

Corporations Rock!

Remember boring pep rallies in high school when people you didn't like got all pumped up about things you didn't care about? Steve Ballmer, CEO of Microsoft, keeps this tradition alive in his new music video.

Like so many Puff Daddy hits, this video is actually composed entirely of two existing clips. Unlike Puff Daddy, "Developers" is worthy of critical review. It's cobbled together from footage shot at two Microsoft internal pep rallies featuring its dynamic, enthusiastic, and sweat-drenched CEO, Steve Ballmer. In one clip, the "Balding Ballmster," as his wife and employees undoubtedly call him, displays his uncanny talent for repeating the word "developers" fourteen times without mispronouncing it even once. In the second video, a wildly gesticulating Ballmer eschews conventional norms of English expression, opting instead to convey his passion via a series of grunts and yelps. Ballmer hurtles his considerable girth around the stage to the strains of Gloria Estefan in a breathtaking synthesis of schoolgirl-esque skips and Hitleresque arm thrusts. In a stunning denouement, Ballmer reveals his unabashed love for the company that has given him incredible power, unimaginable wealth, and innumerable fatal system errors. The workers in attendance can only agree, basking in the paternal radi-

ance of their benevolent leader.

Sadly, for a long time these two amazing works languished apart from one another, inspiring only a fraction of the mirth their coition would create. Until the day when some brilliant, anonymous artist combined these videos in the most logical way: he chopped them up and set them to a shitty techno song, complete with editing techniques straight out of the Adobe Premiere tutorial. In the hands of this idiot savant, Ballmer's formerly awkward gyrations become the very essence of funk. The video begins by finding a natural rhythm in Ballmer's passionate exhortation, "Developers, developers, developers, developers." Then the beat kicks in, but-tressing this rhythm and giving it a funky fresh flow. Tension mounts as the noun is repeated and the rhythm embellished with a Casio-caliber synth line. Then out of nowhere another sample bursts into the mix: the dramatic shout, "Oh! Oh! Oh oh oh!" The rest of the video builds on this foundation, interweaving more awkward, yelping samples and terrible visual effects.

But this video does more than amuse; it provokes. "Baldmer's" postmodern pot-pourri confronts viewers with the naked reality of our absurd existence. In its bold synthesis of preexisting works, "Develop-

ers" calls into question the very nature of authorship. From its Foucaultian attention to detail to the androgynous Ballmer's questioning of gender norms to its exaltation of software developers, the work paradoxically both challenges and reinforces the late-capitalist paradigm exemplified by Microsoft. Truly, this beautiful work of art will stand forever as a revealing commentary on the human condition. ☹



Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer does the twist. (Check it out at www.yalerecord.com)

