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On Friday, Sept. 14, G.O.O.D Music released their highly anticipated compilation album *Cruel Summer*. A few of G.O.O.D. Music's most notable artists are Common, Big Sean, Kid Cudi, Mr. Hudson, CyHi The Prynce, Mos Def, Pusha T, and Teyana Taylor, with Kanye West as their mentor.

If you are looking for a classic Kanye West production like *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy* (2010) or *Watch the Throne* (2011), *Cruel Summer* falls just short of that. Most of West's work can be considered a classic after listening to it just once. *Cruel Summer* however does not have that same effect. The complex samples and violent 808 beats draw away from most of the songs' melodies and lyrics.

The first song "To the World" opens with R. Kelly belting out a boastful, angry hook that is accompanied by string plucking. R. Kelly's hook consists of a melody of yodeling, of which the song could do without. The motif of this song is based on Kanye West's mentality of "f" the world, the attitude that he has inculcated over the rest of his G.O.O.D Music artists. Fortunately, Teyana Taylor saves the song with her concluding verse "my middle finger, to the world, [...] from the ground to the

moon. Hills to the mountains, hands to the roof. Give it up, [...] won't let you deny me, Makin' you love me". Her rasp melodic voice makes the song worth listening to.

The second song, "Clique" features Big Sean and Jay-Z. The song is the fourth single off of a compilation album, with the first two singles being "Mercy" and "New God Flow". The reparative hook of "Clique," refers to Big Sean's label mates and could be considered an attack at other hip-hop groups such as Young Money. The beat, which was produced by Hit-Boy, is kept relatively simple. Of course, the hook includes choir samples which have become a notable style of Kanye's. Lyrically each artist on this song raps about the same thing, inserting punches about their group when and where they are necessary. Kanye

implies that God Himself is down with the group when he says "But I been talking to God for so long. And if you look at my life I guess he's talking back. F-ing with my clique"

"New God Flow" begins with a great piano sequence and an adequate sample from "Mighty Healthy" by Ghostface Killah for the hook. The song features Pusha-T and Kanye West, however Pusha-T is the main structure for lyrical quality.

"Sin City" should have been the opening track to the compilation album. The demonic themed song examines the fame and limelight of the Hollywood society. The song features John Legend, Teyana Taylor, CyHi The Prynce, Malik Yusef, and Travi\$ Scott. Malik Yusef's verse "You are all unwelcome to Sin City," is a treatment to the famous slogan "Welcome to Fabulous Las Vegas Nevada," which adds a thrill to the song making Sin City one of the more complex songs of the album.

The only other full track that truly delivers on the album is "Higher." With a main feature from The Dream, the song has a playful repetitive melody that doesn't interfere with hook. The drawback to this song is the verse from long lost rapper Ma\$e. His verse is out of place, plain and simple.

The tracks "Creepers," "The One," and "Bliss," however are completely different genres of music than the overall theme of the album. Although each of the songs are prominent, they sound out of place.

The bottom line about Cruel Summer is that it does not measure up to previous work of head honcho Kanye West. There are a couple of impressive new songs. But ultimately the cruel summer was not that brutal.