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## Getting Hip to the Hop: A Rap Bibliography/Discography

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**ABSTRACT.** This bibliographic/discographic essay examines works which may be used to develop a core collection on Rap music. A selected bibliography and discography is also provided.

### INTRODUCTION

Research interest has recently emerged in the popular African-American musical idiom known as Rap and continues to grow as social and cultural scholars have embarked on a serious study of Rap music and culture. Therefore, the student, scholar, and general library patron may seek information on Rap and its relationship with the African-American community. During the 1970's, libraries rushed to include in their holdings culturally diverse materials, especially materials on African-American history, literature, and culture. Today, emphasis is placed on cultural diversity, Rap is sometimes deemed to be low art and may be overlooked in the collecting of diverse materials. However, Rap has already celebrated its sixteenth anniversary and, like Rock and Roll, Rap is here to stay.

Rap music research is difficult because (1) the librarian or information provider generally lacks knowledge of the category,<sup>1</sup> and (2) primary/ephemeral materials are not widely accessible.<sup>2</sup> This selective bibliographic and discographic essay examines a variety of Rap resources and materials including biographies, criticisms, discographies, histories, recordings, and serials to help fill the Rap knowledge and culture gap and assist in the development of a core collection on Rap music.

### *Background*

Rap is more than speaking in rhyme with music, reviving old melodies, or "scratchin'" vinyl recordings to a syncopated beat. Rap is the current stage of the evolution of the African-American musical tradition. Rap is the verbal and musical response to late twentieth-century urban decadence and technology.

The verbal and musical elements of Rap began in Africa. The verbal word games of the "signifyin' monkey," "playin' the dozens," and "snaps" are derived from the African adolescent male experience. These word games are used to develop mental and emotional stamina, which

were important lessons in surviving slavery, racism, and poverty. Freestyle (that is, off the cuff and stream of consciousness) Rap is true word improvisation. Rap also utilizes “call and response,” a verbal form commonly used by African-American ministers and politicians to encourage audience response ranging from coming to the altar to turning out to vote. The percussive beat and traditional chants of ancient African rites are found in Rap. The traditional village drummer acted as a griot, or town crier, announcing celebrations, tragedies, and daily life happenings. Rappers, too, announce daily happenings, bemoaning crime, drugs, and racism.

Rap builds upon previous African-American musical styles and artists. “Testifyin’” and “Tellin’ it to the Lord” are spiritual and gospel verbal forms used in Rap. “Scat Singin’,” “Tellin’ it Like it Is” and other Jazz improvisational verbal forms are used in Rap. The vocal harmonizing, four-beat rhythm and electrically amplified instruments from the Rhythm and Blues (R & B) fifties, the Soul sixties, and the Disco seventies are found in Rap.

Rap incorporates samplings or musical excerpts from previously released recordings. The turntable is an essential instrument in Rap. Scratchin’ is used to simulate the sound of a needle being stuck in a vinyl groove. The turntable artist can control the direction and speed of the table. A selected groove or track can be used once or repeatedly to create a rhythmical beat or a melody. The sequencing of these samples and the layering of sounds are known as laying the tracks. Recording tracks from the sixties and ’70s are frequently used. Favorite artists include James Brown, George Clinton, Rick James, and Zapp. The technomusician uses computers to sample commercial jingles, video game tunes, television theme songs, and other musical sources. Rap’s technomusicians are adept masters of synthesizers, studio multitracks, beat boxes, midi instruments, and computers. The future Rapper will undoubtedly bend cyberspace to create and communicate new African-American music.<sup>3</sup>

Rap is part of a cultural movement known as Hip-Hop. Hip-Hop is a positive African-American response to technology, urban decay, and social despair. Hip-Hop culture encompasses art, music, dance, speech, and dress. Oversized clothes, sports, ball caps, boots, graffiti, comics, trading cards, fades, dreds, kente cloth, t-shirts, and allusions to Malcolm X and other cultural icons are found in Hip-Hop.

Rap’s beginnings are commonly attributed to the recording release in 1979 of “Rapper’s Delight” by the Sugar Hill Gang. This record sold more than two million copies. There are two distinct periods in Rap: The Old School (1979-1988) and New Jack Swing (1989-present). Old School Rappers began as disc jockeys (dee jays) performing on radio and at discos and parties. Scratchin’, verbal and body sounds, and a rapid verbal assault are elements of the Old Style. The image of graffiti artists and street dancers “break-in” to huge portable cassette players typifies the period. The movie industry, as a response to the popularity of Rap in the African-American community, released several “good time-feel good” movies, *Bachstreet*, *Breakin*, *Breakin’ II*, *Krush Groove*, and *Flush Dance*, which introduced Rap music to mainstream White America. The Sugar Hill Gang, Kool Here, Grand Master Flash, Kurtis Blow, and Afrika Bambaataa successfully established Rap as a musical idiom. Run-D.M.C.’s *Run D.M.C* Crossover Rap debut album was the first Rap album to go gold and has become a Rap classic.

Cable and satellite television are in part responsible for popularizing Rap. Music Television (MTV), Black Entertainment Television (BET), and other music channels help introduced Rap to the world. MTV was at first reluctant to broadcast Rap and other African-American music videos. However, in 1988 MTV introduced *Yo! MTV Raps*, hosted by Dr. Dre, Ed Lover, and Fab 5 Freddy. Thus, MTV became a reluctant pioneer of Rap music videos.<sup>4</sup>

Sadly, MTV withdrew *Yo! MTV Raps* in 1995 and currently features “light weight” Rap videos as part of its regular programming.

New Jack Swing, the second wave of the genre, Rappers began as Rappers, not as poets or DJs. These Rappers rely upon the new technology in music. The recording studio and computer or midi instruments are just as essential as the verbal style and scratchin’ LPs. Geography or regionalism has helped to determine the various styles of Rap. West Coast Rap can be differentiated from the smoother East Coast Rap by its choice of samplings and hard-hitting lyrics. Gangsta’ Rap style, discussed below, was developed in the West.

Rap can be divided into two general categories: Accepted Rap and Controversial Rap, with seven identifiable styles of modern Rap within these categories. This dichotomy of Rap is not, however, exclusive for Rappers may use or combine several styles.<sup>5</sup>

Accepted Rap styles include Acid Jazz, Crossover Rap, Good-time Rap, and World Rap. Acid Jazz combines Jazz samplings with verbal improvisation. Goodtime Rap or Cool Rap is lyrical and upbeat. Crossover Rap is also called Sell-Out Rap, Bubble Gum Rap, and Rip-Off Rap. Crossover Rap’s lyrics and music often seem nonsensical and use a repetitive dance beat. Goodtime Rap lyrics describe personal experiences, work, romance, sex, school, growing up, and family. World Rap, the mixture of Rap music with traditional indigenous music, illustrates the international popularity of Rap. This Rap encompasses indigenous music from the Latin Beat, Jamaican Dancehall, and Afro-Pop.

Controversial Rap Styles include Conscious Rap, Explicit Rap, and Gangsta’ Rap. Conscious Rap addresses the political, social, and economic issues facing African-American youth. Conscious Rap expresses a positive Black vision of culture, self, and womanhood. However, some Conscious Rap lyrics contain racist and anti-Semitic language. Explicit Rap or Porno Rap uses sexual imagery and a throbbing musical beat. Explicit Rap lyrics often describe the brutalization of women and homosexuals. Gangsta’ Rap or Reality Rap, which receives the bulk of anti-Rap criticism from the conservatives and popular culture critics, is incorrectly used to label all Rap styles.<sup>6</sup> Gangsta’ Rap’s hardcore lyrics reflect the current crime and drug experience of American urban youth.

## **COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT**

Developing a basic core collection on Rap is a considerable task for public, academic, or special libraries. The undertaking requires some commitment of money and time. Whatever the particular information needs of the parent institution, the resources mentioned in this article should relate to any level of collection development in Rap music.

