

***Hunter: For the Record* : Documentary Review**

Hunter for the Record tells the story of the life of rapper Robert Hunter aka MC Hunter (1975-2011). It is a comprehensive look at Hunter's life and times with reference to his music, live shows and interviews interspersed with comments from friends and family.

MC Hunter is an important figure in the history of Australian Hip Hop. As a pioneering figure who first started to rap in 1994, mostly by participating in public freestyle battle rap competitions. Initially taking elements from American gangster rap and B Boy culture before his music became more authentic – to rap in a more authentic manner – In his colloquial language about his own experiences.



He is remembered as a tireless advocate of Australian music, in the creation of his numerous albums in collaboration with the West Australian musical collective Syllabolix – SBX.

This crowd funded Documentary shows his full life and times, starting from boyhood, his later dependence on drugs and alcohol, becoming a father, the relationship with his ex, his diagnosis with cancer and his struggle with his own mortality – the documentary shows his changing into a different man.

Some of the footage from the documentary comes from Hunter's

personal video camera, initially capturing his drunken, drug fuelled early life where his sole concern was 'to have a good time'. Against footage from a later period after his diagnosis with cancer where he is seen to settle down.

Around this time he was quoted to say "Cancer is the best thing that happened to me", it was only in remission that he realised some of his past follies and the great amount of time he had wasted.

He sought to repair his relationship with his son Marley and ex Laura. He also came back to making music with a renewed sense of urgency and vigour. His music was seen to contain more messages as he thought about what he could pass on and what was to be his legacy.

Consider this – During the early 2000s, he produced two albums *Done DL* in 2002 and *Going back to Yokine* in 2006, counterposed to his later years he would go on to produce 3 albums within as many years, along with a number of other smaller projects and collaborations – *Monster House* in 2010, *Fear and Loathing* in 2011, and *Bring It All Back* – released posthumously in 2013. Also producing a compilation rap album – Australian Hip Hop supports CanTeen in 2011 – which raised over \$100 000 for this charity which provides support for young people with Cancer. A very noble act of philanthropy.

Under the weight of events, Hunter moved from making fairly offensive rap with a raw style – for which he is most well known for with songs like [I'm a Cunt](#) to making more introspective, thoughtful rap music such as [You and Me](#). These two songs can form the basis of a quick example of the stark contrast of Hunter's voice and thought from his earlier lyricism to his later music.

The documentary shows him as a dynamic, complex figure who dramatically changed after his diagnosis with cancer. By simply recognising his youthful excesses he can hardly be compared to who he once was, in his twilight years he gave up the party lifestyle and wanted little more than to spend time with his son.



Hunter fought a long and hard battle with Cancer, living life to the full in writing, recording and performing his music despite his immense physical deterioration up to his passing. At the time of his death he was only 36 years old.

A limitation of the documentary is that it does not include any information or discussion about his last album produced posthumously – *Bring It All Back*. Perhaps the explanation is that the film was released a year prior to that of the final album – but in any case the documentary centred largely around Hunter's final years is incomplete without it, *Bring It All Back* contained much that was to be his last testament so to speak.

Despite this minor shortfall, Hunter for the record is a fair attempt to portray the life and times of this influential Australian rapper. One of the more interesting documentaries in showing him not as a static and fixed personality, but a figure who was able to dramatically change as he sought to best respond and live differently under an illness with very serious and grave implications.

Hunter is a genre defining figure in the canon of Australian rap and hip hop, for that he will continue to exercise a positive lasting influence.

Hunter for the Record

Director: Sam Bohdi Field

Distributor: Periscope Pictures

2012

90 mins