

CupcakKe: Ephorize

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CupcakKe might have amassed her rabid following of “slurpers” through the internet, but as a rapper she’s something old-fashioned: a free-associative poet who talks about her pussy with such writerly relish it might just inspire some kid to pick up a pen and start scribbling. What’s more, she’s got the same bullhorn conviction that made Chuck D so bracing back in the day. In the Bing Crosby age of rap dynamics, CupcakKe is *loud*; she has a way of saying things so they stay said. This means her best lines hit that much harder and her worst lines are mostly redeemed through the force of her intent.



Her sex raps are gleefully graphic, and on her third album, *Ephorize*, she keeps us waiting for them. After one dour piano ballad (“2 Minutes”) and one Nicktoons novelty banger (“Cartoons”), the first line of “Duck Duck Goose” is spit-take-worthy: “*Thought I came but I peed on the dick.*” She saves her best writing for these songs. When she raps “*My bootyhole look like a zero,*” we can laugh at how weird the simile is, but what makes it work is that it actually lets us visualize said orifice.

Her “real” songs aren’t quite as well-written, perhaps because she’s aware they’re not the reason most people come to her records: “*Most people already skipped this song because it ain’t about sex and killing,*” she laments on “Self Interview.” She rarely musters up an insight more profound than “*double standards need to end,*” but she says it with such force it’s almost as if she’s trying to coax a change through the sheer physical power of her voice.

No amount of conviction, though, can redeem “Crayons,” a tribute to her LGBT fanbase that reduces the queer community to a brace of infantilizing Prop 8-era clichés about rainbows and pink hairdos. The hook rings through with shout-along force—“*Like who the fuck you like/ Fuck the world*”—but the song’s message seems to be that queer folks, including “transgenders,” will help you enjoy life more by serving candy with cocktails.

She’s obviously not trying to offend anyone, but some issues are too complex to be summed up in the kind of broad brushstrokes CupcakKe prefers, and most likely her (many) queer fans will bump any of the other enviable bangers here instead: “Exit,” a pissed-off kiss-off with a deliciously Auto-Tuned hook, or “Duck Duck Goose,” a surprisingly pretty track that introduces a creative new way to make cake batter.

The song that comes through with the most inspirational power is one that doesn't really seem to try: "Post Pic," an ode to a form of self-love that's often dismissed as simple vanity—the selfie. After hearing her open up about her body insecurities on "Self Interview," it's not hard to make the connection at the core of selfies' appeal: in a world choked with unattainable beauty standards, sometimes you just need to tell yourself you're cute. It's inspiring to hear someone shout hard truth, but subtlety can hit harder.

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