-ENT: If we got to hang out with CHRIS for a day, where would we catch you hanging out on a Friday or Saturday night?

CHRIS: I'm a chill guy off the court and stage, so you might find me at the late night movies or at a relaxing type of party with some good music. But yeah, with my boys, we make quite a scene.

J!-ENT: If there was one word to describe yourself, what word would that be and why?

CHRIS: Definition. there is no road before me, but where I go the is a road behind me.

J!-ENT: Here's a serious question that I ask performers in America and also in East Asia of being "hapa" (half Japanese/half American) and on the hip-hop end of things, has it been challenging to break into the Japanese music industry because you are hapa?

CHRIS: Yeah, I guess you can say so. Good or bad,they expect something from you & also the Japanese scene seemed so closed to something so different at first. But in the end its just about grinding and getting that



respect.

J!-ENT: With each J!-ENT INTERVIEW, we have a section called "word play" which we give you five words, you give us the "CHRIS" definition of these words:

CHRIS:

LOVE: A beautiful thing with out any self consciousness

SUCCESS: Something only a true human can achieve

HAPPINESS: Peace of mind

SEX: The desire of connecting in a higher level

JAPANESE HIP-HOP: Where the future lies

J!-ENT: Living in Tokyo, is there

anything that you miss from America. Food, lifestyle, club, anything? For example, artists in Japan who have lived in the US for the shortwhile always mention "Taco Bell".

CHRIS: Taco Bell fo' real! Also, Twizzlers & root beer, yep.

J!-ENT: Any chance of catching you perform in the US or even get a taste of FAR EAST BALLERS for international streetball competition in the US?

CHRIS: Yeah, we might go in September to NYC to compete in a basketball freestyle competition. I'll try to setup a show while I'm there.

J!-ENT: Before we go, what final words would you like to leave with your fans of your music?

CHRIS: It's a great feeling to be able to share my music with you all. Every single word and even the shortest words from my fans gives me the strength to go on. Thanks for all the support. I hope my music give you the same hope that you bring to me. LOVE & RESPECT world wide. ■

For more information on CHRIS, please visit:

www.chosen1.jp

www.myspace.com/chrislennontokyo

www.fareastballers.com

DENNIS A. AMITH *is a J!-ENT entertainment writer-at-large.*



nobodyknows+

A J!-ENT INTERVIEW BY DENNIS A. AMITH

AVAILABLE NOW ON J!-ENT

Images courtesy of Sony Music Associated Records, Inc.

CHRIS

Lennon

Primary Records (BBMC Inc.)

OACD-10007

Duration: 49:14

OFFICIAL Website: www.chosen1.jp

RELEASE DATE: June 6, 2007

1. The Invitation
2. Let's Go
3. Stand Up!
4. Moon & The Sun (feat. DJ KAORI)
5. Just Believe
6. Everytime (feat. arvin home aya)
7. Sky is Calling (feat. Shen)
8. DO You Wanna Know??
9. Sexy, Sexy
10. Kono Machi
11. Feelin' Good
12. Flame of Hope
13. Nothing's Gonna Change

Primary Records (BBMC Inc.) hip-hop artist CHRIS has come a long way since his first album "Ake no Myojo".

One of the known hapa (half American/Japanese) hip-hoppers in Japan that came from New York, CHRIS knew at a young age that hip-hop was in his blood.

CHRIS went on to help startup FAR EAST BALLERS, a group that is promoting streetball (basketball taking place outdoors in a park or school setting) in Japan.

In America, streetball has a strong correlation with hip-hop music and the same goes in Japan with the group promoting music and street ball through Freestyle and Ball Rockin' events.

With CHRIS second full-length album "LENNON", CHRIS collaborates with producers JiN, DJ WATARAI, Focis, BUZZER BEATS, SUBZERO, John "Papa" Jube and Arden.

