

00:00:00	Oliver Wang	Promo	Hey, heat rockers. Before we get started today, we just want to remind you that it is the Max Fun Drive right now, which is the one time a year that we ask you, our beloved audience, to help support our show.
00:00:13	Morgan Rhodes	Promo	We're really grateful that because of Max members, we can keep doing this show during this time. And that's why we're doing a drive right now to remind you that you're the reason we can make this content for you to enjoy. Max Fun is audience supported, which means we are free to make the content you enjoy, because people like you contribute.
00:00:30	Oliver	Promo	Choose the monthly amount that's most comfortable for you. And we realize that this is challenging financial times for a lot of households. We wanna make things as flexible as possible. The majority of people just give five to ten dollars a month. Some are able to upgrade to 20, 35, even \$100 or more. It's really about what works for you.
00:00:53	Morgan	Promo	Just go to MaximumFun.org/join and become a member. Alright, now on with the show!
00:00:59	Music	Transition	"Crown Ones" off the album <i>Stepfather</i> by People Under the Stairs.
00:01:05	Oliver	Host	<i>[Music continues under the dialogue, then fades out.]</i> Hello! I'm Oliver Wang.
00:01:08	Morgan	Host	And I'm Morgan Rhodes. You're listening to <i>Heat Rocks</i> .
00:01:10	Oliver	Host	Every episode, we invite a guest to join us to talk about a heat rock. You know, an album hot enough to create chonky fire, whatever that is.
			<i>[Morgan laughs.]</i>
00:01:26	Music	Music	Today, we are gonna be heading back to Atlanta's Eastpoint to revisit the 1998 album by Outkast, <i>Aquemini</i> . "Rosa Parks" from the album <i>Aquemini</i> by Outkast.
			<i>Ah ha, hush that fuss Everybody move to the back of the bus Do you wanna bump and slump with us? We the type of people make the club get crunk Ah ha, hush that fuss Everybody move to the back of the bus</i>
00:01:41	Oliver	Host	<i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i> A debut album is exciting because it introduces something new. Sophomore albums help fuel narratives about growth or reinvention. But when's the last time you got into a deep conversation about perfect third albums? Here are some of the gems that would await that discussion: <i>Midnight Marauders</i> , <i>Homogenic</i> , <i>London Calling</i> , <i>Born to Run</i> , and today's album, <i>Aquemini</i> . <i>Southernplaylisticcadillacmuzik</i> shifted the gravitational center of hip-hop down south. <i>ATLiens</i> saw Big Boi and André 3000 taking leaps forward as both MCs and producers. <i>Aquemini</i> , for many fans, was the capstone: a nearly 75-minute tour de force of musical, cultural, and lyrical stylings that is arguably—and we will get into this argument—the finest LP of their career, which is saying a lot since I haven't even mentioned <i>Stankonia</i> or <i>Speakerboxxx/The</i>

Love Below yet. And the less said about the *Idlewild* soundtrack, probably the better.

Produced by Outkast, Mr. DJ, and Organized Noise and named after the two rapper's zodiac signs, *Aquemini* was—to put it in Big Boi's words, quote, "Two different visions that were parallel." Unquote. On the one side, you had André's time traveling rhyme javelin, balanced by Big Boi's penchant for making straight music, quote, "strictly for the catty lovers". Unquote. We're gonna get into all of this and more on today's *Heat Rocks* episode, bringing our combined and—let's see if I can get this down right the first time—Aqua-leo-corn hive mind, today.

00:03:14	Music	Music	<p>[Christian cackles brightly in the background. Morgan "heeeeey"s.] "SpottieOttieDopaliscious" from the album <i>Aquemini</i> by Outkast.</p> <p>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</p>
00:03:31	Morgan	Host	<p><i>Aquemini</i> was the album pick of our guest today, Professor Regina Bradley. I've got a soft spot for professors. That's my mama's fault. She is a retired, tenured professor that made me love lesson plans and syllabi, required reading, and tests. Teachers' kids are like preachers' kids minus the moral dilemmas. We love to learn, and we love our environments of origin, so I love school. Always remembering specific professors. Rose München, Galen Chappelle. And whoever that teacher was that let the class modernize <i>The Canterbury Tales</i> based on whatever we wanted, and homeboy picked crisp sets.</p> <p>At the time, I thought that was as cool as it could get, but it isn't. What's cooler than a class on Outkast called <i>The Rise of the Hip-Hop South</i> with a focus on <i>Stankonia</i>? Not much. She's the cohost of the podcast <i>Bottom of the Map</i>. She digs deep into southern hip-hop. She's got trap, 808s, funk, she's got all that covered. She's a professor of English and interdisciplinary studies at Kennesaw State University. Her Twitter handle is Zora Neale Thurston. What's cooler than that? Not much.</p>
00:04:39	Regina Bradley	Guest	<p>Regina Bradley, welcome to <i>Heat Rocks</i>. How you doing? How y'all doing?</p>
00:04:41	Morgan	Host	<p>Goood!</p>
00:04:42	Regina	Guest	<p>I need to take some lessons from your mom. I still don't like syllabus planning or exam prep. [Laughs.] None of that stuff!</p>
00:04:48	Oliver	Host	<p>I am with you, 1000%.</p>
00:04:51	Morgan	Host	<p>So, I have to ask as we do at the beginning of the show, what was your introduction to Outkast and what was your introduction to <i>Aquemini</i>?</p>
00:04:59	Regina	Guest	<p>So, what had happened was—</p> <p>[They laugh.]</p>
00:05:12	Clip	Clip	<p>Um, first immediate recognition of Outkast was definitely the Player's Ball episode of <i>Martin</i>. I was like, "Oh! Okay!" [The audience cheers and applauds.]</p>

Speaker: This! This party is not oveeeeer! Let's put our hands together one more tiime for Outkast!

[Screams and applause.]

Music: "Player's Ball" by Outkast.

*All the players came from far and wide
Wearin' afros and braids, kickin' them gangsta rides
Now I'm here to tell you there's a better day*

00:05:34 Regina Guest I didn't become Outkasted, as I used to say with folks on *Outkasted Conversations*, until right before my freshman year in high school, in 1998. So, I was at band camp, trying to make it work. You know, that awkward, incoming freshman, didn't really have no friends. Had those strict parents. My grandma was like, "Yooo! Don't leave the school to like go to McDonalds." 'Cause it's like right up the street. But I didn't wanna risk it so young.

[They laugh.]

00:06:01 Morgan Host Smart.
00:06:02 Regina Guest Yeah, so I was just kind of just sitting there. And all of the sudden, I heard folks like start playing *[sings a few bars of "SpottieOttieDopaliscious".]*

00:06:09 Music Music I'm like, oh! Alright!
"SpottieOttieDopaliscious" from the album *Aquemini* by Outkast.

*Damn, damn, damn, James
Damn, damn, damn, James*

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]

00:06:22 Oliver Host Morgan, I'm assuming that by this point in time, by '98, you had already come back to LA from Atlanta. But had you been following Outkast throughout this? And what were your impressions of *Aquemini* when you first heard it?

00:06:33 Morgan Host Oh yeah. Yeah. I was at Clark when *Southernplayistic* came out. My homegirl was cool with Rico, so we had our copy early. We just thought we were so just cool 'cause we had it early. We were like, "Yo, we've got this on deck." And so, I journeyed with them. And in 1998, when this came out—if I'm honest here, I was moving away a little bit from hip-hop. I thought I had already sort of gone through the golden years. And I was moving a little bit heavier into dance music and all the subgenres of dance. But I was holding out hope. And then I got hit with the one-two punch which was *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill* and this one.