Materials cannot be purchased once but must be updated frequently as new styles and artists emerge. The selection tools used to purchase Rap music may include reference works such as catalogs and journals, patron requests and suggestions, approval plans, and music reviews. Most of the books and sound recordings listed here are available for purchase.

## **MONOGRAPHS**

## **Reference Works**

Although a rich collection exists of ephemeral print materials and sound recordings of Rap, this vast quantity of material lacks documentation and bibliographic control. Fortunately, two bibliographic studies exist that review periodical articles, monographs, and sound recordings from Rap's 1979 beginnings through the end of 1992. Judy McCoy's *Rap Music in the Eighties: A Reference Guide*, covers published materials and recordings from the '80s. More than 95 percent of the reviewed articles are from mainstream periodicals such as *Village Voice*, *Melody Maker*, *New Statesman*, and *People Weekly*. McCoy includes only a few articles from the African-American press. She reviews *Source* and *Word-Up*, two Rap magazines, but their articles are excluded. Her discography provides an overview of the commercial success of the artists. Robert M. Geary's "Rap Music and Its Political Connections: An Annotated Bibliography" From *Reference Services Review* complements McCoy's work with music reference works, dissertations, and critiques on Rap history, feminist Rappers, and Controversial Rappers. Both works offer valuable annotated materials for the casual user as well as the serious researcher.

Many language dictionaries and other reference sources cover African-American language and usage. The rich vocabulary of the Rap community is thoroughly presented in Fab 5 Freddy's *Fresh Fly Flavor: Words and Phrases of the Hip-Hop Generation*. *Fresh Fly Flavor*, written by one of *Yo! MTV Raps* hosts, Fab 5 Freddy a.k.a. Fred Brathwaite, is a comprehensive glossary containing more than four hundred Rap terms and African-American musical idioms. Some entries offer information on the use of words and phrases by Rappers. Fab 5 Freddy also features a list of Rap artists and, for some, their recordings. Geneva Smitherman's *Black Talk: Words and Phrases from the Hood to the Amen Corner* also provides Rap definitions and usage. Smitherman provides an extensive introduction on the history and cultural aspects of African-American pronunciation, language, and terminology. Entries include definitions, etymology, parts of speech and usage, origin, usage note, and cross-references. By recognizing that the language of Rap mirrors African-American popular culture, the crisis of the African-American male, and urban society, a perspective on culture is discerned. *Black Talk* is an indispensable resource in the understanding of Rap lyrics.'

*Rap the Lyrics*, edited by Lawrence A. Stanley, is an early collection of one hundred and fifty lyrics arranged in alphabetical order by artist. An introduction by Jefferson Morely provides a short history of Rap music. The lyrics range from Accepted Rap to Controversial Rap from Afrika Bambaataa to 2 Live Crew. *Rap the Lyrics* and other publications provide written transcripts of the lyrics. Though many Rap sound recordings contain lyrics in the liner notes, some recordings may not; thus, *Rap the Lyrics* and other lyrical transcripts are essential in analyses of Rap music. However, to appreciate fully the art and impact of the lyrics, one must listen to the recordings. Few reference materials contain current information on Rap music and artists. Havelock Nelson and Michael A. Gonzales' *Bring the Noise: A Guide to Rap Music and Hip-Hop Culture*, published in 1991, still remains as one of the first, best, and most significant reference works on Rap music. The biographical entries, each averaging two pages, are arranged in alphabetical order by artist or group and include a list of recordings and often photographs. Nelson provides a personal reflection on Rap and its influence on African-American culture.

## **History**

In the last fifteen years Rap music has become a topic for publishing by chroniclers of popular culture. These publications provide a popular overview of Rap music, culture, and criticism. Of the several Rap histories published, only a few provide a comprehensive overview of the music. Rap histories can be divided into two divisions: Old School (East Coast style) and New Jack City (West Coast style). These histories provide sound bites in the development of Rap music. Most histories include a bibliography, glossary, discography, photographs, and an index.

Early works on Hip-Hop and Rap arose on the East Coast. These works place New York City as the birthplace of Hip-Hop. *Fresh: Hip Hop Don't Stop*, edited by Nelson George et al; *Hip-Hop: The Illustrated History of Break Dancing, Rap Music, and Graffiti* by Steven Hager, and *Rap Attack* by David Toop present early overviews of the place of Rap in Hip-Hop music. All three works discuss the historical roots and rise of Rap music and basic information on the music and culture in the early eighties. A discussion on breakin', graffiti, and the Old School Style is provided. *Rap Attack 2: African Rap to Global Hip-Hop*, rev. ed. by David Toop, is considered a Rap music survey. Toop's essential work is an introduction to Rap music and most importantly its African roots. Further, Toop discusses the musical evolution of African-American music. Originally published in 1984, this 1991 revised edition contains three new chapters on the "Fresh" sounds of Rap. The extended chapters on Conscious Rap and Crossover Rap furnish a well-structured study on these Rap styles.

The issues of race, politics, and culture are often overriding themes in Rap music. These themes are most prevalent in the lyrics of West Coast Rappers. *Say It Loud!, It's Not about a Salary*, and *The New Beats* supply well-designed discussions on these themes in Rap music. *Say it Loud! The Story of Rap Music* by K. Maurice Jones Brookfield is a respectful history on Rap detailing its influence upon African-American youth. Brian Cross's *It's Not about a Salary. . . Rap, Race + Resistance in Los Angeles* presents an overview of West Coast Rappers. The introductory chapter on Latino Rap and interviews with Kid Frost, Ice Cube, Latin Alliance, and other L. A. Rappers offer a meaningful and useful resource on West Coast Rap. Cross's work is important in showing how Rap has transcended the African-American community to influence other oppressed groups. S. H. Fernando, Jr.'s *The New Beats: Exploring the Music, Culture, and Attitudes of Hip-Hop* is a cultural review of Rap and Hip-Hop for the youthful reader. Although adolescent youth is the targeted audience, the adult reader should find the chapters on the importance of studio mixing and orality, or language style, of Rap useful.

### ***Criticism***

During the past three years that Rap music has become a topic for scholarly study, African-American historians and sociologists have shown an academic interest in the relationship between Rap music and the culture and community. This section accommodates general works on African-American popular culture involving reprints of essays in disciplines connected with art, literature, history, culture, sociology, and music. The materials discussed in this section provide background information on the cultural history of African-Americans and offer insight into African-American youth and popular culture. Many of these works offer unique and valuable insight into Rap and should have a place in any musical collection on African-American music.

Rap music is considered synonymous with African-American youth culture. The young African-American male uses rap to discuss his worldview. Many works have been published on the dilemma of the Black male. Haki R. Madhubuti's *Black Men: Obsolete, Single, Dangerous . . .*

is a collection of essays on the status of the African-American male. Haki Madhubuti, formerly Don L. Lee, offers insight on what can be done to ensure the survival of what the author has classified as America's most endangered species. In *Cool Pose: The Dilemmas of Black Manhood in America*, Majors and Mancini document recent research on African-American male culture and describe its political condition as "the dilemma of Black manhood." *Cool Pose* provides background material for the understanding of music, clothes, and signifyin' in African-American adolescent male culture. Another good background book is *The Uptown Kids: Struggle and Hope in the Projects*, by Terry Williams and William Kornblum. Williams and Kornblum delineate the boundaries between Rap, youth, and the urban environment.

Rap is a product of African-American culture and popular culture. Many books and essays have been published during the past five years on African-American popular culture. African-American popular culture has been a focus of many academic anthologies. These anthologies accord a perspective on the relationship of music in everyday African-American life. African-American culture is experiencing a Renaissance or reemergence of Black Thought and culture. *Black Popular Culture*, edited by Gina Dent, is an interesting anthology on African-American culture and its place in White America during the late twentieth century. This collection includes essays on Rap and other African-American music by Cornell West, Houston Baker, and other African-American academicians. *Perspectives of Black Popular Culture*, edited by Harry B. Shaw, includes chapters on the importance of the disc jockey and radio in the African-American community. *Black Popular Music in America*, by Arnold Shaw, is a historical overview on the commercialization of African-American music from Minstrels to Hip-Hop music.

