



FOE Is that an intentional scar on your shoulder?

MPM Yes. It's a brand.

FOE Who did it and how. What does it stand for?

MPM A friend of mine did it. He made a branding iron of a Phi and burned it into my shoulder. The brand is a reminder of what blacks have gone through in terms of slavery and just being second class citizens in this Country. It's just a reminder that we haven't made it yet. A painful reminder. A lot of people get them because they think they look really cool.

FOE On your album, your music and lyrics are very positive. Does that come from a religious background?

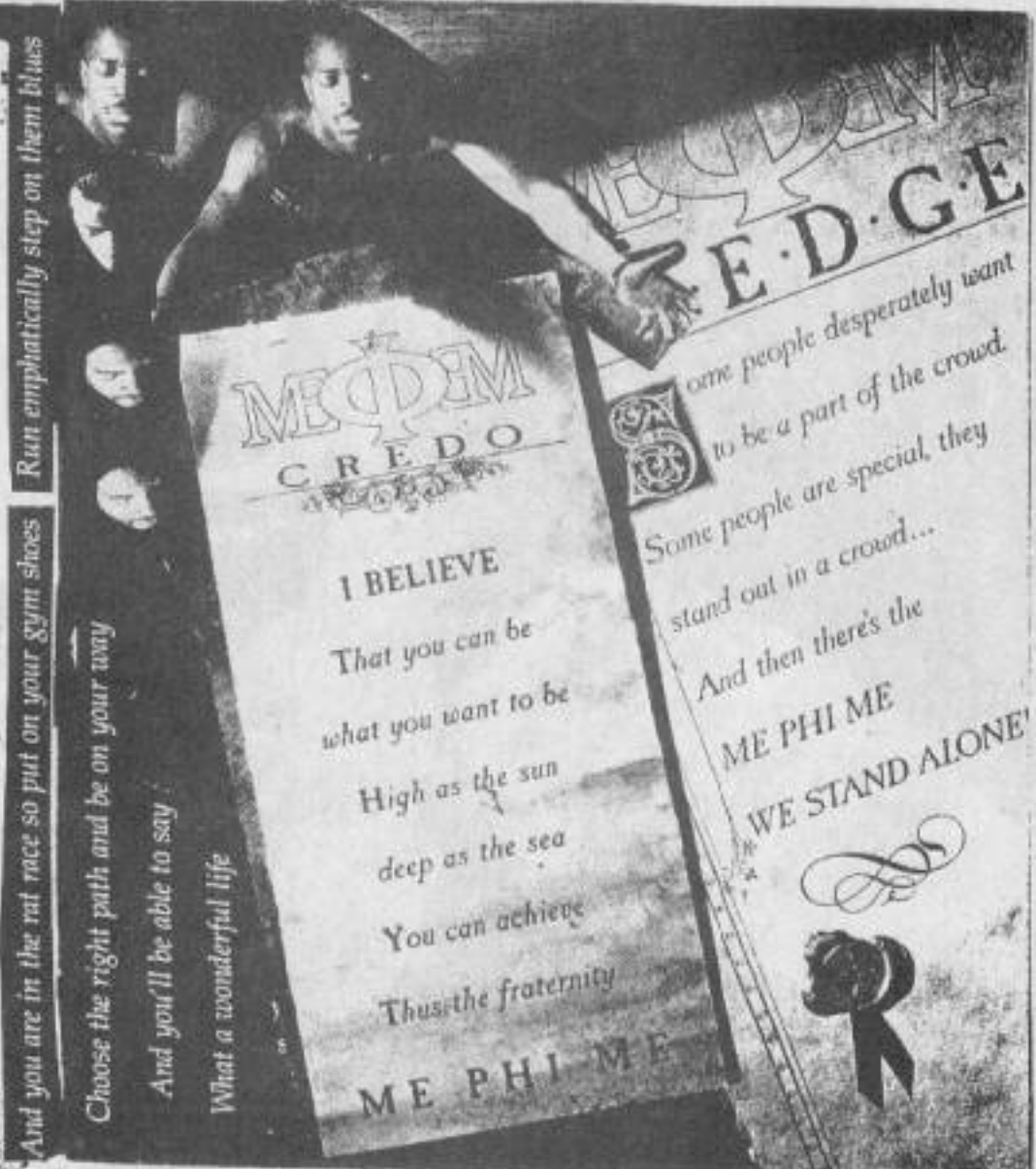
MPM I grew up in a black Baptist church and I am one of these guys, and although my base will be my base, which is Christianity, Baptist, I get upset a lot at religions, just because a lot of it is so man made, and I think sometimes you miss out on the spirituality because you are so busy trying to follow this doctrine or that doctrine. I read my Bible, I love my Bible, I love my God... Not only that but I'm on the road right now with the Disposable Heroes and Arrested Development and being on the road makes it really difficult to pledge an allegiance to any religion. I think that sometimes the behavior is an insult to that religion that you pledge to, but I make it a point right now not to pledge to any religion. Because I don't always behave properly.

FOE The reason I ask that question was because a lot of the religions out there preach that you are not to look to yourself for your power but to a god for your power, and what I get from your lyrics is that you get your power through yourself, your self esteem.

MPM I do. I believe that my outlook and a lot of my self power has been given to me by God. Where a lot of people will pray to God saying "Please God have someone help me", I feel that if you're going to pray, pray to God saying "Help me to help myself". Let me have the strength to make it through whatever it is I need to make it through. It's kind of like asking people to carry you and not knowing how well your own legs work.

FOE I think your disc is very uplifting. At the time when I was reviewing it last issue, I was depressed and it brightened up my day. A lot of your lyrics deal with being positive, but how do you handle it when you are in a depressed state. Or doesn't Me Phi Me get depressed?

MPM That's a good question. I don't think I really get depressed any more. We all have our bad times. But, it's kind of like what Jesse Jackson says, keep hope alive. I'm always hopeful that things will work out. For me to lose hope about things working out, somebody has to show me the end of the line that hey, things just won't work out. And it hasn't been shown to me, and I have found that in 99.99% of the cases, as long as I keep my head up and stay positive about what may happen, irregardless of how bad things are, something positive will come out of it.



Sometimes its just a matter of patience. Like there was a tour I was supposed to do, before, that was cancelled because the lead singer of the other group got sick and I could've gotten upset, but kept my head up and was patient and this tour came along. And this is actually a much better tour and if I had been on the other tour I wouldn't have been on this tour. This tour has a lot more power and positivity to it and more of a kinship to what I'm about. I think that if you take some knocks, you have to try and keep your head up, and we all have our ways of doing that. Hopefully you can stay positive about the war and not concentrate so much on every little battle, and let the battle defeat you.

FOE Was there a point in time when you accepted this attitude, was it a conscious decision or was it always with you?

MPM I think I've always been an upbeat person. I'm sure I did change, but it was such a long time ago that I can't... this has just been me for a long time. And growing up in Flint Mich. I not only experienced it myself but I was able to see depression up close. People that I knew and love, I got to see some of them pull out of it. I guess its kind of a side study of mine, depression and how to defeat it. Its always come back to an inner strength and often times the source of the depression was low self esteem, or someone was searching for themselves, someone was not comfortable with where they were in their lives or what they're lives had amounted to, and so it always came back to self, and that all helped to define what I now call Me Phi Me.