I wanna—there are gonna be random shoutouts throughout this episode, but I wanna start with shouting out Circuit City, because that's where I picked up this album.

[Regina cackles.]

On CD. And I had some sort of Buick that year, and I bumped that thing. And as I like to say, it was love at first listen, from "Hold On, Be Strong," I was like, "Oh. Here we go."

00:07:41	Music	Music	<p>“Hold On, Be Strong” from the album <i>Aquemini</i> by Outkast.</p> <p><i>Hold on, be strong</i> <i>Hold on...</i></p> <p><i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i></p>
00:07:58	Oliver	Host	<p>I just wanna get this part of the discussion out of the way now—and Regina, you mentioned that this was more or less your introduction to Outkast, at least in terms of full album. Their catalogue is, of course, really impressive. And I think a lot of us wish it was longer than it is, but it’s still pretty generous.</p> <p><i>[Regina agrees.]</i></p>
00:08:17	Regina	Guest	<p>To you, is <i>Aquemini</i> their best album?</p> <p>Maaan! To be honest with you, I have a love affair. I cheat between <i>Aquemini</i> and <i>ATLiens</i>. <i>[Laughs.]</i> So, today I’d be like, “Yeah, <i>Aquemini</i> is their perfect album.” Today. And I think more so because it was such a perfect blend of their influences and where they wanted to take their music. You know what I’m saying? You know, something like <i>ATLiens</i> was—for me, it was like a direct response to being rejected at The Source Awards. It was more fuel than anything.</p> <p>And then, with <i>Aquemini</i>, folks already know who they are. Folks—you know—kind of perk their ears up a little bit more. And then you have this five-mic album in <i>The Source</i>. You know what I’m saying?</p> <p><i>[They agree.]</i></p> <p>Even <i>The Source</i> was like, “Yo! This is five mics.” Which is interesting, though! Because like Charlie Braxton, who wrote that review, has told me on many occasions he was like, “I had to fight to get them the five mics.” <i>The Source</i> was—but like, you know, if you talk to folks like, you know, Karen Mayo and them and folks who worked like at <i>Source</i>, you know what I’m saying, they were like, “Yo, we tried not to give out the five mics, but you know.” I was like—it was a little biased there, regional bias. Yeah, a little bit. I mean, come on. <i>[Laughs.]</i></p>
00:09:24	Morgan	Host	A little bit!
00:09:26	Regina	Guest	<p>You know, <i>Aquemini</i> was their—I mean, I don’t know if I could cuss or whatever, but this was their grown ass man album, for me. I feel like this was their we’re grown men who have been in the game for a minute who are still evolving as artists. This is what you can do and sound like, and that’s what you get with <i>Aquemini</i>.</p>
00:09:42	Music	Music	<p>“Slump” from the album <i>Aquemini</i> by Outkast.</p> <p><i>From front to back street, listen, we on a mission</i> <i>To get right, working street corner in the midnight</i> <i>Picture the scene, these fiends with five</i> <i>Ten-dollar dreams, scheme, for a sack of that, believe that</i> <i>I’m with whatever like Wheatstraw</i> <i>Stuck serving my cocaine raw</i> <i>Drop sixty-two off the brick</i></p>

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]

00:10:00 Oliver Host Morgan, I'm—Yeah, I'm gonna throw the same question at you.
00:10:02 Morgan Host I was about to—cold blooded! 'Cause I was about to put you in the hot seat! You know I gotta have several disclaimers.

[Regina cackles.]

00:10:11 Oliver Host Alright. Go in.
00:10:13 Morgan Host *Southernplaylistic* is always gonna be precious to me.

[Regina agrees.]

Okay? Because that's how I grew up on them. "Ain't No Thing", "Crumbly'n' Erb", "Hootie Hoo". Come ooooo! The hits!

[Oliver agrees.]

And it was like who are those cats? But I could make an argument for *ATLiens*, because of "Elevators" is a jam for me. That's a stone-cold jam. "Millennium". *Speakerboxxx/Love Below*, a myriad of hits. "Spread", "Valentine's Day". Come ooon! But why *Aquemini* to me is—at least for me—their best album is because, for me, I didn't skip anything. I didn't skip anything when I heard it the first time, and I didn't skip it last night in prep for the chat. And for me—and we can get into this later—there weren't these moments for me where I was like, "This is André's lane, and this is Big Boi's lane." It was more of a synthesis to me. They fell together, not just on tracks, but the way that—you know, the way that the album flowed.

So, for me—and I know we're gonna get—you know, we're gonna get some comments, but I just have to say. My disclaimer's that *Southernplaylistic*, precious. *Aquemini*, five mics.

00:11:28 Regina Guest I just feel like—me and my husband have this system in place when we talk about music. We're like if the first album was a classic, they don't even count in the conversation. 'Cause they already have secured themselves. [Laughs.]

[Morgan agrees.]

They already have secured—so, I'm just like, you know, folks get mad. Like, "What about *Southernplaylistic*!?" And I'm like it's wonderful. You know what I'm saying? I don't even put it in part of the conversation, because they're not just gonna come after you. You gave them my handle and everything! They're coming after me, now! Like, "What do you meeeean?!" [Laughs.]

00:11:55 Morgan Host I mean, right! 'Cause some people will argue you down about *Stankonia*. And I'm not gonna say *Stankonia*'s not fire, but I feel like I had more jams on this. I love "Bombs Over Bagdad". I love "Miss Jackson". I love "So Fresh and So Clean", but it's just—it's hard to describe, but there's just a feeling listening to *Aquemini*. There's just so many choices, sonically, emotionally for me. And it puts it to the top of the list. So.

Oliver.

00:12:25 Oliver Host I distinctly remember that when *Stankonia* came out, there was such a—just the cavalcade of critical love for it. I remember

distinctly that it ended up topping the *Pazz & Jop* Poll, which was the annual music critics poll that *Village Voice* would do. And it was not unusual in the grand scheme of things for a hip-hop album to reach number one, but it was the first hip-hop album since I think the Arrested Development album from '92 to have topped the *Pazz & Jop* poll. So, *Stankonia* was—at least in the circles I moved in—a really, really big deal, critically. And I just remember thinking back—and this would've been, again, circa—what?—2000 or so. I mean, *Stankonia*'s great! I get it!

[Morgan agrees.]

But I always thought *Aquemini* was still the better album. Though, I don't remember—'cause we're now talking something, you know, 20 years on. I don't remember what my thinking was. I just remember thinking, "Nah, I still think *Aquemini*'s better than *Stankonia* even though it hasn't garnered the same level of praise." But one of the things that I was just thinking about, especially listening to this album and thinking about the group's catalogue as a whole: you could make two different arguments, both of which speak to how incredible Outkast was.

Number one is that any one of their first five albums—so, starting with *Southernplaylistic* and going through to *Speakerboxxx/Love Below*, any one of those could be in the running for one of the best albums of the year, period. Right? Number two, you can make the argument that any single one of them could be the best album by the group itself. And I was trying to think of other acts—not just hip-hop, just any other musical acts in which the first five albums fulfilled both criteria. They could've been album of the year, and they could've been the best album that the group put out. And I'm coming up blank. I mean, no one that I can think of off the top is that consistent.

