Kanye West makes it to graduation day

With his education finally coming to a close, will his degree be worth anything in the marketplace?

In a genre that is often defined by one-dimensional posers and cookie-cutter singles, Kanye West has always been a refreshing breath of uncontaminated air. Sure, Mr. West has an ego that rivals, if not surpasses, that of any other musician this side of Bono, but the Chi-town don is no different than any other musician. It is human to fall back on his socially conscious rhymes and musical style of music promotes a chillin', relaxing vibe, as opposed to having good taste. Rather than merely pushing the boundaries of what music has always sounded as if it might have been a drum-enhanced 70's style soul-groove, Kanye often seems as though he is demonstrating that growth is inevitable. The song finds Kanye seamlessly rapping about the complications of romance over a drum-enhanced 70's style soul-groove. If the incredibly inventive "Stronger", which features a super-sized Daft Punk snippet, had scared off any of Mr. West's longtime fans, then "I Wonder" should assure them that the reigning king of hip-hop soul remains upon his throne. But by not limiting himself to one certain sound, Kanye West has thrust open the doors of opportunity, and may be redefining how the world views hip-hop in the process. "I Wonder" is a classic West track, as it samples Laib Shtait’s "My Life" and it's grown stronger.

In the last three years, Bedouin has played at Laurier three times to very enthusiastic crowds (even bat- ting frostbite at the ice-cold event Polar Jam last year). "Laurier's always had really good atmosphere and spirit, and therefore always one of the best producers in music, his talents as an M.C. often leave one wanting more. The master of one-liners, such as the brilliant quip in "Flashlight", "She don't believe in shooting stars/she only believes in shoes and cars/wood floors in a new apartment/const - ture from the store's department", Kanye often seems as though he isstill stumbling to stretch a word to fit his rhyme scheme. On the far too slow and underdeveloped "Barry Bonds" this blemish becomes apparent as the line "I done played the under - dog my whole career/I been a very good sport, haven't I this year?" sounds forced and unnecessary. Despite his tendency to try too hard when reaching for a clever line or pun, West has always been able to fallback on his socially conscious and often self-effacing subject mat - ter. In the past he has seemed un- certain of himself and, ironically, a little self-conscious. This human - izing tendency has helped set him maximizes them, offering a com - plex sonic landscape. If Graduation falters, and it most certainly does, it's in Kanye's lyrical ability. While Mr. West is undeni ably one of the best producers in music in general won't sound far - away from the store's department; Kanye often seems as though he is still stumbling to stretch a word to fit his rhyme scheme. On the far too slow and underdeveloped "Barry Bonds" this blemish becomes apparent as the line "I done played the under - dog my whole career/I been a very good sport, haven't I this year?" sounds forced and unnecessary. Despite his tendency to try too hard when reaching for a clever line or pun, West has always been able to fallback on his socially conscious and often self-effacing subject matter. In the past he has seemed uncertain of himself and, ironically, a little self-conscious. This humanizing tendency has helped set him ap from most of the other main stream rappers that have emerged in the 21st century, but on Gradua - tion this trait becomes almost non - existant. Perhaps Kanye West has adjusted to his newfound celebrity status and has let his ego run am - unt. However, the DJ Premier ached "Everything I am" and album closing. "Big Brother" that Kanye's insecurity has not dis - appeared completely.

It is "Big Brother", which chroni - cles West's often rocky relationship with Def Jam and Roc-a-Fella Re - cords President and C.E.O. Jay-Z, that allows West's lyrical and nar - rative abilities to shine through. On this track West makes himself completely open, and therefore extremely vulnerable, helping to add another level of appeal to an already impressive persona. As an artist and creative force Kanye West has few competitive peers in the hip-hop landscape, and with a few more progressive albums like Graduation his hyperbolic state - ments about being the best thing in music in general won't sound far - fetched at all.