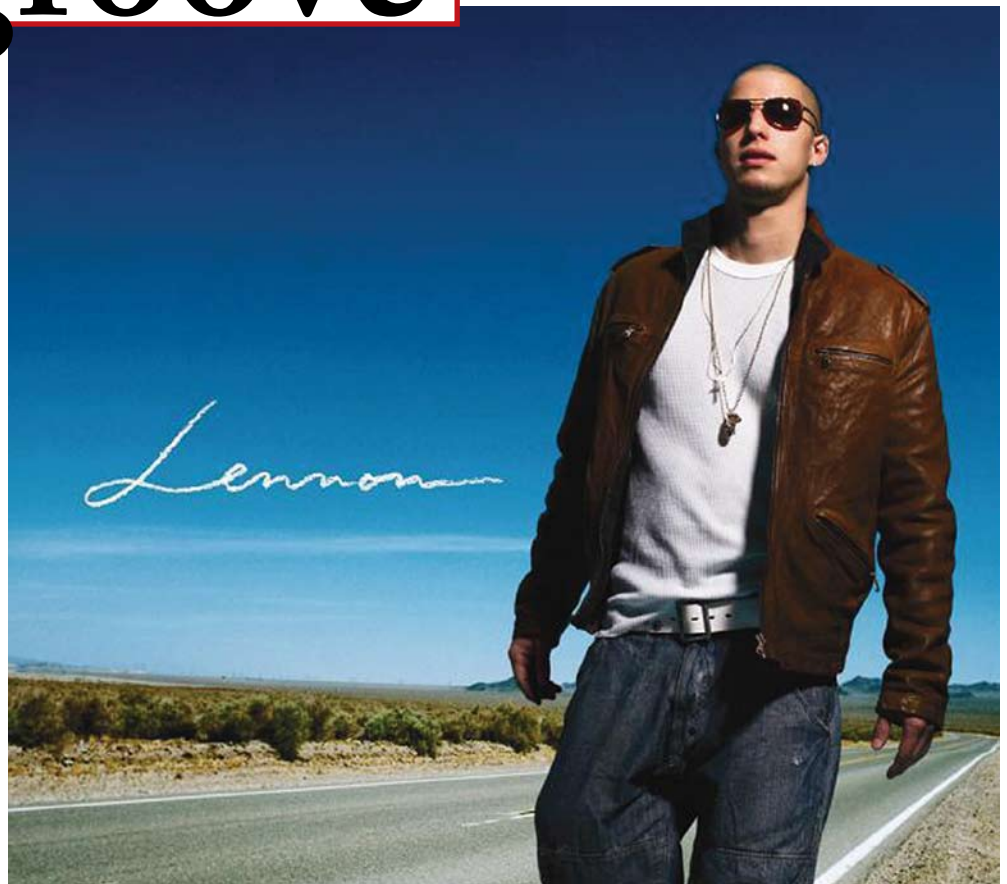
With CHRIS having his roots in New York and now in Tokyo, you get a very smooth competent flow of rhymes bundled with new school beats with a strong East Coast feel.

Make no mistake, despite being from New York, CHRIS has perfect command with rhyming in Japanese.

With the release of "Lennon", I can tell you that this album is much more fierce and CHRIS spares no expense in having to prove anything to the listener.

There is a smooth, competent and also confident flow for CHRIS rhymes on this album.

The tracks feature catchy, get up off your seat style of jams with a few



< THE SECOND TIME IS FIERCE!

Japanese street baller and hip-hop artist CHRIS releases his second full-length album.

showing us concussive beats to a Kanye West party style of feel.

Of course, similar to the first album which had its share of collaborations, the same with this album.

I enjoyed every song on the album and the collaborations with fellow Aoyama Gakuin University graduate from San Francisco, arvin home aya (vocalist of JAZZTRONIK), world reknown DJ KAORI and DEF-TECH's Shen are awesome!

I felt that with "Ake no Myojo", although it had a laid back vibe, it also had a serious, in your face style of feel to it.

What I enjoy about "Lennon" is that it features a good balance between the in your face tracks but it instead of sounding hardcore and serious, it has that vibe of having fun, enjoying the moment and most of all, just letting yourself go.

You have tracks such as "Stand Up!", which is similar to a Kanye West Boost Mobile chant of East Coast, West Coast, Dirty South, hip hop fans unite.

CHRIS does the same by mentioning for listeners in Tokyo, Osaka, Nagasaki, Nagoya, etc. to stand up and jam.

"Moon&Sun" showcases CHRIS dense barrage of lyrics in balance with a different but fresh style of music.

"Sky Is Calling" is a slow jam that actually features a sweet balance of Japanese and English but overall the rhymes on this track are smooth!

"Lennon" is definitely catchy, habit forming with each listen and definitely CHRIS finest work thus far.

The overall feeling is a well-produced, great balance musically overall album.