You know, in hip-hop, Tribe, De La—like, they don't have—they have like three albums, maybe four. They don't have five that are just flat-out classics. And I feel like Outkast—again, if we kind of leave, you know, *Idlewild* off the side—

[Regina bursts into laughter.]

00:14:31	Morgan	Host	They've never—they've never dropped anything flat.
00:14:32	Oliver	Host	[Chuckling.] Cold blooded! It's like the first four seasons of <i>The Wire</i> . Like, four of the best seasons of television ever and you just treat the fifth one like it never existed. That's how I treat <i>Idlewild</i> in this case. But my point here, though, is I think that's incredible. That level of consistency that Outkast brought across—what?—like over a ten-year span is remarkable.
00:14:51	Morgan	Host	The only thing I would add to that—and I totally support your point about it's hard to find, but for me as a Prince fan, I like his first five.
00:15:00	Oliver	Host	Okay, Prince is good.
00:15:01	Morgan	Host	I like his first five.
00:15:02	Oliver	Host	Sure. That's hard to kind of argue against. Except that I think a lot of people don't really fuck with his first album!

[Regina screams "WHAT?!" in the background.]

Like, Prince's first album's sort of like, "Oh, that's cool, he kind of gave them the game." But then it's really not until *Dirty Mind* I feel that people really started to pay attention to him.

00:15:16 Morgan Host

Sure. But if you go *Dirty Mind*, *Controversy*, *Purple Rain*, *Sign of the Times*, 1999, it's unmatched for me. That's hit after hit.

00:15:26 Oliver Host

Those are some good albums.

[They laugh.]

00:15:30 Morgan Host

But it's Prince, you know. He only had 30-something albums. So. But that would be the only contender. But I agree with your point, 100%.

00:15:37 Oliver Host

I wanna quickly add something, and I would love to hear Regina's thoughts on this, because we touched a little bit on—when we talked about *Southernplaylistic* with DJ Rashida on that episode, we discussed a little bit how Outkast, on that album, introduced people outside of the south and really outside of Georgia and Atlanta, I suppose, to a very particular kind of regional vernacular and dialect that previously you just had not heard much from—I think—a lot of nationally popular rap acts. And I was thinking about how I think the early wave of big rap hits out of the south didn't necessarily sound like they were out of the south. They were kind of location agnostic in a certain way, sonically, vernacularly.

But with Big Boi and André 3000, I mean, they leaned so hard into sounding like where they were from. And where they were from, someplace distinct. And Regina, I know you have described yourself in one of your internet handles as the red clay scholar, so I know that a sense of place is important to you. So, how does Outkast represent their locality through just the way they speak or rhyme?

00:16:44 Regina Guest

Okay, dissertation defense. Oh.

[They laugh.]

No, I love it. I'm from—I'm from Albany, Georgia, which is at the southwest corner of the state. Like, I went to Albany State, so we played Clark all the time. Um. *[Laughs.]* So, you know, HBCU stand up. I love it.

[Morgan agrees.]

But I think, when I listen—what's always fascinated me is to get people to say lyrics from Outkast from different parts of the state in different parts of the south. Because the emphasis on where you—you know, put the oomph on is different. You know what I'm saying? And I think that that's important, because one—you know, kind of like, Morgan, what you were saying earlier, that Atlanta isn't like a monolithic Atlanta. Like, there's no uniform Atlanta. I feel like they—putting Outkast in conversation with other folks from the dungeon, like Goodie Mob for example, gives you that vernacular that—they're in conversation with each other. They're similar, but they're not the same.

And I think that that's what makes Outkast so alluring. Because not only is all of Atlanta not the same, like even in Georgia, Atlanta is totally different than where I'm from in southwest Georgia. You know what I'm saying? So, being able to use language and inflection and all of these things to kind of speak to the complexity of the places that they're from is something that Outkast forced the readers to recognize in ways that other artists pick up a little later. You know what I mean? Or even if you're thinking about a lot of the artists that come out now that need to affirm a distinctive regional identity isn't the same. And I'm wondering—it's just something I just think about too is like, you know, they also created language. You know what I mean?

[Morgan agrees.]

Like, they would create these words! Or create these new meanings! And you're just like, yeah, I think I'ma borrow that. *[Laughs.]* You know? You would listen to it—like you would hear it like on the album and you—you know, you could try it out at school the next day or try it—and they'd be like, "Where'd you get that from?" You'd be like—either you knew, you were listening to Outkast, or you were like let me fake it and continue to try to use it. You know what I mean? So, I mean like even something like a "stank you smelly much". Nobody was saying that shit until—*[laughs].*

00:18:47 Morgan Host

Right. Or cut!

[Regina agrees through laughter.]

Right, or cut. I hadn't heard cut—you know—used as they were using cut until Outkast. I was like yo, that's different. But I—but I—a lot of things I got introduced to in terms of southern ways of life—and my parents are southerners, but Atlanta was different. And one of my introductions—my mother's from Waco, Texas, my dad's from Tennessee. They both went to HBCU. But southern Atlanta was a different introduction. Like, I had never experienced the Waffle House until I got there.

[Oliver laughs.]

And I'm bringing—I'd never experienced it! And it was a revelation. But I'm bringing it up, because when I think of Outkast and their dialogue, their dialect, and those inflections, it reminds me of my experience—my first experience of the Waffle House, where I went in there; I'm from LA. I'm thinking I'm getting my regular two-egg breakfast. You got sides. She says, "Grits or hashbrowns." And I say hashbrowns. Right? And she says, "Well, how do you—how do you—"

00:19:45 Regina Host

"How do you want them?"

00:19:46 Morgan Host

"How do you want them?"

[Regina laughs.]

And I'm like, well! You know, crispy! You know, I was like I don't know! You know? And she looks at me like you fool. Right? And so, she just points to the marquee. And I'm like, "Yooo! Wait."

And so, when I think about Outkast, I think about the ways that you can get your hashbrowns at the Waffle House. And—let me read off some of these categories so you know what I’m talking about.

[Oliver “oh”s excitedly.]

00:20:21	Music	Music	Smothered. Covered. Chunked, diced, peppered, capped, topped, and country. That’s the sound of Outkast to me. All those. “West Savannah” from the album <i>Aquemini</i> by Outkast. <i>You might call us country, but we's only Southern And I don't give a fuck, P-Funk spot to spark another</i> <i>Now, now, now, nine in my hand, ounce in my crotch Digging the scene with a gangsta slouch, mhmmmm! (like that now, like this, and it don't quit, and it don't stop) Nine in my hand, ounce in my crotch Digging the scene with a gangsta slouch, mhmmmm! (and it don't stop, and it don't quit, it's like that and ah)</i> <i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i>
00:20:39	Oliver	Host	To get back to some of the specifics on the album—and of course, we’re gonna spend a lot of time, especially in the second half, talking about specific songs. But I could not pass up an opportunity to get into the fact that this album has a lot of skits. Morgan is our resident skitologist, a big proponent, wants to bring skits back into music making. So, how do the skits—for both of you, how do the skits on this album measure up within the pantheon of hip-hop skits.
00:21:03	Morgan	Host	Professor. You first!
00:21:05	Regina	Guest	Even just within the Outkast joints—‘cause man, my favorite skits are still on <i>Stankonia</i> . Like, “Kim & Cookie” is classic. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:21:11	Morgan	Host	Faaavorites! Faaavorites! Hands down!
00:21:15	Regina	Guest	Yo! Like, it was—it wasn’t no thing to be walking down the hall and then, you know, you randomly hear somebody be like, “Ring, ring.” And then somebody else be like, “Say hello, Cookie!”
00:21:26	Morgan	Host	<i>[They laugh.]</i>
00:21:30	Regina	Guest	Right! And interludes! Skits and interludes. Yeah! I just feel like, y’all—okay, so, okay in the—in the pantheon of skits, Outkast is unmatched. Like, that’s just—the humor in it, like the humor—the humor reminds me of like when I’ll be in school or just be posted up, you know, in the mall or whatever and you see like this group of dudes just chilling and like talking the shit. And it’s just—that’s exactly what it sounds like. Like, joking on each other. I’m just like, “Oh, this sounds so similar.”
			But I think on the <i>Aquemini</i> album, my favorite skit is actually the opening one, after “Return of the ‘G’”. <i>[Laughs.]</i> When he goes to the record store and he’s like—
00:22:10	Music	Clip	<i>[They agree.]</i> “Return of the ‘G’” from the album <i>Aquemini</i> by Outkast.

