

# Mp3 Praiz - The Take Over



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**\*\*Midwest\*\*Praise Worship\*\*Christian Hip Hop\*\* Spiritual Rap\*\*R B\*\*Urban Praise\*\* 11 MP3 Songs**

GOSPEL: Contemporary Gospel, URBAN/R&B: R&B Rap mix Details: The devil must be mad as hell at STL's new prince of Praiz' By Chris King Of the St. Louis American I realize it's not exactly doing this young man a favor to say this, but I can't resist saying what I have been thinking, and I have been thinking that Praiz' (aka V'land, or born to his mama as Vance Watt) is the Nelly of gospel. But the scope and power of this young brother's achievement on his debut record The Take Over make me reach for a comparison to someone who hit the market fully realized, with a detailed concept, a smooth but tight sound, and a double shot of STL love. That would have to be Nelly. But where Nelly came up with the club, the grind and the streets in his verses, Praiz' is all about God and Jesus and the Holy Ghost. What can I say? The Nelly of gospel is in the house - God's house, that is, but we get to listen, and it sure does sound good. I'm going to say what most everybody thinks about gospel hip-hop. It's like a two-headed bird trying to fly in different directions. The older heads would say it's a contradiction in terms. The sexiness of groove and the urgency of lyric that define hip-hop just don't want to go in the same direction as Jesus. Praiz' busts out of this contradiction with sheer force of talent, precision and energy of execution, and (it's safe to say) his love of God. His beats sound so good, his melodies soar so high and his verses have enough edge to make you want to go pretty much anywhere he's riding. It almost comes as a surprise that this ride is bound for glory. Gospel radio listeners will have been hearing Praiz's ballad "Deliver Me" on some local stations, but this elegant track, easy on the ears of ladies especially, provides no clue to what this dude is really up to. You need to start with him on track one, "Deep," which uses the sound gently slapping water as almost the sole basis for a deeply hypnotic track. "We started out with a bunch of fuss," Praiz testifies, destroying the club life that dominates most hip-hop with one simple,

patient sentence. Without needing to name names (there would be too many to name), he has in his sights the kind of person who goes from grimy to flashy without a moment's reflection on grace, good works or guidance. Jam on this, St. Louis: "You can't get to heaven in your Escalade." Oooo. "You can't get to heaven in your Escalade"! The preacher, not to mention the aunties, have a powerful ally in Praiz'. He wrote the melody carefully and sings it sweetly, with a voice and flow just a little bit (once again) like Nelly's, and he sticks it to you in the middle of some beats that have you bopping. So you ain't ever gonna forget it. "You can't get to heaven in your Escalade"! And don't get me started on "Selah Selah." Actually, do let me get started, and then come back to it in a week or two, after folks have had a chance to hear The Take Over. Let me say it starts with an African pop chorus, turns into a Double Dutch rhyme, then into a cheerleader's chant - each of these parts a hook strong enough to hold together a song on its own - and then it turns into a bad-butt hip-hop anthem. The thing he is screaming, and making you want to scream while throwing sets up in the air, is ... get this ... "Ain't nobody mad but the devil!" I bet that old devil is mad as hell. Praiz or V'Land is out to get him, and he's got the power to take him out. This young man wrote, arranged and produced all eleven tracks on The Take Over (ten originals, plus a radio edit). You have to look past Nelly all the way to Prince to find a brother with that complete of a skill package. The Prince of Praise? And, dang, his two kids, Rock and Lil Pooh, laced up the best (or at least the cutest) skit I have ever heard on any hip-hop record, ever, and it includes an important piece of local history: the youngest person ever to say on record the word "here" with those hard STL R's - "Give it heRRRe!" - that Cedric The Entertainer immortalized at the opening of (back to Nelly) Country Grammar.

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