*Rap on Rap: Straight-Up Talk on Hip-Hop Culture*, edited by Adam Sexton, comprises essays by William Safire, Barbara Grizzuti Harrison, Greg Tate, Ice Cube, and other popular culture chroniclers. Most of the essays were previously published in mainstream newspapers and magazines, including the *New York Times*, *Detroit Free Press*, *Billboard*, *New Statesman*, *Time*, and *The Source*. *Rap on Rap* presents views on the meaning of Rap music, lyrics, culture, and censorship. *Microphone Friends*, edited by Tricia Rose and Andrew Ross, is a scholarly reader focusing on the same issues; some essays were specifically adapted or written for this anthology.

*Buppies, B-Boys, Baps & Bohos* and *Flyboy in the Buttermilk* encompass articles and music reviews on Rap previously published by the popular press. *Buppies, B-Boys, Baps & Bohos: Notes on Post-Soul Culture*, by Nelson George, was originally published in article form in the *Village Voice* "Native Son" column. George, acclaimed by some as the voice of African-American pop culture, includes a chronology, criticism, insights, and reviews of artists and their music. *Flyboy in the Buttermilk: Essays on Contemporary America: An Eye Opening Look at Race, Politics, Literature, and Music*, by Greg Tate, is a Hip-Hop review of American popular culture. The author is a founding member of the Black Rock Coalition which is devoted to the preservation and promotion of Rock music in the African-American community from Jimi Hendrix to Living Colour. Tate is a staff writer for *village Voice* and many of these essays were previously published in *Spin* and *Down Beat*.

There are very few scholarly reviews of the Rap aesthetic. W.E.B. Du Bois, Nelson George, and other African-American culturalists have established criteria for Black aesthetics. The African-American aesthetics for music reflects the current musical trends. Nelson George's *The Death of Rhythm and Blues* is a socioeconomic history of the death of Soul music through capitalism and cultural rape. George connects the rise and fall of R & B with the social and political atmosphere of the forties through the eighties. *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America*, by Tricia Rose, from New York University, is one of the first published

serious studies of Rap music. This is a scholarly study of the place of Rap musicians in the community, women and their role in Rap, the technology of Rap, and cultural expression of Rap. The author provides an extensive bibliography for further study and review.<sup>8</sup>

African-American scholars have written numerous commentaries on popular culture. Rap, as a popular culture topic, has been thoroughly critiqued by the African-American intelligentsia. *Outlaw Culture; Reflecting Black; and Black Studies, Rap and the Academy*, address the issues of language, gender, and race in Rap music. In *Black Studies, Rap and the Academy* Houston A. Baker, Jr., renders commentaries on the black aesthetic and Rap. Baker, a Harvard professor, does not defend nor condemn Rap but offers a serious discussion on the impact of Rap and the relationship to Black Studies in White Academia. Bell hook's *Outlaw Culture* is a collection of essays on popular culture from a feminist perspective. This anthology includes a cultural review of Gangsta' Rap and a tete-a-tete with Rapper Ice Cube. *Reflecting Black: African-American Criticism* by Michael Eric Dyson, a professor of Communication Studies at University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, contains previously published articles on African-American popular culture, religion, and social issues. Interestingly, *Signifying Rappers: Rap and Race in the Urban Present*, by Mark Costello and David Foster Wallace uses a freestylin', stream of consciousness design. The authors, two White aficionados of Rap, adapt Rap's lyrical elements into their writing style.

Several important books have been published on Controversial Rap and artists. "The Emergency of Black and the Emergence of Rap" and "Sacred Music of the Secular City from Blues to Rap" are special issues of *Black Sacred Music: A Journal of Theomusicology*, edited by Jon Michael Spencer. "The Emergency of Black and the Emergence of Rap" reviews the culture of Hip-Hop, the influence of the Nation of Islam on Rap, theology in Hip-Hop, and the Rapper as a shaman, and a feminist review of Rap lyrics. This special issue contains a special contribution by social historian C. Eric Lincoln, The "Sacred Music of the Secular City from Blues to Rap" section on Rap consists of essays by African-American popular culture scholars Michael Dyson and Cornell West. *Nation Conscious Rap* and *Stop the Violence* present two positive portrayals of Controversial Rap artists and their music. *Nation Conscious Rap*, edited by Joseph D. Eure and James G. Spady, contains an extensive introduction on the relationship of Rap and politics. More than twenty Rappers and Rap Groups are interviewed and discussed. James G. Spady's essay, "The Business of Hip Hop or Getting Paid" is an important review of the artist versus the record owners and agents. *Stop the Violence: Overcoming Self Destruction*, edited by Nelson George, is a ground-breaking publication on the struggle of African-Americans against gang violence. Published by the National Urban League this book and the subsequent "Self-Destruction" video and sound recording single is part of a nationwide effort to end Black-on-Black crime. Profits from these and other "Self Destruction" projects were donated to the National Urban League.

*The Rap on Gangsta Rap* is a handbook on the political, cultural, and social context of Gangsta' Rap by the executive editor of *The Source*, Bakari Kitwana. Kitwana presents a thoughtful interpretation on the lyrics, words, music, and violence associated with Gangsta' Rap. Julian Shabazz's *The United States of America vs. Hip-Hop: The Historical & Political Significance of Rap Music*, a small illustrated pamphlet, reviews controversial Rappers, including 2Live Crew and Public Enemy. The author also offers a short discussion of how the FBI tried to shut down West Coast Gangsta' Rappers. The author compares the harassment of Rappers with Panthers (a 1960s Black nationalist organization) by law enforcement agencies. He contrasts the Black Power movement of the sixties with the current Hip-Hop movement.

## Biography

Rap biographies exist in several forms. The famine biographies, group biographies, and artists autobiographies complement musical histories on Rap.

The supermarket biographies by *Word Vp*, *Rap Masters*, and other famines offer little insight into the development of artists and their music. Group biographies, though primarily for fans, are issued by mainstream publishers and may present information about Rap artists via interviews and lyrics. *Bring The Noise* presents a superior analysis and review of Rap artists. *Break It Down: The Inside Story from the New Leaders of Rap*, by Michael Small, a fan book on Rap, includes interviews with Afrika Bambaataa, Salt-N-Pepa, and KRS-One. *Rap: Portraits and Lyrics of a Generation of Black Rockers*, by Janette Beckman and B. Adler, combines biographical sketches with lyrics and photographs of Rappers.

Autobiographies offer a unique interpretation by Rap artists on music, culture, and society, although they are often merely publicity aimed at adoring fans. Only three autobiographies deserve further scrutiny. *As Nasty As They Wanna Be: The Uncensored Story of Luther Campbell of the 2Live Crew* describes the life and philosophy of controversial Explicit Rapper Luther Campbell. Chapters on lyrics, court transcripts, and an interview with Campbell provide a unique view of Rap censorship issues. *The Ice Opinion: Who Gives a Fuck?*, by Ice-T, contains informative chapters on his controversial recording "Cop Killer," his Rock group Body Count, and the censorship of Rap music. *Ice Opinion* is affixed with a "Pimptionary/Glossary." The abridged audiobook edition, read by Ice-T, is an excellent oral example of African-American speech and language patterns.<sup>9</sup> *No Disrespect*, by Sister Souljah, is primarily a reflection of her personal relationships and political consciousness.