Speaker 1: Hey, what else you got, buddy?

Store Owner: Um, I got that new Goodie Mob!

Several Speakers: *[Overlapping.]* No, we got that song.

Speaker 2: *[Singing.]* Sky high! Sky high!

Speaker 3: *[Inaudible]* now, n-gga.

Speaker 1: That why they be saying sky high?

[They confirm.]

Store Owner: I tell you what. I tell you what you ain't got, though. \$16.99, I'll get you that new-new Outkast. Ain't even came out yet. It's supposed to come out next week.

[Everyone reacts negatively.]

Give me 15. Give me 15.

Speaker 2: Oh, you got that—man, what?! You wanna get that cad? I thought I was your boy! I thought I was your folk!?

Speaker 1: Man, first they were some pimps, man. Then they were some aliens or some genies.

Speaker 2: Chill out, B-Man. You don't care about that, man—

Speaker 1: Then they be talking about that Black righteous space. Whatever, man. Fuck, man. I ain't fucking with them no more, man.

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]

00:22:42 Regina Guest

They knew what folks were thinking about then—you present as some aliens in the other album; y'all were some pimps on the first album. But I think being able to subvert like that criticism of you gave us this one idea of what southern means, and now here you go changing it again just speaks to the genius that is, you know, the cats. And just how funny these cats are. Like, that's what I wanna know. Do y'all just post up in the studio like, "Okay, we're gonna throw a skit about... *[snaps fingers]*, yo! Getting some weed! Go. What you got?" *[Laughs.]* "Fuck with that."

00:23:10 Morgan Host

Right. Right, right, right. I mean, everything is so funny on here. And I think if I had to defend a dissertation on skits and interludes, I would say that a successful skit has to include some reference or experience with phones.

[Regina laughs.]

00:23:43 Music Music

And you have that all throughout. If you're not gonna do a whole voicemail message, you gotta be on the phone. And that's the hallmark of the skits on this album. People calling. You've got—the heartbreak for me is "Nathaniel" and that whole rap on the phone. "Nathaniel" from the album *Aquemini* by Outkast.

*They got a n-gga on some "Sir, yessir, left right left"
Throw me in the hole if my ass outta step
They treat you like a motherfucking slave
Dope fiends find Jesus, swear they saved
N-ggas better get they game tight
Cause these crackers trying to take a n-gga life and they rights
I'm surrounded by fake-ass crooks*

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]

00:24:00	Morgan	Host	I agree with you, Regina, that <i>Stankonia</i> 's got it down. 'Cause you got skits and interludes. But this was great. And that they came at different places in the album—beginning, middle, and end. So, sometimes in a song it would just break out into something, and you'd be like, "Yo. Yo!" Like, the bit with Raekwon, which I love. The whole Shaolin and ATL coming together, which I wasn't expecting the first time I heard it. But it's one of my favorites on here.
00:24:23	Regina	Guest	I just still feel like Big Boi's throwing shade on that skit. Like, <i>[cackles]</i> —I mean, like lowkey!
00:24:29	Morgan	Host	Like you gotta step up!
00:24:31	Regina	Guest	Yeah, like lowkey like you know, you have Raekwon in all his New York glory. You know what I'm saying? And then like Big Boi just keeps—he just keeps repeating like, "Word, son. Word!" I'm just like dying!

[Morgan laughs.]

00:24:45	Music	Music	I'm like do you not see this man is—okay. Okay. "Rosa Parks" from the album <i>Aquemini</i> by Outkast.
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André: It's like, yo.

Big Boi: Word.

André: N-ggas don't even know, son, yo we gon' play some funky shit for ya'll.

Big Boi: That's right.

André: Straight up, pay up, pay up, n-gga.

Big Boi: From East Point to Shaolin, y'all better know that, yeah!

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]

00:24:57	Oliver	Host	If I could just add this little anecdote—and I wanna give credit where it's due; Rodney Carmichael wrote a great 20 th anniversary making-of article for <i>Creative Loafing</i> about this album. So, I learned all of these great little factoids. So—'cause Raekwon being on this album—I mean, him being on like the Mobb Deep album, sure. Right? That makes a lot of sense. But like how did he end up on an Outkast album? And as I read in Rodney's piece, it's because Raekwon owned a spot down in Atlanta and I guess had maybe known Big Boi previous. But when they came down to do this session, they met at the Lenox Square Mall, which is I think where
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Big Boi and André 3000 first met and made the decision to kind of collaborate.

And Raekwon had invited Big Boi into the studio booth as he recorded his verse for “Skew It On the Barbie”, which was not something that Big Boi had been used to. He usually—you know, usually when someone’s taping in the studio—the recording booth—you’re not also in it, because you’re trying to leave it pristine for the person using it. But Rae wanted Big Boi to come in there to basically feed off the energy of being in the booth at the same time. And apparently there was a lot of Hennessy spilled during that particular session. So. A little—again, little tidbits, here. Little anecdotes to sprinkle in.

00:26:09 Morgan Host

Shoutout to Hennessy. Shoutout to Hennessy.

[Regina cackles.]

00:26:11 Oliver Host

I was also gonna say—I meant to mention this earlier—is that really, between Atlanta and Staten Island and Queensbridge, I feel like those three cities—and a little bit of Bay Area, a little Vallejo with E-40. But they basically remade how we talk. You know, the slanguage that trickled out of those places radically reshaped how we talk. And it is kind of funny to think about Big Boi maybe subtly shading on the kind of New York speak.

[Morgan laughs.]

You know. He should’ve dropped in some more five-percenter language, just to really make up *[inaudible]*.

[They laugh.]

00:26:42 Morgan Host

You know?

00:26:46 Oliver Host

Cold blooded. Coooold blooded.

00:26:57 Music Transition

We will be back with more of our conversation with scholar and author, Regina Bradley, about *Aquemini*, after a brief word from some of our sibling Max Fun podcasts. Keep it locked.

00:26:59 Morgan Promo

“Crown Ones” off the album *Stepfather* by People Under the Stairs. It’s Max Fun Drive, *Heat Rocks* stars. We’ve heard from many people who really value our work and the work of other shows on Max Fun, particularly during this time of social distancing. It’s been hard on all of us, but having familiar voices to make us laugh, think, interact, and feel normal is extremely important to some folks. If that sounds like you and you’re able to join, I encourage you to do so now.

