Hip Hop Family Tree Book 1: 1970s-1981 (Hip Hop Family Tree)

By Ed Piskor

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This encyclopedic comics history of the formative years of hip hop captures the vivid personalities and magnetic performances of old-school pioneers and early stars like DJ Kool Herc, Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, plus the charismatic players behind the scenes like Russell Simmons; Debbie Harry, Keith Haring and other luminaries make cameos.

The lore of the early days of hip hop has become the stuff of myth, so what better way to document this fascinating, epic true story than in another great American mythological medium ? the comic book? From exciting young talent and self-proclaimed hip hop nerd Ed Piskor, acclaimed for his hacker graphic novel *Wizzywig*, comes this explosively entertaining, encyclopedic history of the formative years of the music genre that changed global culture. Originally serialized on the hugely popular website Boing Boing, *The Hip Hop Family Tree* is now collected in a single volume cleverly presented and packaged in a style mimicking the Marvel comics of the same era. Piskor's exuberant yet controlled cartooning takes you from the parks and rec rooms of the South Bronx to the night clubs, recording studios, and radio stations where the scene started to boom, capturing the flavor of late-1970s New York City in panels bursting with obsessively authentic detail. With a painstaking, vigorous and engaging Ken Burns meets- Stan Lee approach, the battles and rivalries, the technical innovations, the triumphs and failures are all thoroughly researched and lovingly depicted. plus the charismatic players behind the scenes like Russell Simmons, Sylvia Robinson and then-punker Rick Rubin. Piskor also traces graffiti master Fab 5 Freddy's rise in the art world, and Debbie Harry, Keith Haring, The Clash, and other luminaries make cameos as the music and culture begin to penetrate downtown Manhattan and the mainstream at large. Like the acclaimed hip hop documentaries *Style Wars* and *Scratch*, *The Hip Hop Family Tree* is an exciting and essential cultural chronicle and a must for hip hop fans, pop-culture addicts, and anyone who wants to know how it went down back in the day. Full color

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Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)
Hip-hop devotee Piskor was one of Harvey Pekar's last collaborators and here shows himself to be Pekar's true disciple as a chronicler of popular culture. In fact, he one-ups his famous partner-mentor—Pekar, an avid and knowledgeable fan of bebop, never scripted a whole book on his passion. Moreover, Piskor intends this book to be the first of several tracing the history of what is still, 40 years after its emergence, the most important stylistic development in pop music since rock 'n' roll. The large-format volume is strictly a chronicle, presenting the major figures in hip-hop as they appear and make their impressions on the music. It's full of names while barren of explanation, description, analysis, and even, oddly enough, dates (though for fans of hip-hop, that likely won't be a deterrent). Piskor's artwork seems equally indebted to the looks of golden-age DC superhero comics and Pekar's greatest collaborator, R. Crumb. Besides the bibliography, discography, and index expected of a pop-music-history reference work, Piskor provides an appendix-in-comics on his personal understanding of "The Hip Hop/Comic Book Connection." --Ray Olson

Review
"Captures the personalities, imagery and milestones with a hilarity and efficiency that no other medium could." (Billboard)

"**Gripping**." (NPR)

"When cartoonist Ed Piskor decided to unspool the labyrinth history of one of America's greatest artistic accomplishments, he spared no effort to immerse his readers in the era of jump suits and scarred vinyl. Everything in *Hip Hop Family Tree* screams nostalgia: the Ben-Day dots, the sepia discoloration…even the print feels course and pulpy, like a priceless cultural artifact unearthed in a garage sale or your dad's basement. Flipping through the oversized pages, you can almost hear the slap bass, horn swells, and ricocheting rhymes of hip-hop's inaugural years." (Sean Edgar - Paste)

"**Action-packed**, fun and funny." (Seattle Times)

"An avid lover of hip-hop music and superhero comic books from a young age, Ed Piskor has combined his two passions to create a **remarkable** reading experience ... *Hip Hop Family Tree* imagines real-world events through the filter of 1980s Marvel Comics, bringing hip-hop visionaries to the page in a style that exaggerates their energy and style to capture the intensity of the music without having the beats." (The A.V. Club)

"One of the defining histories of hip hop… Ed created a portal into the beginning of hip hop, and just saying that a picture is worth a thousand words is a poor way of explaining why its impact is greater than that of a detailed book." (Daniel Genis - The Daily Beast)

"The amount of research and history Piskor packs into this book is **mind boggling**." (The Huffington Post)

"These stories are carefully researched and detailed along with **great** comic book style art..." (The Source)

"An astonishing feat of cultural archaeology, in both ambition and execution. The project somehow doesn't seem quite real: a comic-book history of hip-hop going back to the very beginning ? the late 70s ? where lore

is thick and documentation scarce. To tell this story in any language would be a challenge; to tell it in the language of comics feels like a magical summoning." (Lary Wallace - Vice)

"This is **the comic of all time**." (Biz Markie)

"He's not just doin' a comic book, he's doin' a piece of history." (Darryl "DMC" McDaniels)

"**Ed Piskor is the sh#t!!**" (De La Soul)

"Being in an Ed Piskor comic is **cool enough to freeze hot water**." (Fab Five Freddy)

"A superhero-riffing, world-building, toe-tapping, beat-hitting story of a whole lot of people, some brilliant, some lucky, some crazy, and some all of the above." (Alex di Campi - 12th Dimension)

"These are dookie-gold-chain d-o-p-e." (Darcy MacDonald - CultMTL)

"Even if you are not a fan of hip hop or rap *per se*, one cannot deny its pervasive influence on the world at large. If nothing else, this first volume, covering the years 1975 through 1981, demonstrates the nonstop merging of style and culture that is part and particle of the American experience." (Gregg Reese - Our Weekly)

"Extraordinary effort. Even if you are not a hip-hop fan, you need to read this." (Jatin Varma - The Economic Times)

"[A] rapid-fire telling of the early days of rap and hip hop culture… There's a lot to learn even if you think you've heard it all." (Gene Ambaum - Unshelved)

About the Author
Ed Piskor (1982) is an alternative cartoonist living and drawing out of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He is a former student of the Kubert School and is best known for his artistic collaboration with underground comics pioneers Harvey Pekar, his graphic novel Wizzywig, and his blockbuster series Hip Hop Family Tree. Piskor is revered for his combination of golden age drawing style and smart storytelling. The Washington Post once said that "Piskor is able to render a world that resonates as truth." Currently, he is knee deep in drawing the next book in the Hip Hop Family Tree five-volume series.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

William Boehme:

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