## SERIALS

Many of these periodicals are not indexed in traditional music indexes such as *RILM Abstracts of Music*, *Bibliographic Guide to Music*, *Music Article Guide*, *The Music Index*, and *Popular Music*, which either ignore or limit coverage of Rap music. *The Source*, *Vibe*, and other music periodicals provide current information on Rap artists and recordings. *Schwann Spectrum*, *Rolling Stone*, and other conventional popular music publications neglect an immense volume of Rap artists and their sound recordings.<sup>10</sup>

*The Beat: Reggae, Caribbean, World Music* is a fine publication on Reggae and World music. This monthly magazine publishes an annual tribute issue on Bob Marley and regularly reviews performances, books, and recordings. *The Beat* also reviews Jamaican Rap known as Dancehall music. *Word Up!* is one of the first Rap famine publications. This magazine is directed to African-American adolescents. "The History of Rap: Rap Masters," (1994) is a fine history by fanzine publisher Word Up! This special issue is lavishly illustrated and contains quotes by New Jack Rappers and presents the status of Rap in the mid '90s. *4080: Hip Hop Magazine* rounds out the '90s fanzines geared to youthful aficionados of Rap. This magazine is one of the few African-American magazines to be accessible via the World Wide Web (<http://www.hooked.net/buzz-net/4080>). *4080*, published monthly in California, does an exceptional job of presenting a street view of Rap.

The next level of famines focuses completely on Rap music. *Rap Sheet*, published monthly, employs an illustrated newspaper style which lists and reviews concerts, and interviews



Rappers. This magazine predominantly features West Coast Rappers. *RapPages: The Magazine with an Attitude* is a well-illustrated magazine containing reviews of recordings, movies, and videos. *RapPages*, published nine times a year, features interviews with hot chart stars.

The final group of Rap magazines represents the elite thinkers and writers of Rap music. *The Source* and *Vibe* are essential periodicals for the research, and study of Rap music. *The Source: The Magazine of Hip-Hop Music, Culture and Politics* is one of the best magazines written by and for the Rap artist. This monthly magazine encompasses all aspects of Rap: comics, dancing, clothes, and books. *The Source*, started by two White Harvard aficionados, Jon Sector and David Mays, has matured into a fine periodical on Rap culture and politics. A 1994 cover story on "The House Crack Built" is a testimony to the magazine's genuine concern about the community. *The Source* was one of the first music publications to go on the information highway ([gopher.eneews.com/11/alphabetic/all/source](http://gopher.eneews.com/11/alphabetic/all/source)). *Vibe* was founded by Quincy Jones to address the cultural art needs of the African-American community. *Vibe*, published ten times a year, covers all forms of African-American music and is one of the first music publications to go on the World Wide Web (<http://Nvibe.com/>). This magazine contains well-written and structured articles and reviews. *Vibe* is unsurpassed in its writing quality and coverage of Rap music.

Rap periodicals, as already noted, are also represented in non-print formats, including the information highway, video, and CD-ROM. The Internet provides a variety of resources to access materials including Telnet and the World Wide Web. The Web brings a multimedia format to your computer via a telecommunication line. *Mbe*, 4080, and other music periodicals offer Web links to recording companies, lyrics, libraries, and personal homepages. Telnet offers periodicals in a text-only format. *The Source* and other music periodicals can be accessed this way.<sup>11</sup>

Other nonprint formats include videos and CD-ROMS, *Rock Mdeo Monthly* contains Rap releases which include a fifty-minute video and *Huh* music magazine. The magazine contains a full description of the video and a description of the other videos in the series, including Pop, Rock, Heavy Metal, and Country. The videos usually feature ten new releases produced by Warner Bros. The companion audio, *Rock Music Monthly*, also contains Rap releases through a subscription, which includes a music release and *Huh* music magazine. Rap interactive CD-ROMS, at the time of this writing, do not exist. However, Rap artists have been featured on CD-ROM discs.<sup>12</sup>

## DISCOGRAPHY

These selected sound recordings represent a core collection of Rap music (1989-present). The listed long-playing albums were chosen because of the impact of both the performers and their performances in the development of Rap as a vocal and musical art.<sup>13</sup> There are seven identifiable styles of Rap: Acid Jazz, Conscious Rap, Crossover Rap, Explicit Rap, Gangsta' Rap, Goodtime Rap, and World Rap. All seven styles borrow elements from each other. Few styles are exclusive. Rappers may use or combine several styles. Thus, Rappers are not restricted to a particular style.

The artists are grouped by style to expedite comprehension. This essay compares and discusses recordings within a category. A selective discography is provided at the end of this essay.<sup>14</sup>

## ***Acid Jazz***

Acid Jazz or Culturalist Rap is Rap with a musical sense that uses innovative Jazz samplings to combine verbal and Jazz improvisation. Acid Jazz Rappers include Digable Planets, Us3, Guru, The Solsonics, and the Groove Collection and use sophisticated samplings from Blues and Jazz.

Rap music enjoys the support of the Jazz establishment. Acid Jazz is the collaboration of Jazz musicians and Rappers. Miles Davis, Stanley Clarke, Branford Marsalis, Herbie Hancock, Quincy Jones, and other Jazz musicians, composers, directors, and producers have supported the development of Rap music. Samples from Miles Davis and Herbie Hancock sound recordings are favorites of Acid Jazz and other Rap styles. Quincy Jones is the founder of *Vibe* and the Qwest recording label. His magazine, label, and current recordings predominantly feature Rap artists and their music. These recordings effectively show the common bonds of Rap with the African-American community and its musical traditions. His *Back on the Block* album introduced Rap to a wider listening audience of African-American musical idioms.

Miles Davis' last recording, *Doo-Bop*, was an early attempt to fuse the two musical elements. Miles has always been in the forefront of African-American music from BeBop through Rap. This album, released posthumously, is considered a critical disappointment. Easy Mo Bee provided the lyrics and mix. The mixing of old tracks, studio tracks, and the lyrics is often unintentionally disjointed. However, Miles may have mixed this recording differently if he were present.

Acid Jazz has two subcategories: the instrumentalists and the lyricists. The instrumentalists include Groove Collective, The Solsonics, and Us3. *Groove Collective* by Groove Collective, and *Jazz in the Present* by The Solsonics represent the growing number of vocalists and instrumentalists who have successfully included elements of Rap in their performances. Digable Planets in *Reachin' (A New Fusion f Time and Space)* and *Blowout Comb* represent a style that incorporates Jazz musical elements into the lyrics. *Reach-in'* includes "Rebirth of Slick (Cool Like Dat)" a popular 1993 single and video release.

Acid Jazz, a relatively new Rap style, has become a strong musical influence upon both Rap and Jazz. Guru, who is both an instrumentalist and a lyricist, is a true Acid Jazz Rapper. He represents the future of Jazz. *Jazzmatazz* Volume I by Guru is a melding of both elements into lyrics samples, and music.

## ***Conscious***

Conscious Rap is music with a message. This Rap speaks to the nineties political, social, and economic issues facing African-American youth. Conscious Rap expresses a positive Black vision of culture, self, and womanhood. This Rap style teaches and preaches. The Nation of Islam and Malcolm X have influenced many Conscious Rappers from Ice Cube to The X-Clan. Five% Nation of Islam is an African-American Islamic sect believing that Black people are the progenitors of civilization and all Blacks are God. Believers include Rakim, Brand Nubians, and Poor Righteous Teachers.<sup>15</sup> Afrocentrism, founded by Dr. Molefi Kete Asante, the intellectual view that uses Africa as the center for interpretation and analysis, has influenced Conscious Rappers. "The Native Tongues Posse" is the formal name for De La Soul, The Jungle Brothers, Queen Latifah, A Tribe Called Quest, and Monie Love who believe and musically practice

Afrocentrism. Arrested Development, KRS-One, Public Enemy, and The X-Clan are also Afrocentric practitioners. The X-Clan organized Black Watch, KRS-One founded Edutainment, and others, too, have gone beyond fan clubs by establishing grassroots political organizations to combat crime, end drug abuse, and work for a brighter future in the African-American community. Conscious Womanist Rappers or Sisters with a Message foremothers include Pearl Bailey, Millie Jackson, Moms Mabley, Betty Carter, and other performers. Sister Souljah, Queen Latifah, Nefertiti, Isis, Me'Shell NdegeOcello, and other feminist Rappers speak of pride, self love, and the power of a strong Black woman.<sup>16</sup>

Conscious Rap has three subcategories: the politicians, the culturalists, and the feminists. The politicians are represented by Public Enemy, KRS-One, and the X-Clan. *Fear of a Black Planet* by Public Enemy is one of the first commercially successful Conscious Rap albums. This recording, though very accusatory against Whites, was nevertheless popular with White youth with the help of a heavy rock beat. Selections include "Fight the Power" from the *Do the Right Thing* movie soundtrack, "Welcome to the Thunder-dome," and "911 Is a Joke." *By All Means Necessary*, by Boogie Down Productions, has a memorable album cover: KRS-One, group member, posturing or copping a Malcolm X pose is a classic in the cultural politics of Hip-Hop. *By All Means Necessary* lyrics attack racism, violence, and ignorance through edutainment. *Return of the Boom Bap* by KRS-One, an Old Style Rap reborn, is one of KRS-One's best artistic accomplishments. He combines political consciousness with street imagery and fast beats. *To the East, Blackwards* by X-Clan is a favorite among Conscious Rap listeners. Critics have accused X-Clan of anti-Semitism and racism. This recording contains heavy sampling from George Clinton.