00:27:23 Oliver Promo

Membership at Max Fun just starts at \$5 a month. That gets you all the bonus content, which you will be able to access as long as you’re a member. And there is—*[chuckles]* there’s just a ton of content that’s waiting for you already, right there. Earlier this year, for example, we did a bonus episode where Morgan and I went to The Last Bookstore, here in Los Angeles, and picked out a few records to talk about right there, in the store. I’m not sure they wanted us to be taping there, but we did it! We did it. It’s there waiting for you.

If you choose to join at \$10 a month, you get a Max Fun membership card, one of our annual, unique, uniquely designed

pins, and of course all of that previous bonus content. If you're able to join at \$20 a month or more, you get this year's special gift, which is a Max Fun game pack, which features some custom dice as well as a custom deck of playing cards, all with Max Fun-centric designs on it. Just visit MaximumFun.org/join to become a member. Again, it's just that simple. Go to MaximumFun.org/join to become a member.

00:28:31	Morgan	Promo	If you want to support a little bit extra but aren't full able to upgrade right now, you can check out boosting your membership by an amount between levels. It doesn't qualify for the gifts, but it does still directly support the show.
00:28:43	Oliver	Promo	We would really like to thank all of our audience members who are working in healthcare or retail or other essential jobs right now. We are certainly very much thinking about the work that you do and the sacrifice that you're making to help the rest of society out through that work. We're so grateful for it, and we hope that our show is a pleasant diversion for you right now, and that we are in some ways supporting the work that you're doing, in return.
00:29:10	Morgan	Promo	And if you're a fan of this show but can't become a member right now, that's totally fine. We know times are tough right now, and this show will always be free for everyone. You can still support us by just listening and telling a friend about <i>Heat Rocks</i> .
00:29:25	Oliver	Promo	Alright. Now, back to the show.
00:29:27	Music	Transition	"Crown Ones" off the album <i>Stepfather</i> by People Under the Stairs.
00:29:29	Morgan	Host	Yo, and we are back on <i>Heat Rocks</i> , talking <i>Aquemini</i> with scholar and author Regina Bradley.
00:29:35	Oliver	Host	Regina, the last time I think we spoke at length, you had been thinking or were planning on writing—if I have this right—a series of short stories inspired by Outkast songs. Which, to me, seems like a true dedication to the art of storytelling. What is it that you have or had in mind with that? And where are you with it?
00:29:52	Regina	Guest	Soooo, Mr. Ten Year Review! Um.

[They laugh.]

So, yeah, I have a—I mean, it's just an obsession. I just—they're just so dynamic in multiple ways. Like, I got to write an academic book about them, which is dope, but I also—I'm a creative writer. I'm a fiction writer. And I just feel like there's just certain lines in Outkast songs, I'm like, "This deserves a story!" *[Laughs.]* Like, if I'm listing to "SpottieOttieDopaliscious" and he's talking about like, you know—he's just out there posted up, he couldn't even get to the door 'cause he was too drunk. I'm like, "Oh! Well, what happened before that to make him drunk; he couldn't go out to the club!"

[Laughs.]

00:30:33	Music	Music	"SpottieOttieDopaliscious" from the album <i>Aquemini</i> by Outkast.
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Me? Well, I've never been there

Well, perhaps, once,

But I was so engulfed in the Ol' E',

I never made it to the door

You speak of hardcore

While the DJ sweating out all the problems and troubles of the day

While this fine, bow-legged girl, fine as all outdoors

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]

00:30:54 Regina Guest

I've always also been interested in the way that their ideas and viewpoints about women have been represented in their albums. 'Cause it changes. You know what I'm saying.

[They agree.]

From something like, you know, "Club Donkey Ass"—right? *[Laughs.]*—*Southernplaylistic*, up to, you know, "Where Are My Panties" on *The Love Below*. Like, you know.

[Morgan agrees.]

Like, in the—on *The Love Below*, I'm like—you know, André centers Black women. I'm not saying that it's a—you know—feminist album, but I am saying that he's thinking about where he fits into the world of women or Black women in particular. And not vice versa, which is what you usually expect in hip-hop—that women revolve around men. You know what I mean?

[They confirm.]

I'm still writing! That's the short part of it. I'm still writing. I'm still kind of trying to figure it out, but I think it's really dope that they kind of left these open ends in their songs, so to speak, for folks to kind of pick them up and fill them in.

00:31:51 Oliver Host

Right. I mean, personally, I think—you know, their needs to be more justice for both Sasha Thumper and Suzy Skrew than the sort of amount of agency or lack thereof that's given to them on "Da Art of Storytelling".

00:32:01 Morgan Host

Oh, on "Mamacita".

00:32:02 Oliver Host

You know. Or "Mamacita", for that matter. Right?

00:32:04 Regina Guest

Are we gonna talk about "Mamacita"?! 'Cause we—look. *[Laughs.]*

00:32:08 Morgan Host

[Excited.] Go ahead! Go ahead! You have the floor.

00:32:10 Oliver Host

Clearly, you have some thoughts, yeah.

00:32:12 Regina Guest

I—*[sighs]* I just feel like it's the outlier of the album. I don't know how else to explain it. Like, it's—you know, Morgan, you were talking earlier about like transitions and flows. And I just feel like—not saying "Mamacita" is a bad song. It's not. But I'm just kind of like—

00:32:24 Oliver Host

It's weird. It doesn't—

00:32:25 Regina Guest

It just—it jumps out at you!

[Oliver agrees.]

It's jarring, in a way! You know what I mean? If you go from something like "West Savannah", which is like riding music—you know, kind of just chill. And all of the sudden, you know, you have like this predatory lesbian woman after her—like, it's just—there's too much going on. Like, I just—it's my least favorite song on the album.

00:32:45 Music Music

"Mamacita" from the album *Aquemini* by Outkast.

*Mahogany Team Queens up on the rise
Be careful, watch your back, blackbirds don't wear disguise*

*How we coming, coming hard, camels too slow
Stick up kids do anything, hustlers keep loot to show (what?)
The game is hot you could never be a winner
Just begun a game so considered a beginner*

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]

00:33:05 Oliver Host I thought the most interesting part of that—and obviously, you already had Raekwon on the album before, so it's not like you don't have New York, tristate representation. But the MC that we're talking about on "Mamacita" is—I think Masada is her name. And she's so clearly—she's from Jersey, and she so clearly sounds like she's from the tristate. And this song, I feel like, could have just been on like a Foxy Brown—you know—album at the same—in '98 or '99. And so, it feels out of place because it—to me, it's the least Outkast-y of the songs on here.

I don't think it's a bad song! It just doesn't—it just feels like it's from a completely different album, and it's kind of got wedged in. As opposed to like "West Savannah"—which goes back to your point, Regina—which was a song that was originally recorded—it was supposed to be on *Southernplaylistic*, but they left it off. And then, it comes back two albums later, but it still feels like it fits into the flow of it. Whereas "Mamacita" is like what? Like, where are we now? You know? How did this come about? So.

So, let's flip this around. We've already figured out some of our least favorite songs. Let's talk about the fire tracks. Right? What are the songs that still bang to this day? Morgan, I'm gonna put you in the hot seat first.

00:34:12 Morgan Host Uuuh. Shoot. Tough crowd. Okay. *[Sighs.]* I'm just going with it. I'm going with it. "Da Art of Storytelling".

00:34:22 Regina Guest Part one or two?

00:34:24 Morgan Host Part one.

00:34:25 Music Music "Da Art of Storytelling" (Pt. 1)" from the album *Aquemini* by Outkast.