That balance of fun atmosphere to the street ball, in-your-face adrenalin-charge style of tracks are awesome.

And also, those that enjoyed "Ake no Myojo" and its overall style will find some of that on "Lennon".

"Lennon" is an exciting return for CHRIS and definitely a well-done sophomore album from one of the coolest, young hip-hop artists in Japan.

— DENNIS A. AMITH

CHRIS

Ake no Myojo

Avex Trax

AVCD-17513

Duration: 55:19

OFFICIAL Website: www.chosen1.jp

RELEASE DATE: September 29, 2004

1. Intro - THE Awakening-
2. Heatwave
3. Playin' Wit My Mind
4. T.O.K.Y.O
5. Skit JA
6. 蔓延る病魔 feat. MIKO
7. Shining Star -Sunriser-
8. Reach To Da Sky
9. Negai koto feat. DJ KAORI & MIKO
10. Skit AJ
11. Here We Go Now
12. enkai
13. Fuhnen no Chikai
14. Docchi?
15. Sprit Guide feat. JIN
16. Kick Da Shit feat. ALALAGI

Avex trax recording artist CHRIS is back with his first full-length album "Ake no Myojo".

One of the known hapa (half American/Japanese) hip-hoppers in Japan that came from New York, CHRIS knew at a young age that hip-hop was in his blood.

After graduating from high school, CHRIS attended college at Aoyama Gakuin University and played basketball and eventually helping the team win at a major tournament.

CHRIS went on to help startup FAR EAST BALLERS, a group that is promoting streetball (basketball taking place outdoors in a park or school setting) in Japan.

In America, streetball has a strong correlation with hip-hop music and the same goes in Japan with the group promoting music and street ball through Freestyle and Ball Rockin' events.

Through FAR EAST BALLERS, CHRIS and crew has managed to promote Japanese streetball and their music at many high profile basketball events such as "LEBRON JAMES VISITING JAPAN" and "KOBE BRYANT ASIA TOUR in JAPAN" events.

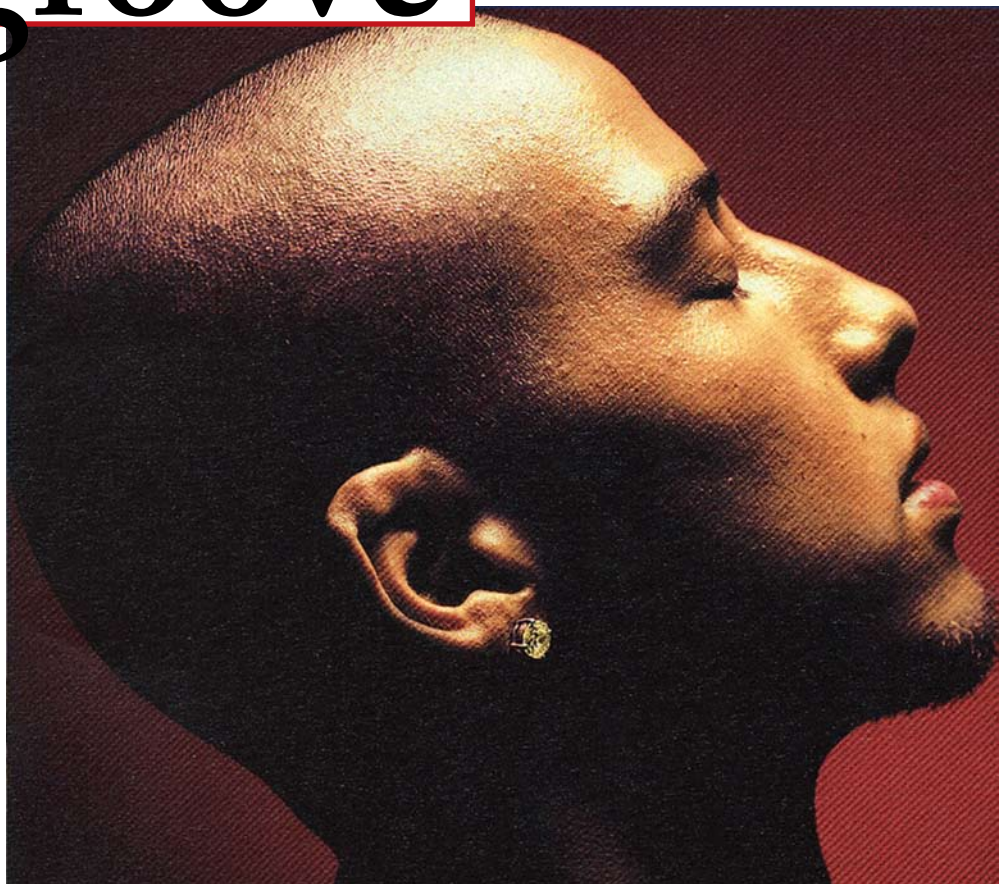
In 2003, CHRIS had his first anime tie-in mini-album with "Love me or Not" which was used as the ending theme for the TV Tokyo anime "DEAR BOYS" and has collaborated with DJ MASTERKEY and Asian American hip hop artist JIN.