The culturalists are represented by The Disposable Heroes of Hiphoprisy, A Tribe Called Quest, De La Soul, and Arrested Development. *Hypocrisy is the Greatest Luxury*, by The Disposable Heroes of Hiphoprisy, follows in the footsteps of Gil Scott-Heron. The recording includes "famous and Dandy (Like Amos 'N Andy)," and "Language of Violence." *Midnight Marauders* by A Tribe Called Quest, Native Tongues Rappers, uses samplings from Jazz and Soul music. *3 Feet High and Rising* by De La Soul uses a Native Tongues style featuring children's rhymes and a Goodtime Rap theme. The recording includes the breakthrough single "Me Myself and I." *3 Years, 5 Months and 2 Days in the Life of . . .* by Arrested Development displays an Afrocentric Peoples Rap style. The group wrote and performed the theme song for the *Malcolm X* movie soundtrack, "Revolution." The group's multimedia performance art includes African drummers and dancers. Arrested Development follows Sun Ra, a Jazz artist, and George Clinton, a funk practitioner in the improvisational tradition. This recording includes the thought-provoking "Tennessee." *Zingalamaduni*, Arrested Development's second album, marks the group as determinant philosophers of the Hip-Hop culture.

Many women including MC Lyte, Monie Love, Sister Souljah, and Queen Latifah use the feminist Conscious Rap style. Most female Rappers use the Goodtime Rap style. Notwithstanding, there are a few woman Rappers who represent the womanist concept of Black Pride, Black love and Black self.<sup>17</sup> *L.I. F.E. (Living in Fear of Extinction)* by Nefertiti uses a Feminist Rap style. Isis, an X-Clan Black Watch disciple, uses strong political imagery on *Rebel Soul*, her first album release. The recording includes several vocal cameos by her mentor, Professor X, founder of the X-Clan. The lyrics of *360 Degrees of Power* by Sister Souljah, a Public Enemy devotee, angered candidate Bill Clinton, which resulted in a *Newsweek* cover story.<sup>18</sup> That recording includes "African Scaredy Katz" and a duet with Ice Cube on "Killing Me Softly: Deadly Code of Silence."

## *Crossover*

Crossover Rap has been called Sell-Out Rap, Bubble Gum Rap, and Rip-Off Rap. Crossover Rap's music and lyrics often seem nonsensical and repetitive. This style of Rap is more acceptable to commercial White America, just as Paul Whiteman, Glenn Miller, Elvis, and others were more acceptable than Louis Armstrong, Count Basie or Chuck Berry to previous White generations. M.C. Hammer (now Hammer), Vanilla Ice, Beastie Boys, and others who commercialize Rap are considered acceptable entertainers in mainstream American culture and music. However, no White performer has yet emerged as the "Great White Hope of Rap." There are two subcategories in Crossover Rap: Sell-Out and White Out. M.C. Hammer continues to receive criticism for being a Sell-Out or Commercial Rapper. Hammer sampled Rick James exclusively in his early recordings like *Please Hammer Don't Hurt Em*. Hammer, at his commercial height, did Taco Bell commercials, an NBC Saturday morning cartoon, and won a Grammy for his Las Vegas style performances. His recent release, *The Funky Headhunted* uses the Gangsta' Rap style imagery, and has increased the wrath of many Rap enthusiasts and critics regarding Hammer's musical sincerity.

White Out is a package term for selling Rap music to the White mainstream. *To the Extreme* by Vanilla Ice, an Elvis Rap wannabe, was a tremendous commercial success. However, he did not achieve the same success with subsequent recording releases *Extremely Live and Mind Blowing*. Vanilla Ice appeared and recorded the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* soundtrack theme.

The Beastie Boys, The House of Pain, and 3rd Bass compose a group of White Rappers that receive "props" (respect) from some African-American Rappers. However, the African-American community at-large views these Rappers as dilettantes or usurpers. The Beastie Boys introduce an interesting enigma in the classification of Rap. *Licensed to ILL*, the Beastie Boys first album, contains two hit singles: "Fight for Your Right (To Party)" and "Brass Monkey." The group's musical skills and artistic contribution to Rap music are yet to be determined. Their new album *ILL communication* has received accolades from Rock music critics.

## *Explicit*

Explicit Rap or Porno Rap uses sexual imagery and a throbbing musical beat. Explicit Rap lyrics have been accused of brutalizing women and homosexuals. These Rappers perceive themselves as carrying on the tradition of social humorists like Red Foxx, Pigmeat Markham, and Richard Pryor, known for their "blue" jokes and party records. Explicit Rappers are recognized by their burlesque performances and raunchy lyrics. Slick Rick, Too Short, 2Live Crew, and Ice-T have used the Explicit Rap Style.

There are two subcategories in Explicit Rap: "Who Gives a Fuck" and the signifyers. "Who Gives a Fuck" is the subtitle from Ice-T's autobiography. He purposely utilizes explicit words and violent imagery for shock value. Body Count & Ice-T categorize themselves as a Heavy Metal Rock group, not as a Rap group. Their recording, *Body Count*, contains sexually graphic and explicit lyrics. Time-Warner canceled Ice-T's recording contract due to the controversy surrounding this album. The Fraternal Order of Police (FOP), Charlton Heston, and former Vice President Dan Quayle have assailed the recording and Ice-T. The focus of censorship "glock" was "Cop Killer." "Cop Killer" contained lyrics that spoke of "whacking" a dishonest law enforcement official. The American Patrolman's League and other members of law enforcement supported

Ice-T during the controversy but Time-Warner acquiesced to the criticism and the track “Cop Killer” was later removed from the subsequent censored version of this album and the original recording was recalled from store shelves.<sup>19</sup>

2Live Crew, Slick Rick, and Too Short represent the signifiers whose lyrics have roots in “playin’ the dozens” or snaps. *As Nasty as They Want to Be* by 2 Live Crew, a significant recording in battling censorship and upholding First Amendment rights, includes Explicit Rap tracks from “Throw the D” to “Me So Horny.” 2Live Crew is also the first known Rap group to be banned from performing on moral grounds.

## ***Gangsta’***

Gangsta’ Rap or Reality Rap, which has received the bulk of anti-Rap criticism, has been incorrectly used to define all Rap styles. This Rap reflects the current crime and drug experience of American life. Gangsta’ Rappers follow in the African-American tradition of the trickster, Bre’r Rabbit, John Hammer, Ice Berg Slim, Stagger Lee, Nat Turner, and other “Bad Boys” of African-American culture. The nineties’ tricksters, roughnecks, B-boys, gang-bangers, drug dealers, and pimps are the heroes of the hardcore lyrics. *Niggers With An Attitude* (N.W.A.), Ice-T, Ice Cube, Eazy E, Snoop Doggy Dogg, Geto Boys, Naughty by Nature, Warren G, Wu-Tang Clan, and 2PAC use the Gangsta’ Rap style.

