

## ISAIAH RASHAD

### BIOGRAPHY

Words mean what you think they mean and often so much more.

Much like a novelist, Isaiah Rashad poses a question and makes a statement with the title of his second full-length album, *The House Is Burning* [Top Dawg Entertainment]. The implication is, “*The world is in disarray*” (which it is always is). The inquiry is, “*What are we going to do about it?*” Well, the Chattanooga, TN-born and Los Angeles-based artist does what comes naturally. He ponders, he writes, and he raps.

It’s simple, but so much more...

“To me, the title sounds like a book—not a rap album,” he smiles. “I’m really writing my life. The world’s on fire, but nobody cares. It’s an observation. *The House Is Burning*, so are you going to run in there and get your trophy from a couple of years ago and those shoes you like? Or, are you going to move on? Can you grow for yourself? Am I going to sacrifice myself for some old shit? No, I’m going to move on,” he answers.

He keeps moving. That’s why the internet has tried so hard to keep up since he emerged in 2012. After one seismic appearance after another throughout 2013, he formally introduced himself with 2014’s *Cilvia Demo*. *XXL* named him among its prestigious “*Freshman Class*,” while the project earned a rare score of 8.2 from *Pitchfork*. Just two years later, his full-length debut, *The Sun’s Tirade*, bowed in the Top 20 of the *Billboard* Top 200 and closed out 2016 on over a dozen year-end lists, including *UPROXX*, *L.A. Weekly*, *Inverse*, *Stereogum*, *Pop Matters*, *Pigeons & Planes*, *Pitchfork*, and more. In between sold out shows coast-to-coast and racking up nearly 500 million total streams, he quietly stared down his demons out of the spotlight.

“Essentially, I had a relapse, went to rehab, and got better,” he admits. “That’s not my life. Addiction doesn’t dictate who I am. I’ve accepted my decisions. I don’t want anybody to feel bad for me, and I didn’t have it worse than anyone else did. Everything that happened, I did to myself. Now, I’m here to do what I’m supposed to.”

By the time he dove back into the album, life had changed. The process switched up, so he realigned and linked up with new collaborators such as Kenny Beats.

Ready to break a five-year creative silence, he returns with *The House Is Burning*. Drawing inspiration from favorite authors such as Stephen King, the lyricism takes the spotlight, especially on the menacing first single “Lay Wit Ya” [feat. Duke Deuce]. Claustrophobic bass and haunting keys underscore his breathy rhymes before Duke wilds out with a fiery cameo. Meanwhile, throwback horns bleed into skittering siren-laden production on “From The Garden” [feat. Lil Uzi Vert]. Isaiah’s syncopated delivery dips in and out of the pocket as bass thumps, while Lil Uzi Vert serves up a motormouthed verse that’s as fascinating as it is focused. Then, there’s “Claymore,” which teeters between a hauntingly soulful melody and intimate verses.

“This album was difficult,” he sighs. “I love music, but I don’t like to say shit. It’s almost like a game for me. It’s like working out. I don’t want to be redundant. Redundancy in general bothers me. Any song that I make, I usually make it in about 30 minutes to an hour, and that’s it. My ideas come to me immediately.”

While the house is burning, Isaiah’s running forward at full steam once again. Try to catch up.

“Music is where I go to express myself,” he leaves off. “It’s what I do to close a chapter. You know what’s crazy? I’m not even ashamed to say it...I really think my albums aren’t different from each other. Eventually, one of my albums will become a classic. I just love this shit. It’s me.”