CHRIS returns in 2004 with "Ake no Myojo" that features an interesting balance of East Coast and Japanese hip-hop.

With "Ake no Myojo", CHRIS continues his work with DJ MASTERKEY and also teams up with New York hip hop artist JIN, DJ KAORI, MIKO and ALAGI and several producers for his tracks such as OGA, DJ SANCOS, DJ YUKIJIURUSHI, DJ BEN THE ACE and DJ YUTAKA.

The overall feel of the album has a chilling out, laid back style at times with the Dazz Band-ish track "Here We Go Now" to really, awesome in your face, want to jam style music with tracks such as "Heatwave", "Negai Koto" and my favorite "Kick Da Shit".

All in all, a solid effort from one of the emerging young artists for Japanese hip-hop.
— DENNIS A. AMITH



< THE CHOSEN ONE IS BACK!

Japanese street baller and hip-hop artist CHRIS releases his first full-length album.

THE BALLER'S DEBUT MINI-ALBUM - LOVE IT!

CHRIS

Love me or not

avex trax

AVCD-17302, Rel. July 3, 2003

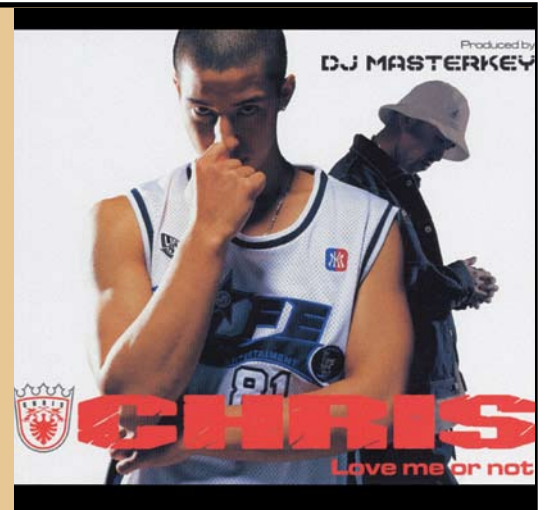
Duration: 27:41

In 2003, well-known Japanese street baller and hip hop artist CHRIS got his big break with his anime tie-in for the TV Tokyo basketball anime "DEAR BOYS" with his song "Love me or not".

His debut mini-album on a major label "Love me or not" features a good amount of collaboration work as the album is produced by DJ MASTERKEY and features tracks with hip hop artists such as New York's JIN, JUJU and Miko.

The album starts off with an introduction with CHRIS telling the listener "you don't know who I am" then busting out with smooth, hard hitting lyrics.

Listening to this album post-Lennon, the first debut mini-album shows CHRIS's strength in lyrics but the latest incarnation of CHRIS's music is fierce, confident, musically impressive and hard hitting, not to say that "Love me or not" is anything



but because there are tracks such as "First Rule" feat. Miko and "Chosen One" feat. JIN are awesome tracks.

So, naturally for what CHRIS came out with in 2003 is impressive but his latest work in 2007 shows the growth of CHRIS an artist since his debut.

The CD+DVD edition includes the music video clip of "Chosen One".

CD insert features lyrics but also several shots of CHRIS playing some street ball in Japan with the Far East Ballers crew.

AVAILABLE NOW ON J!-ENT!

TRF

A SPECIAL J!-ENT
15TH ANNIVERSARY TRIBUTE



BY DENNIS A. AMITH & HIROSHI TAGAWA

TRF OFFICIAL WEBSITE: <http://trf.avexnet.or.jp/>