There are two subcategories of Gangsta’ Rap: The Griots and Gangbangers. The Griots describe everyday happenings on the streets. The Gangbangers are gang members who also record Rap music.

Ice-T, N.W.A., Ice Cube, Dr. Dre, Eazy E (1963-1995), and Snoop Doggy Dogg, Geto Boys, and 2Pac are griots. *Original Gangster*, Ice-T’s first recording, introduced West Coast Gangsta’ Rap to the world. This breakthrough album released the business and artistic hold of the East Coast on Rap. *Eazy-Duz-It* (Ruthless, 1988), released by Eazy E, was later released as *Straight Outta Compton* (1988), the first recording release under the name N.W.A. It features Raps by Eazy E and Ice Cube. *NIGGARZ4LIFE* or *Efil4zaggin*, one of N.W.A.’s last recorded albums as a group, has the notoriety of being censored by the Sno-Isle Public Library System. The importance of N.W.A. cannot be emphasized enough: N.W.A.’s *NIGGARZ4LIFE* became the first Gangsta’ Rap recording to reach number 1 on the Billboard charts despite the explicit lyrics and ghetto imagery. This group is important for spawning the successful careers of Ice Cube, Dr. Dre, D.O.C., MC Ren, and Eazy E.

Ice Cube, Dr. Dre, and Eazy E continued to influence the development of all Rap music styles. *AmeriKKKa’s Most Wanted* by Ice Cube is his first solo recording after his departure from N.W.A. This recording continues Compton style Gangsta’ Rap. Ice Cube later remixed this album with some new material for *Kill at Will. Lethal Injection* by Ice Cube interweaves Conscious and Gangsta’ Rap styles. Included in this recording is “Pop Gun,” a coordinated effort with seventies Funkmaster George Clinton. Ice Cube has ventured into the film industry with the production of the film and soundtrack *Friday. The Chronic* by Dr. Dre is a Death Row Production which includes former N.W.A. members. Dr. Dre, who owns the label, mixed and produced the album. Eazy E’s recordings, such as *It’s On (Dr. Dre) 187um Killa*, are notable for the lyrical and visual attacks on former N.W.A. members.<sup>20</sup> Sadly, Eazy E died of complications due to AIDS. His death had a profound impact on the Rap community. Eazy’s illness, unlike Michael “Magic” Johnson’s,

hit closer to home. The fast life style and live for “t’ day” outlook of the Rap community are being reexamined by both the artists and the listeners.<sup>21</sup>

The highly successful album *Doggystyle* by Snoop Doggy Dogg went through the *Billboard* roof after he appeared hand-cuffed on the cover of *Newsweek*. Snoop later was named the "1994 *Billboard* Male Artist of the Year," *Geto Boys* by Geto Boys is the second released album by the Houston-based Gangsta’ Rap group. This recording includes “Mind of a Lunatic,” “Scarface,” and “Trigga Happy Nigga.” Their first release, *Making Trouble* (1988) was release under the name Ghetto Boys. This recording includes the very successful track “Assassins.”

2Pac uses a voice-over dubbing style and gangland imagery on *2Pacalypse Now*, his first recording release. Along with his film roles, 2Pac has made this and other recordings best-sellers. *Strictly 4 my N.I.G.G.A.Z. ...*, his second recording, is an artistic and commercial success. This recording includes “I Get Around,” “Souljah’s Revenge,” and the title cut. *Me Against the Worlds* released after his incarceration for sexual assault, has received heavy rotation from the community. *Ain ’t No Other*, MC Lyte’s third release, dismantled the male grasp of Gangsta’ Rap. The track “Ruffneck” is a favorite of B-boys and Buppies.

The Gangbangers, as mentioned above, are gang members who record Rap. *Bangin on Wax by Bloods & Crips* is Gangsta’ Rap from true West Coast Gangstas. The first track is full of peace, brotherhood, and community harmony; otherwise, both crime organizations give a boastful gangbanger’ performance. Other urban gangs have released street or bootlegged tapes.

## **Goodtime**

Cool Rap or Goodtime Rap is lyrical and upbeat. Cool Rap speaks to personal experiences such as work, romance, sex, school, growing up, and family. The vocal crooners, known as Romeos or Macks, use smooth Rap to convince and persuade women of their affections and sexual skills. R. Kelly, Montell Jordan, Heavy D, En Vogue, and other songsters or crooners use Rap to explain these emotions. Big Daddy Kane, YoYo, MC Lyte, TLC, Kid ’N Play, Salt-N-Pepa, Kriss Kross, and Digital Underground use elements from the Goodtime Rap style.

*Mama Said Knock You Out*, by L.L. Cool J., is one of Rap’s most commercially successful albums and includes the chart hit “The Bodmin<sup>1</sup> System.” L.L. Cool J. defined the Goodtime Rap style. *Hard and Smooth* by Wreckx-N-Effect is a popular New Jack style album that includes “Rump Shaker” and “New Jack Swing II.” Many Rappers have sampled “Rump Shaker” for their own performances and recordings.

Goodtime Rap does not contain a specific subcategory; nevertheless it may be divided by gender. Women dominate this Rap style. *Ain’t No Other*, MC Lyte’s third album release, proves a sister can Rap Gangsta’s style. This highly successful recording includes the chart buster “Ruffneck.” *All Hail the Queen*, Queen Latifah’s first album, and other recordings released between 1989 and 1990 introduced the Rap-buying public to women Rappers. *All Hail the Queen* includes “The Pros” which uses a sampling from Miles Davis. *Blacks’ Magic*, Salt-N-Pepa’s third recording release, is very positive and focuses on pride in self and body. The recording contains “Express Yourself and other commercially successful tracks. The group’s preceding recordings, *A Blitz of Salt-N-Pepa Hits* and *Very Necessary*, were also commercial successes. *Down to Earth*, by Monie Love, from Great Britain, utilizes Goodtime Rap style speaking to the growin’ up pains of the eighties. Monie Love is featured with Queen Latifah on “Ladies First” on Latifah’s first album.

## **World Rap**

World Rap epitomizes the international popularity of Rap. World Rap is the mixture of the African-American Rap art form with traditional indigenous music. This Rap includes the Latin Beat of Kid Frost, Latin Alliance, Kid Creole, MD MC's, the Jamaican Dancehall style of Shabba Ranks, Cutty Ranks, Shinehead, Patra, and the Afro-Pop beat of African traditional polyrhythms and ritualistic chants. World Rap includes music from Europe and Asia.

*As Raw as Ever* is Shabba Ranks's first American album. Critics often compare Shabba to Hammer due to his Rip-off Rap style and show-time dance performances. Most of Shabba's lyrics are explicit. However, the sampling and heavy beat box use is dependent on the use of the new technomusical instruments. Maxi Priest and KRS-One are both featured on the album. *The Real Rock* by Shine-head introduced Shinehead's Rap, Reggae, and Dancehall fusion to North America. Tracks include "The Real Rock" and a video game inspired "Pinball Wizard." The *Stopper* by Cutty Ranks is Gangsta' Rap (Rude Boy) from a Jamaican Dancehall stylist and includes "Pon Pause," "Hand Grenade," and "Original Rude Boy Style." Patra's *Queen of the Pack* recording introduced Jamaican Dancehall queens to the American buying public.

*Hispanic Causing Panic* by Kid Frost is a founder of L.A. Hispanic/Latino West Coast Rap. Successfully fusing Rap with urban Latin music, his recording includes Conscious Rap "La Raza." MC Solaar's recording, *Prose Combat*, confirms the spread and popularity of Rap worldwide. The Acid Jazz style of Solaar, born in Senegal and raised in France, decries world racism and poverty and is consistent with his American contemporaries.<sup>22</sup>

## **Anthologies**

Compilation albums are great listening resources for specific styles of Rap, musical overview, and record label artists. The listed recordings offer a basic overview of Rap music.

