
Kidulthood To Adulthood

Contributed by Nino
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"You can go from Kidulthood to Adulthood / Now I must act like an adult would / React like an adult should" - Bashy's words, yet again laying down the truth as he talks about the common mindset that comes with the final stages of adolescence. Two years ago the critically acclaimed "Kidulthood" came as the first real representation of the 21st century British youth lifestyle.

Kidulthood was raw, gritty and disturbingly honest. From the less than Catholic attitudes towards sex to the unavoidable presence and influence of drugs, the film did not pause for a moment in its illustrations of street violence and a general disregard for morals or empathy.

What made Kidulthood such a believable and therefore effective work of art, was that many individuals involved on both sides of the camera were only too familiar with the lifestyle being presented on our screens. And now, as they reach "Adulthood" we're invited to join the crew, plus some exciting new additions in the sequel... Written yet again by Noel Clarke, this time he not only acts in the film as we saw him as "Sam" in Kidulthood, he's playing the role of director as well. Clarke's life in London means he can create a pure representation that is easy for many to relate to.

Joining Noel's character for the sequel are the two close friends of Sam's main victim of Kidulthood, Trife. The righteous Moony, played by actor, grime artist and law student Femi Oyeniran. And the entertainingly abrasive Jay, played by actor and radio DJ, Adam Deacon. In Adulthood, Deacon takes the opportunity to display an excessively angry and revengeful attitude, as Sam emerges after his six year prison sentence. He was also seen playing the misunderstood youth in Plan B and Killa Kela's video to "Bizzness Woman". Plan B aka Ben Drew now joins Deacon in this heavily anticipated sequel. And he seems like the most natural casting ever, with his controversial story-telling style lyrics illustrate a lifestyle not dissimilar to those seen in the films.

Madeliene Fairly as Claire, Sam's ex girlfriend, Red Madrell as the single mother of the dead Trife's daughter, and Cornell S. John as Uncle Curtis; all return to play their more than convincing roles seen in the original. They're all in a different place in their lives, allowing us to see many new sides to characters we are familiar with. We are also introduced to an exciting range of new faces, all with truly impressive back catalogues that prove Adulthood's claim to talented and focussed intellect. It's obvious the makers are more serious about their purpose than ever. These new actors include the young Jacob Anderson, Don Klass, Arnold Ocenly, Nathan Constance, Will Johnson and Danny Dyer.

Of course, as ever, the music is a huge part of the film too. And who other than saviour and inspirationalist of the moment - Bashy to provide the title track - "Kidulthood To Adulthood" and act as assistant music supervisor for the entire film. Finally, just as we no longer have force ourselves to attempt to relate to Scarface and Reservoir Dogs on the film front. We can also feel more in our own ground listening to Bashy's lyrics than mainstream US artists.

Yeh, good music is good music. But when you want music you can truly relate to, contemplate to and really take something away from, something that allows you to look at your own lifestyle from both sides of the fence is truly a step forward for British culture. Because if you're not from the Bronx, you can appreciate the art, but your confidence in really understanding it all only goes so far. The lyrics don't hit as hard and the ideas don't stick as fast. Bashy's lyrics don't just make you think, they make you want to act.

Kidulthood to Adulthood is a fantastic breakdown of the most appreciated style on the street currently. The dramatic gothic style violins provide the theatrical edge. While the triple bass drums, rapid hi-hat flows and mercilessly high tuned snare drums give it an undeniably grime foundation. The electronic bassline is the freeze on the freestyle, building the apprehension suited to the trailers.

The lyrics aren't just the lime in the vodka; they're in an aptly placed jug of their own. Bashy drops lines covering emotions and attitudes which reflect the plot and directly refer to character personalities and situations without coming across as too scripted or generic. "I gotta break the cycle, cos if I go pen or end up dead then its my fault". His words are made functional by their lack of fiction. Because, as always, Bashy is laying down the truth. As he describes himself - consistently "A street, social, commentator. I talk about LIFE. I talk about what's going on, things that people can relate to". Exactly the intentions of the film itself.

Many people fail to recognise the fact that Bashy actually was an educated actor before an MC, having recently played the lead role in sellout play 'Mind Blowing Decisions' at Hackney Empire. His knowledge of drama proves a vital component of his work on the Adulthood soundtrack. Following this he will be streaming out more good to his loyal supporters including a Black Boy Special Edition DVD with all the remix vids, behind the scenes footage and more. And this summer his album 'Catch Me If You Can' will find its way from the shelves to our stereos in mere minutes.

You can catch Bashy spitting live at 'Culture Of Resistance', as part of this years Marxism festival. The festival itself is something supporters of Bashy's philosophies would hold benefit from, featuring a diverse range of debate and performances covering everything that's worth discussing. To give you a taste, these include debates on Gun and Knife Crime, The Struggle for Black Liberation, Women's Liberation, Islamaphobia, The Olympics and Public Sector work. Plus a play exploring attitudes and responses to homosexuality in hip hop... the festival begins on 3rd July in Central London, and the Culture of Resistance gig will close it off on 7th July. (For more info visit www.marxismfestival.co.uk or call 02078191190).

Back to Adulthood... Although in the recent months the anticipation has been incredible. The emergence of the sequel came as a surprise to many of us. Indeed, the crew have broken yet another boundary by making a sequel to a British street film, when these are usually reserved for Hollywood thrillers. Who, lets be honest, shouldn't haven't bothered making half of the meaningless money wasting films they create in the first place, never mind the predictable sequels.

In the case of both Kidulthood and Adulthood however, there's really no room for criticism and I don't doubt souls all over will go by any means to catch this as soon as its released. No illegalities please. But feel free to rip off Hollywood as much as you like with pirates. (That by the way is my personal view, not one expressed by britishhiphop.co.uk who do not condone any such thing. No how.)

It wasn't actually an intention in mind when Kidulthood was made and came as a result of Red Madrell responding teasingly to a few West London teenagers asking what had happened to Trife, to which she replied 'You'll have to wait and find out in the sequel'. Damian Jones and George Isaac step up yet again for the production, as does Brian Tufano BSC (whose other work includes Trainspotting and Billy Elliot) taking the role of Director of Photography.

If it hasn't already become obvious to you - this is not some half hearted attempt at drama and honesty. It doesn't seem possible for Adulthood to disappoint. And you won't just be getting a film to fill the screen for a bit. Adulthood promises to be one of the most influential works of art you will witness. Whether you're still in Kidulthood, approaching Adulthood, or you already like to think you're there. Back to Bashy's words - 'You can be black, asain, white', and you'll get this, you'll still feel this. And it's a feeling that will last.

Adulthood hits screen 20th June 08.

Kidulthood To Adulthood is available for download 30th June 08.

By Nino

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