*Now Suzy Skrew had a partner named Sasha... Thumper
I remember her number like the summer
When her and Suzy, yeah, they threw a slumber
Party, but you cannot call it that 'cause it was slummer
Well, it was more like spend the night
Three in the morning, yawning, dancing under streetlights
We chilling like a villain, and a n-gga feeling right
In the middle of the ghetto on the curb*

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]

00:34:42 Morgan Host It's animated. It's melodic. The hook—Sleepy Brown.

00:34:48 Oliver Host Hook's great, yeah.

00:34:50 Morgan Host And you know how I be about visuals. So, the video. Once you see that video, you experience the song a whole different way. I feel like we get to experience André being weird, and I love that. The dancing and the purple and the painting. It's like, early special effects. I love it. I could make an argument for a bunch of other songs. I guess the one that's just as close to my heart is "Aquemini". I love "Aquemini". Title track.

[Oliver agrees.]

00:35:22 Music Music But there's something about "Da Art of Storytelling" that does it for me. So, that's my story and I'm sticking with it.
"Da Art of Storytelling" from the album *Aquemini* by Outkast.

It's like that now

You better go on and get the hump up out your back now

It's about four or five cats off in my 'Lac now

We just shoot game in the form of story raps now

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]

00:35:37 Oliver Host I'm—same here. I think it's hard to pick on here, because there's such great choices. Like you, Morgan, I think we might have had a very similar thought process. I mean, "Aquemini" as the title track is just—it's so hypnotic. It brings you into this world that is mesmerizing. Obviously, you got "Rosa Parks" was the big single. It was a club banger. It was supposed to be a song for Total—like, Puffy's R&B group, Total. Which I have—it's impossible for me to imagine Total singing over that track. Like, I don't know how anyone besides Outkast could've done it, so I'm glad that didn't work out.

But "Da Art of Storytelling" is really what I think just does it for me consistently.

[Morgan agrees.]

And it's not only just that I think the individual qualities of the song—which are great—but it's also, and this goes back to something I was talking about in the first half, is how that song really, to me, fits into this continuum of the ways in which hip-hop has always had these extraordinary storytellers. So, you can go back ten years from this album to Slick Rick, and then you can go forward ten+ years and get to Kendrick Lamar and see that continuum. And so, that's another reason why "Da Art of Storytelling" works. I think, sonically, it's one of the best beats on there. Even though, lyrically—and this kind of spins back to what we were saying a moment ago—I don't necessarily love it, lyrically, in terms of the content of it. I think the stories are gripping, but you know, any song that ends with like—you know—a woman dead of an overdose sung by a man always feels like sort of cautionary tale territory. And hip-hop has way too many of those.

But despite that, it's still a song—and maybe part of it is just the magic of that hook that you were telling me about, Morgan.

[Morgan agrees emphatically.]

00:37:21 Regina Guest That is—it just does it every time. So, Regina, you're batting third on this one. What is your fire track off of this album?
"Liberation"!

[They react excitedly and Regina laughs.]

Listen! Listen, it don't matter—it don't matter what of the week it is. "Liberation" is always gonna be my favorite *Aquemini* track, followed very, very, very, very closely "Aquemini"—the actual...

[Oliver agrees.]

Because André was in rare form on that track. He was—he ain't even care no more. That was—but "Liberation", I mean, it's gotten me through so many different things. It's just such a—it's like having church without having to go to church. You know what I'm saying?

[Morgan agrees.]

But it's such a significant thing to me, because it's gotten me out of a lot of valleys, a lot of dark moments. From, you know, the passing of my grandfather to dissertating. *[Laughs.]* Yeah. But you know, "Liberation" just does something for me in ways that the rest of the album was great, but "Liberation" just really kind of reminds me that, you know, keep going. You know what I'm saying? Like, keep going and trying to get—trying to get free, trying to not care what everybody else thinks and making your own lane, sticking with it. Going with it.

00:38:23 Music Music

"Liberation" from the album *Aquemini* by Outkast.

*I'm so tired, it's been so long struggling hopelessly
Seven and forty days (hey)
Oh, I sacrifice every breath I breathe*

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]

00:38:40 Oliver Host

Let's get into some favorite moments. And we actually have already touched on this I think a couple times now. But for me, it haaas to be the horns. When you first hear the horns on "SpottieOttieDopaliscious". Which, I mean, I don't know if there's a better horn melody in all of hip-hop. It's so distinctive. It just kind of like—as I was saying about "Aquemini" a moment ago—there's just something about the song and the sound of it that just lures you in. And partly, I think with this song in particular, it's kind of this mesh of—you have these subtle or maybe not even that subtle reggae rhythms operating. The horn lines remind me of something like maybe Fela Kuti might have cooked up.

[Morgan agrees.]

You know, shouts out. I think that the horn group was—Hornz spelled with a "Z" Unlimited did them. And you know, I've heard those horns played by marching bands. I've heard them—you know—sampled by other artists. It is just one of the most signature things Outkast have ever done, sonically. And every time I hear it, it just gives me those magical chills.

00:39:40 Music Music

"SpottieOttieDopaliscious" from the album *Aquemini* by Outkast.

Go on and marinate on that for a minute

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]

00:39:56	Oliver	Host	How about you, Morgan?
00:39:58	Morgan	Host	“Liberation”. And it’s “Liberation” about the 3:15 mark, where you hear Joi and Myrna Peaches start to sing that “ooh”. You know what, Christian, I have to hear a little bit of that.
00:40:14	Music	Music	“Liberation” from the album <i>Aquemini</i> by Outkast. <i>But people, keep your head to the sky</i> <i>Shake that load off, shake that load off</i> <i>Shake that load off, shake that load off</i> <i>Shake that load off, shake that load off</i> <i>Shake that load off, shake that load off</i> <i>Shake that load off, shake that load off</i> <i>Shake that load off, shake that load off</i>
00:40:35	Regina	Guest	<i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue.]</i> It’s like call and response! <i>[Oliver sighs in awe.]</i> It’s like—you know, it’s like that part of the church service where like—you know, will there be one? That’s what I think about— <i>[Morgan and Regina laugh.]</i> Will there be one?! And then you’re just kind of like, you know—especially like the “shake that”. I’m like just the chant, it sounds like a short prayer. <i>[Singing.]</i> “Shake that low.” Like, who do you—?! You know what I’m saying.
00:40:54	Music	Music	<i>[Volume increases.]</i> <i>Shake that load off, shake that load off</i> <i>Shake that load off, shake that load off</i> <i>Shake that load off, shake that load off</i> <i>Shake that load off, shake that load off</i> <i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i>
00:41:06	Oliver	Host	Regina, I wanna know what your favorite moments are. Before we get there, I just had to share this tidbit. This is also from that Rodney Carmichael making-of article that came out about this album. It’s about Erykah Badu. And this quote comes from Kawan Prather, who was the group’s A&R.
00:41:20	Regina	Guest	KP!
00:41:21	Oliver	Host	Quote, “Dre’s baby mama was Erykah Badu. I mean, damn. Why wouldn’t you put your baby mama on the record if she’s Erykah Badu? It’s not like the came to the studio and said, quote, ‘I wanna put my girl on this song,’ unquote, and his bitch work at Varsity.” <i>[Oliver chuckles and Regina laughs brightly.]</i> “She’s Erykah Badu. Okay, do it.” Which, ‘nuff said! Like, yes! If you are in a relationship with Erykah Badu and you are making an album, you put Badu on that shit! Yeah. Absolutely. <i>[Morgan agrees and starts to speak.]</i>

00:41:46 Regina Guest Badu—I'm sorry, go ahead, Morgan.
00:41:48 Morgan Host I was just gonna say, shoutout to Varsity. 'Cause I think he's talking about Varsity Jr. I told you there's gonna be random shoutouts. So, let's just take a moment for Varsity Jr. Alright, then.