*The Message from Beat Street* anthology of Rap classics includes "The Message," "New York, New York," and "Beat Street." This recording is an essential purchase for any serious Rap collection. *Hip Hop Greats* features selections from the Old School Rappers: Mellow Mel, Grandmaster Flash, and Kurt is Blow. The recording includes "The Message," "The Breaks," "Rapper's Delight," and "Roxanne." *Bust a Rap* includes early New Jack City Raps by De La Soul, Ice Cube, Wreckx-N-Effect and Queen Latifah. *1st Ladies of Rap*, though a poor technical reproduction, presents a fine selection of popular Rap cuts from the Sisters: Queen Latifah, MC Trouble, Monie Love, Nikki D, Sister Souljah, and other female Rappers. *Planet Rap: A Sample of the World* contains a fine selection of Rappers from around the world. Every continent, with the exception of Australia, is represented on this album which includes MVP, MC Solaar, Bootfunk, and other international Rappers.

*Straight from the Hood* features the music of Geto Boys, N.W.A., Ice Cube, and other Gangsta' Rappers from the Priority label. Tracks included are "Mind Playing Tricks On Me" and "Boyz-N-The-Hood." *Explicit Rap: Original Master Recordings* also features Priority artists and other Explicit Rappers including Ice Cube, Two Short, N.W.A., and 2Live Crew. Featured are "Me So Homey," "The Product," and "No Sell Out." *State of Emergency*, a Conscious Rap anthology, highlights artists Ukfe Finesse, 3 Deep, Ice-T, The Pharcyde, and Minister Farrakhan. This recording is important for featuring politically inspired explicit lyrics.

*Hip-Hop 'N Jazz: A Street Mix* proceeds go to the Ronald McDonald Houses. This special compilation recording contains selections from Digable Planets, Jazzmatazz, Us3, and other Acid Jazz Rappers. *Dancehall Style: The Best of Reggae Dancehall Music*, a four-volume set, introduces various Jamaican Dancehall stylists including Shelly Thunder, Nardo Ranks, Shabba Ranks, Patra, Freddie McGregor, and Gregory Peck.

### **Soundtracks**

Rap has played a significant role in African-American film making in the 1990s. The movie industry released several commercial features in the mid eighties. *Backstreet*, *Breakin*, *Breakin' II*, *Krush Groove*, and even *Flash Dance* introduced Hip-Hop music to the movie-going public. *Colors*, released in 1988, is an early gang movie from director Dennis Hopper. *Colors*, a definitive West Coast Rap soundtrack, introduced the nation to Ice-T and South Central. Soundtracks are more than a commercial asset to a film. The music enhances the message and meaning of the film and the African-American filmmaker.

The soundtrack of Spike Lee's film, *Do the Right Thing*, features "Fight the Power" by Public Enemy. "Fight the Power," the theme track, introduces Rap music to the serious viewing audience. The soundtrack includes Take 6, Ruben Blades, and other non-Rap musical artists. Lee featured Rap music in his succeeding films including *Crooklyn*, *Malcolm X*, and *Clockers*. The movie *New Jack City* is considered the best urban gangster genre film. The soundtrack features Ice-T, Keith Sweat, Queen Latifah, and 2Live Crew and was the first crime film to include Gangsta' Rap on the entire soundtrack. Director Mario Van Peebles' later films did not meet the same artistic and commercial success as *New Jack City*. However, the subsequent soundtracks for *Posse*, *Gunmen*, and *Panther* did sell well. The *Boyz n the Hood* soundtrack, released under the Quincy Jones label, John Singleton executive producer, showcased L.A. Hip-Hop and Gangsta' Rap musical styles. The *Menace II Society* soundtrack features Brand Nubian, Boogie Down Productions, and Too Short. *Juice* is a Brooklyn coming-of-age film a la Spike Lee graduate Ernest Dickerson. Its recording features Naughty By Nature, Eric B. & Rakim, Big Daddy Kane, Too Short, Cypress Hill, and other Rappers. *Bad Boys* and *Tales from the Hood* are recent soundtrack releases that feature Rap music.

*House Party* and the subsequent sequels, *House Party I*, *II* and *III*, introduced the screen audience to Goodtime Rap. Kid 'N Play, who had lead roles in the films, Flavor Flav, Wreckx-N-Effect, and Eric B. & Rakim are featured on the soundtrack. These soundtracks have enjoyed more commercial success than Kid 'N Play's solo recording releases. *House Party* introduces the audience to coming-of-age film that is not gang related. *Above the Rim; The Soundtrack*, an Interscope Records production with Dr. Dre as the supervising music producer features 2PAC, Al B. Sure, and Sisters With Voices (SWV). *Jason's Lyric: Music from the Soundtrack* is a combination of current R & B with the sounds of Rap music. *Poetic Justice* the second film from John Singleton, who also served as the executive producer of the soundtrack, did not meet the expectations of the film critics. *Poetic Justice: Music from the Motion Picture* includes performances by 2PAC, TLC, Babyface, Stevie Wonder, and Dogg Pound. *South Central* is Oliver Stone's film campaign into South Central L.A. The soundtrack is an interesting interweave of seventies disco and nineties hardcore Rap.

The *Deep Cover* soundtrack features dark music for a dark movie. Director Bill Duke wrote in the liner notes, "This album as well as my film is dedicated to those screaming desperate



voices of hopelessness and fear that are neither heard nor given the dignity of recognition.” *Deep Cover* was one of the first non-gang films to include Rap music as a part of the soundtrack. *White Men Can't Jump* and *White Men Can't Rap* is Ron Shelton's interracial buddy movie on street ball hustling. Rhythm and Blues predominates the first soundtrack release; Rap permeates the follow-up album. Recordings include Boyz II Men, Queen Latifah, Cypress Hill, Main Source, and Gang Starr.

Rap music is also used in documentary soundtracks such as *Hoops*, *The Show*, and *Murder Was the Case*. *Hoops* is a basketball odyssey of two African-American males. The soundtrack contains music from local Chicago artists. *The Show* is a tribute to the commercial success of Def Jam owner Russell Simmons. Unfortunately, noticeably missing from the recorded soundtrack are the live performances of Wu-Tang Clan, Snoop Doggy Dogg, and Warren G. Run DMC, who were featured in the film. *Murder* is a nightmarish film and soundtrack based upon Snoop Doggy Dogg's murder arraignment in California. The soundtrack captures the essence of Snoop's and the Dogg Pound's West Coast Gangsta' Rap style.

## CONCLUSION

This essay “Getting Hip to the Hop” has covered many popular publications on the cultural and social impact of Rap music. The body of popular publications on this African-American musical form covers a range of topics including music, sociology, urban studies, and African-American studies. Works examined in this essay may be used as starting points for both the casual reader and the serious music student. Rap music deserves a place in the academic cumcula and to be a part of library holdings.<sup>23</sup>

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*Solsonics: Jazz in the Present Tense* (Chrysalis, 1994).

us3.  
*Hand on the Torch* (Blue Note, 1993).

### ***Conscious Rap***

Arrested Development.  
*3 Years, 5 Months and 2 Days in the Life of..* (EMF, 1992).  
*Zingalamaduni* (Chrysalis, 1994).

Boogie Down Productions.  
*Criminal Minded* (B-Boy, 1987).  
*By All Means Necessary* (Jive, 1988).  
*Ghetto Music: The Blueprint of Hip Hop* (Jive, 1989).  
*Edutainment* (Jive, 1990).  
*Live Hardcore Worldwide* (Jive, 1991).  
*Sex and Violence* (Jive, Zomba Recording Corp., 1992).

The Disposable Heroes of Hiphoprisy,  
*Hypocrisy Is the Greatest Luxury* (4th & B'Way, 1992).

Isis.  
*Rebel Soul* (4th B'Way, 1990).

KRS-One.

*Return of the Boom Bap* (Jive, 1993).

Me' Shell NdegeOcello.

*Plantation Lullabies* (Maverick, 1993).

Nefertiti.

*L.I.F.E. - (Living in Fear of Extinction)* (Mercury, 1994).

Public Enemy.

