



## Holler If You Hear Me (2006)

By Michael Eric Dyson

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## **Holler If You Hear Me (2006) By Michael Eric Dyson Bibliography**

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## Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

A poor, urban, high school dropout and book-devouring autodidact who'd quote Shakespeare in conversation, Shakur would also sing along to Sarah McLachlan. Dyson (*I May Not Get There with You: The True Martin Luther King, Jr.*), a Baptist minister, reveals the complexity of Shakur and shows why even five years after his death his records, poetry and films continue to sell. "He was not hip-hop's most gifted emcee. Still, Shakur may be the most influential and compelling rapper of them all," writes Dyson. "He was more than the sum of his artistic parts." Complementing Dyson's articulate perspectives on the short life and extraordinary impact of the icon are his emotive interviews with writer Toni Morrison, actress Jada Pinkett Smith (Shakur proposed to her, but was turned down), rapper Mos Def and more than a dozen others. Most striking are the conversations about and with Shakur's beloved mother, a former Black Panther and ex-crack addict. Dyson uses themes in Shakur's raps to examine the larger ills of hip-hop culture such as misogyny and the new hostility between youths and elders without neglecting the rapper's positive acts and intentions. Shakur wanted to "combat the anti-intellectualism of hip-hop," Dyson persuasively writes. (Sept.) Forecast: This book will sell, for Shakur has a huge fan base that has only grown since his death. But more than a music bio, the book will draw the attention of socially conscious readers who are interested in how hip-hop affects society.

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From Library Journal

Ordained Baptist minister and DePaul University professor Dyson (*Between God and Gangsta Rap*, LJ 1/96) here analyzes the life of rapper/actor Tupac Amaru Shakur (1971-96) as a microcosm of black American life and culture. Placing gangsta rap in social and historical context, he thoroughly and thoughtfully considers its key elements as evidenced by Shakur's music and videos, exploring issues like machismo, the simultaneous contempt for and adoration of black women, and black-on-black violence. (Shakur himself was shot to death in a still-unsolved murder.) Dyson discusses these sensitive, controversial subjects with such noted cultural analysts as Khephra Burns and Stanley Crouch, creditably balancing the opinions of rap's supporters, rap's critics, and rappers themselves. Though marred by a few minor errors, this well-written, intelligent, and energetically investigative work will make a valuable addition to academic libraries. The extremely high level of writing renders it unsuitable for fan-oriented biography collections, for which *Tupac Amaru Shakur, 1971-1996* (Three Rivers, 1998) is more appropriate. Bill Piekarski, formerly with Villa Maria Coll. of Buffalo, Cheektowaga, NY

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From [The New Yorker](#)

Ever since the rapper Tupac Shakur was shot to death, in 1996, he not only has been kept in the public eye by numerous posthumous releases but has become, for many young African-Americans, a full-fledged martyr. Dyson's book, a mixture of biography and polemic, examines Tupac both culturally and spiritually through a loosely organized series of meditations that begin in Tupac's childhood (his mother, Afeni, was a Black Panther who later fought a vicious addiction to crack cocaine) and move through his manhood (as a young student, Tupac read voraciously, from Aldous Huxley to Teilhard de Chardin). Occasionally, Dyson's claims for Tupac are a bit grand, but his eclectic reportage—he interviews a wide range of people, some famous, some not—paints a nuanced picture of his subject while illuminating the effect hip-hop has had on America.

## **Users Review**

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