00:41:58 Oliver Host As someone who's never lived in Atlanta, what is Varsity Jr?
00:42:02 Regina Guest Like a hotdog chili spot.
00:42:03 Morgan Host Yep! But they support the Braves. So, people go there to watch games and stuff. So, it's an all-encompassing experience. I'm not gonna brag on the food, but the experience was really good for me.

[Oliver laughs.]

00:42:15 Regina Guest It's not the Waffle House. So, we'll say that.
00:42:22 Morgan Host Hold on a minute, their onion rings still slap. That's about it, though.
00:42:24 Regina Guest I don't—I don't really—their onion rings always be hitting. *[Laughs.]*
00:42:25 Morgan Host Yeah, the burgers don't—not so much. Right? Yeah.
00:42:27 Oliver Host I don't. I don't. I don't.
00:42:30 Regina Guest But I like Varsity Jr.
00:42:32 Oliver Host So, Regina, do you have a favorite moment on this album?
00:42:34 Regina Guest I have a couple of favorite moments on the album. One of them is—
00:42:34 Regina Guest Yeah. I figured.
00:42:34 Regina Guest The end of the album. *[Laughs.]* Not even—not even the skit at the end. The part where it sounds like the track itself is dying. I'm just like, "Oh, this is so gangsta!"

00:42:47 Music Music "Chonkyfire" from the album *Aquemini* by Outkast.

... them closed-minded folks, you know what I'm saying? It's like we got a demo tape and don't nobody wanna hear it. But it's like this, the South got something to say. That's all I got to say.

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]

00:43:09 Morgan Host I am an Aquarius, Gemini Rising, so I already know that's drama. But I wanted to read a quote about Aquarius/Gemini friendships. And it says that, "The intellectual connection between the Gemini and Aquarius friend is strong, because the latter has vision and attracts the former, who always loves to tackle a new and progressive idea. Not to mention, they're both very independent. However, these two may fight, because the Aquarius is annoyed by the Gemini's slow progression with any project, while the latter may think the first is too stubborn."

And I remember—around *Aquemini*, after it came out, there were whisperings about and rumors about André going solo. Right? Going in a different direction. But that was before we got to *Stankonia*. We still had *Stankonia* and *Speakerboxxx/Love Below*. So, my question to you is might we have missed something? Was there any truth to those rumors? Or was it just hearsay?

00:44:02 Regina Guest I think it was just hearsay. And this is just—you know, maybe this is the superfan coming out in me, though, but I also think *Aquemini* was a testament that, should that have happened, they could've done that—gone done the solo tip thing. Like, because they were just that strong in their craft. You know what I'm saying?

[Morgan confirms.]

And I think—the other thing that’s interesting about André, too—and this is just—it’s kind of why I stopped having these conversations about, you know, Outkast with people. Because they like to separate the two. But—you know what I’m saying? I’m like, you wouldn’t have André 3000 without Big Boi. *[Laughs.]* Because Big Boi kept you grounded in such a way that he kept not only the brand of Outkast on point, but also he became like—he kept that signature sound that we expected from the ‘kast in ways that, you know, André didn’t have to abide by those rules. One, because—kind of like what you said, like Gemini folk just... oooh. You don’t know which twin you’re gonna get! I’m not even knocking that! I’m just—but it’s like, you know, *[laughs]* it depends. ‘Cause like my daughter is a Gemini. She’s a true Gemini. And it depends on, you know, which twin I’m gonna see that day. *[Laughs.]*

But it’s like—I feel like that was also an opportunity for André to show you there are multiple sides to him in ways that Big Boi didn’t have that luxury at the time. So, it’s like, you’re not supposed to talk about *Speakerboxxx* and *Love Below*. They say like, oh, I was listening to *Love Below*. That was my jam.” You know, “Woot the woot.” And I’m just like okay, but *The Love Below* crawled—you know, Big Boi crawled so that Drake could fly. And then, you don’t get a *Love Below* sound from Big Boi until *Dangerous Lies and Vicious Rumors*, where it’s a lot more emotional. It’s a lot more experimental. Like, you hear those overlaps between *Love Below* and whatever. But I honestly just feel like in ways that Big Boi was already comfortable in his skin as a rapper, André didn’t arrive until *Aquemini*. And when he arrived, that’s when folks were like, “Oh. Let me find out.” *[Laughs.]*

00:46:01 Morgan Host

For sure! Well, you know, we sat down with King—and I think King picked *Speakerboxxx/The Love Below*. That was the album that they wanted to talk about. And in prep for that chat, I had to go back because confession’s good for the soul. I spent a lot more time on *The Love Below* than I did on *Speakerboxxx*. But when I went back, I realized I had missed so much of the—so many of the jewels that are on the *Speakerboxxx* side. I went with what I was comfortable with at the time. And when I went back, I discovered all these things that I was missing. I do think that there’s a part of Big Boi that is so, so, so southern and so consistently southern. And it’s present on all the albums. Not to say that he hasn’t evolved; I’m just saying there’s something that’s so consistent about his flow and so consistent about his persona that he carries.

00:47:00 Regina Guest

And that was a comfort to me on *Speakerboxxx/Love Below*, even as I had to go back and revisit it, because I was so into the André three stacks of *Love Below*. Just to be honest about that.

I mean, yeah! There’s a lot of—you know, I remember that. I remember, ‘cause it was Albany State Centennial homecoming, so that’s all you heard that whole week was nothing but *Love Below* and *Speakerboxxx*. That’s all that folks were playing. You know? And I was just like—I was one of the folks who was knocking *Speakerboxxx*. So, I was just like—you know! Like, oh, okay!

00:47:17 Morgan Host

Confession!

00:47:18 Regina Guest

Yeah! You know, I wasn’t really feeling *Love Below* like that at first. *[Laughs.]* You know, I was somewhere different. But I—yeah! I just felt like we need to give where credit is due, is that you wouldn’t

have an André 3000 without the consistency—like you were saying—of Big Boi. And the consistency doesn't mean that he doesn't evolve! Because I mean, like Big Boi tells a story like nobody else. You know what I mean? With the humor and the punchlines and—you know, all those things. But I think the reason that we like to think that André is so much more deep is—especially if you listen to the *Aquemini* album, is that he gives you these moments of vulnerability and these moments of reflection. Like, this introspective, you know, inner work—emotional work. You know what I mean? That we're just like, "Oooh! I can relate to that!"

And Big Boi is giving you storytelling! You know what I'm saying? Like, it's not necessarily just vulnerability storytelling, which is what André is giving you, but you know, that's what we—that's what we kind of expect. But yeah! I just feel like, you know, André—that *Aquemini* album is when he arrives. Like, it's—that is his—I mean, you know, he arrive-arrives. He's almost flawless on that whole thing. It's ridiculous.

00:48:25 Music Music

"Aquemini" from the album *Aquemini* by Outkast.

