



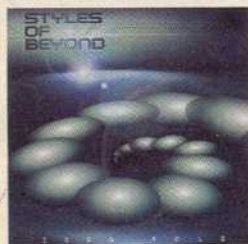
DIVINE STYLER

TITLE...

Directrix: Word Power 2

LABEL...

Bilawn



STYLES OF BEYOND

TITLE...

2000 Fold

LABEL...

Bilawn



Depending on who's bending your ear, Divine Styler is either a cult figure or an unknown figment. He's the only one-hitter ('89's salvo "Ain't Sayin' Nothin'") who can vanish and, almost a decade later, have a magazine named after him (*In Search of Divine Styler*). Imparting Islamicism after Rakim but before Brand Nubian, the Brooklynite's *Word Power* debut was released via Ice-T's Rhyme Syndicate. But nobody got the bad aciditties of '92's *Spiral Walls Containing Autumns of Light*, an internal war of attrition that self-destructed like Jungle Bros.' ill-fated *J Beez Wit tha Remedy*.

By *Directrix: Word Power 2*, Styler has traversed to Mecca and focused his gray matters through Muslim orthodoxy. Strident as ever, the "Satan Dynasty Killa" teleports vocal distortion and programs the bejesus

outta the sampler. The beats will box your lobes into tomorrow. On the title track, DJ Rhetmatic cuts the Styles of Beyond quip "Climb into a time machine," while the strobing keyboard jaunts into the Junior Walker break from "Ain't Sayin' Nothin'." "Hajji" sounds like a rumbling Jeep pilgrimage from Crown Heights to the pyramids.

Labelmates Styles of Beyond's debut, *2000 Fold*, features the beatsmithery of Vin Skully, DJ Revolution, and Divine, and the unmistakable Rakimish tones of MCs Ryu and Tak. "Muuvon" dices the "Good Times" guitar and proves a club joint can still deliver lyrical headknots. On "Gollaxowelcome," they advise: "If you pick up the signal / Send one back." With Divine and Styles, believe in the unknown, and do it at the godspeed of thought. **DAVE TOMPKINS**