L. L. Cool J. (1968-) Encyclopedia Article

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L. L. Cool J. (1968—)

Calling himself the "mic' dominator, best of all time," L. L. (Ladies Love) Cool J. strutted onto the hip-hop scene with his debut album *Radio* in 1985. He was the first artist released under Def Jam's landmark six-figure distribution deal with Columbia Records and rose to prominence when his track "I Can't Live Without My Radio" featured in the movie *Krush Groove* (1985). L. L. Cool J. (born James Todd Smith) is credited with creating rap's first ballad, "I Need Love," a slow, sexy love song to that one special girl. Since then he has released further albums that continued his lyrical braggadocio and rap egotism: *Bigger and Deffer* (1987), *Walking With a Panther* (1989), *Mama Said Knock You Out* (1990), *14 Shots to the Dome* (1993), *Mr. Smith* (1995), and *Phenomenon* (1997).

Further Reading:

Fernando, S. H., Jr. *The New Beats: Exploring the Music Culture and Attitudes of Hip-Hop.* Edinburgh, Payback Press, 1995.

Nelson, Havelock, and Michael A. Gonzales. *Bring the Noise: A Guide to Rap Music and Hip-Hop Culture.* New York, Harmony Books, 1991.