*Of course, you know I feel like the bearer of bad news
Don't want to be it, but it's needed, so what have you?
Now, question: Is every n-gga with dreads for the cause?
Is every n-gga with golds for the fall?
No, so don't get caught up in appearance
It's Outkast, "Aquemini": another Black experience*

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]

00:48:44 Oliver Host

Regina, if you had to describe this album in three words, what three words would you choose?

00:48:48 Regina Guest

Whooo! I—I don't like you!

[They laugh.]

00:48:54 Oliver Host

That's a great question. Oooh.

00:48:55 Regina Guest

Damn!

[Clicks teeth.] You know you're my guy. I'm just kidding. I kid, I kid. You know, you're all the things. Um. Three words. Ooh, Jesus.

00:49:02 Morgan Host

That's two.

[Regina cackles.]

00:49:07 Regina Guest

But I love those two.

I mean, I only got one word, which is "un-fuck-with-able". *[Laughs.]* I don't know if that works.

00:49:14 Oliver Host

Just put enough dashes there; I will accept that. It's—you know. That works.

00:49:17 Regina Guest

Yeah, there you go. Un-fuck-withable.

00:49:19 Morgan Host

That's it.

[They laugh.]

00:49:23 Music Music

That's it.

"Rosa Parks" from the album *Aquemini* by Outkast.

Uh-huh, uh-huh, baby, yeah, yeah
Ah ha, hush that fuss, everybody move to the back of the bus
Uh-huh, yeah, yeah, baby, uh-huh
Do you wanna bump and slump with us?
We the type of people make the club get drunk
Uh-huh, baby, uh-huh, yeah, yeah

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]

00:49:40 Oliver Host Before we bounce out of here, we always wanna leave our audience with something else to listen to—another hype album to step to. So, we have some recommendations. I will go first. Which is: if you liked listening to *Aquemini*, then I recommend that you check out De La Soul's *Buhloone Mindstate*, which I think is—number one, it's another one of the great hip-hop third albums, first of all. And number two, it's one similar to Outkast on this album, where you feel like the group has really reached a kind of creative peak, even if other albums were more commercially successful. I think *Buhloone Mindstate* and *Aquemini* capture something about the sheer creative genius that both groups were able to capture within an album.

00:50:23 Music Music So, that'd be my recommendation.
"Patti Dooke" from the album *Buhloone Mindstate* by De La Soul.

I shed light and not skin
I ain't from Europe
Afro connects at the root of the retina of the third
Mums the word when you're blind baby
Blind to the fact
Don't rest in Compton so I don't own a gat
But respect is clear crystal
Cause Millie got a pistol

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]

00:50:41 Oliver Host Morgan, how about you?
00:50:42 Morgan Host I'd go to 1995, LaFace Records, and I'd go to Goodie Mob and *Soul Food*. I think you get all that dialect. I think you got—to quote Outkast, talk about righteous Black spaces. You got the whole family. You got vocals. And it stays consistent to what I think the sound—you know—of Atlanta is. And that's just one of my favorite—it's a personal favorite of mine. So, I'd say go to Goodie Mob and start with "Cell Therapy". I mean, you can go in order if that's your thing. If you're not into going in order, start with "Cell Therapy" and keep going.

00:51:18 Music Music "Cell Therapy" from the album *Soul Food* by Goodie Mob.

The claim that this community is so drug-free
But it don't look that way to me
'Cause I can see the young bloods hanging out at the store 24/7
Junkies looking for a hit of the blow, it's powerful
Oh, you know what else they trying to do?
Make a curfew especially for me and you

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]

00:51:34 Oliver Host Regina, how about you? What next listen should our audience members invest in?

00:51:39 Regina Guest *[Sighs.]* Um. *[Chuckles.]* Honestly?! Well, I've got like two suggestions. Okay. So, if you enjoyed *Aquemini* and you like the Dungeon Family, you need to listen to the *Even In Darkness* album that has "Trans D F Express". It still—it's still great.

00:51:54 Music Music "Trans D F Express" from the album *Even in Darkness* by Dungeon Family.

*Come get with it
Trans DF Express, Trans DF Express*

*Hippy to the hop, like a digi-log frog
Throw me the cat and I'll throw you the dog (woof)
Simple as a dimple ain't it?
A hole in your cheek, let's hit the town so we can paint it*

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]

00:52:09 Regina Guest The other one is—I know you were talking about EARTHGANG earlier, but I heard a lot of influences by Dungeon Family and Outkast on *Mirrorland*.

[Morgan agrees.]

00:52:23 Music Music So, if you wanna hear something a little bit more contemporary, you can—that's one I would definitely check out. "Blue Moon" from the album *Mirrorland* by EARTHGANG.

*Baby, I'm praising, I'm crazy
Come on over honey, give me some sugar
Come on over sugar, give me some honey
Put it right on my tongue and I get back to the money*

*I been hustling, I don't get no rest, (I don't get no rest)
Once in a blue moon*

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]

00:52:40 Oliver Host Well, that will do it for this episode of *Heat Rocks* with our special guest, Regina Bradley. Check out her book, *Boondock Collage: Stories from the Hip-Hop South*. Regina, what are you working on right now?

00:52:51 Regina Guest *[Theme music fades in.]* So, I just finished the Outkast book, *Chronicling Stankonia: The Rise of the Hip-Hop South*. So, that drops early spring '21. And also, the Outkast reader that I edited is also coming out next spring. So. All Outkast everything in the next six to nine months!

[Morgan laughs.]

But I am still working on that Outkast influenced fiction book. So, that's what I'm working on now. Yeah.

00:53:13	Oliver	Host	And where can people track you down, online?
00:53:16	Regina	Guest	You can always find me on the Twitters, @RedClayScholar . It's award season, and I'm also one of those university system of Georgia professors, so we're trying to figure out what to do about covid. So, I've been ranting a lot, just be warned! <i>[Laughs.]</i> I've been ranting a lot.
00:53:34	Oliver	Host	I hear you. Yeah.
00:53:35	Regina	Guest	On the—on the Twitter. But yeah, that's how you can catch me.
00:53:37	Music	Transition	"Crown Ones" off the album <i>Stepfather</i> by People Under the Stairs.
			<i>[Music continues under the dialogue.]</i>
00:53:38	Morgan	Host	Before we head out of here, we just wanna thank you so much for making this show possible. We are able to create content independent of outside influence, because our audience—people like you—have chosen to support it. And we can't thank you enough.
00:53:53	Oliver	Host	If you have not yet had a chance to join as a member, you can do so at MaximumFun.org/join . That is MaximumFun.org/join .
			You've been listening to <i>Heat Rocks</i> with me, Oliver Wang, and Morgan Rhodes.
00:54:08	Morgan	Host	Our theme music is "Crown Ones" by Thes One of People Under the Stairs. Shout out to Thes for the hookup.
00:54:14	Oliver	Host	<i>Heat Rocks</i> is produced by myself and Morgan, alongside Christian Dueñas, who also edits, engineers, and does the booking for our shows.
00:54:21	Morgan	Host	Our senior producer is Laura Swisher, and our executive producer is Jesse Thorn.
00:54:26	Oliver	Host	We are part of the Maximum Fun family, taping every week live in their studios in the Westlake neighborhood of Los Angeles.
			<i>[Music fades out.]</i>
00:54:34	Sound Effect	Transition	Cheerful ukulele chord.
00:54:35	Speaker 1	Guest	MaximumFun.org .
00:54:37	Speaker 2	Guest	Comedy and culture.
00:54:39	Speaker 3	Guest	Artist owned—
00:54:40	Speaker 4	Guest	—audience supported.