*Yo! Bum Rush the Show* (Def Jam Recordings, 1987). *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back* (Def Jam Recordings, 1988). *Fear of a Black Planet* (DefJam Recordings, 1990). *Apocalypse 91* (Def Jam Recordings, 1991). *Greatest Misses* (Sony Music Entertainment, 1992).. *Muse Sick-Sickn-Hour Mess Age* (Def Jam Recordings, 1994).

Sister Souljah.

*360 Degrees of Power* (Sony Music Entertainment, 1992).

A Tribe Called Quest.

*Peoples Instinctive Travels and Paths of Rhyme* (Jive, 1990). *Low End Theory* (Jive, 1992). *Midnight Marauders* (Jive, 1993).

X-Clan.

*To the East Blackwards* (New York: 4th & Broadway, 1990).  
*Xodus, The New Testament* (New York:Polygram Records, 1992).

### ***Crossover Rap***

Beastie Boys.

*Licensed to ILL* (Def Jam Recordings, 1986).  
*Paul's Boutique* (Beastie Boys Records, 1989).  
*Check Your Head* (Grand Royale, 1992).  
*ILLcommunication* (Grand Royale, 1994).

MC Hammer.

*Let's Get It Started* (Capitol, 1988).  
*Please Hammer Don't Hurt Em* (Capitol, 1990).  
*Too Legit to Quit* (Capitol, 1992).  
*The Funky Headhunter* (Gian Records, 1994).

Vanilla Ice.

*To the Extreme* (SBK, 1990).  
*Extremely Live* (SBK, 1991).  
*Mind Blowin* (SBK, 1994).

## ***Explicit Rap***

Body Count.

*Body Count* (Sue Records, 1992). *Body Count [II]* (Sire Records, 1992). *Born Dead* (Virgin, 1994).

Slick Rick.

*Great Adventures of Slick Rick* (Def Jam, 1988).

*The Ruler's Back* (Def Jam, 1991).

Too Short. *Life is Too Short* (Dangerous Music, 1988).

*Short Dogs in the House* (Jive Records, 1990).

*Short Dogs in the House [II]* (Zomba, 1990).

*Short Dogs in the House [III]* (Zomba, 1990).

*Get in Where You Fit in* (Jive Records, 1993).

2Live Crew.

*As Nasty as They Wanna Be* (Luke Records, 1989).

*As Clean as They Wanna Be* (Luke Skywalker, 1989).

*Move Somethin'*  (Luke Skywalker, 1989).

*Move Somethin' II* (Luke Skywalker, 1989).

*Banned in the USA* (Luke Records, 1990).

*As Nasty as They Wanna Be: Sports Weekend* (Luke Records, 1991).

*As Clean as They Wanna Be: Sports Weekend* (Luke Records, 1991).

*2Live Crew's Greatest Hits* (Luke Records, 1991).

## ***Gangsta' Rap***

Dr. Dre.

*The Chronic* (Interscope Records, 1992).

Eazy E.

*Eazy-Duz-It* (Ruthless, 1988).

Geto Boys.

*Geto Boys* (Def American Recordings, 1990).

*Grip It/On That Other Level* (Rap-A-Lot, 1989).

*Till Do Us Part* (Rap-A-Lot, 1993).

*We Can't Be Stopped* (Rap-A-Lot, 1991).

Ice Cube.

*Kill at Will* (Priority Records, 1990).

*Amerikkka's Most Wanted* (Priority Records, 1990).

*Lethal Injection* (Priority Records, 1993).  
*The Predator* (Priority Records, 1992).

Ice-T.  
*Freedom of Speech* (Sire, 1987).  
*Original Gangster 0.G.* (Sire, 1991).

N.W.A. (Niggers with an Attitude).  
*Straight Outta Compton* (Ruthless Records & Priority Records, 1989).  
*N.W.A. and The Posse* (Ruthless Records & Priority Records, 1989).  
*"NIGGARZ4LIFE"* (Ruthless Records & Priority Records, 1991).

Snoop Doggy Dogg.  
*Doggystyle* (Death Row Records, 1993).

2Pac.  
*2Pacalypse Now* (Interscope Records, 1991).  
*Strictly 4 My N.I. G. G.A.Z.* (Interscope Records, 1993)  
*Me Against the World* (Interscope Records, 1995).

### ***Goodtime Rap***

De La Soul.  
*3 Feet High and Rising* (Tommy Boy, 1989)  
*De La Soul is Dead* (Tommy Boy, 1991).  
*Buhloone Mind State* (Tommy Boy, 1993).

Digital Underground.  
*Sex-Packets* (Tommy Boy, 1990).  
*Sons of the P* (Tommy Boy, 1991).

Kris Kross.  
*Totally Krossed* (Ruffhouse/Columbia, 1992).  
*Da Bomb* (Ruffhouse/Columbia, 1993).

L.L. Cool J.  
*Mama Said Knock You Out* (Def Jam, 1990).

MC Lyte.  
*Lyte as a Rock* (First Priority Music, 1988).  
*Act Like You Know* (First Priority Music, 1991).  
*Ain 't No Other* (First Priority Music, 1993).

Monie Love.  
*Down to Earth* (Warner Brothers, 1990).

*In a Word Or 2* (Warner Brothers, 1993).

Queen Latifah.

*Nature of a Sista ' (Tommy Boy, 1991).*

*Black Reign* (Motown Co., 1993).

*AN Hail the Queen* (Tommy Boy, 1989).

Salt-N-Pepa.

*Black's Magic* (Next Plateau Records, 1990).

*A Blitz & Salt-N-Pepa Hits: The Hits Remixed: It's Time for Cuts, Beats, & Rhymes* (Next Plateau Records, 1990).

*Very Necessary* (Next Plateau Records, 1993).

Wreckx-M-Effect.

*Wreckx-N-Effect* (Atlantic, 1988).

*Wreckx-N-Effect* (Motown, 1989).

*Hard or Smooth* (MCA Records, 1992).

## ***World Rap***

Cypress Hill.

*Black Sunday* (Ruffhouse, 1993).

Cutty Ranks.

*The Stopper* (Fashion Records, Ltd., 1991).

*Lethal Weapon* (VP Records, 1991).

Kid Frost.

*Hispanic Causing Panic* (Virgin Records, 1990).

*East Side Story* (Virgin Records, 1992)

Latin Alliance.

*Latin Alliance* (Virgin Records, 1991).

MC Solaar.

*Prose Combat* (Cohiba, 1994).

Patra.

*Queen of the Pack* (Epic, 1993).

Shabba Ranks.

*As Raw as Ever* (Epic, 1991).

*Rappin' With the Ladies* (VP Records, 1990).

*Mr. Maximum* (Pow Wow, 1992). *Xtra Naked* (Epic, 1992).

*Rough & Ready, Vol I* (Epic, 1992).



*Rough & Ready. Vol. II* (Epic, 1993).  
*No Competition* (Radikal Records & Critique Records, Inc., 1993).  
*A Mi Shabba* (Epic, 1995).

Shinehead.

*The Real Rock* (Elektra, 1990).  
*Sidewalk University* (Elektra, 1992).  
*Troddin'* (Elektra, 1994).

## **ANTHOLOGIES**

*B-Balls Best Kept Secret* (Immortal/Epic Street, 1994).  
*Bust a Rap* (Priority Records, 1990).  
*Dancehall Style: The Best of Reggae Dancehall Music (I-IV)* (Profile Records, 1989-1993).  
*Explicit Rap: Original Master Recordings* (Priority Records, 1990).  
*1st Ladies of Rap: Various Artists* (K-tel International, 1992).  
*Hip Hop Greats: Classic Raps* (Rhino Records, Inc., 1990).  
*Hip-Hop 'N Jazz: A Street Mix* (CEMA, 1994).  
*Message from Beat Street; The Best of Grandmaster Flash, Melle Mel & The Furious Five* (Rhino, 1994).  
*NBA Jam Session* (MCA, 1994).  
*Planet Rap: A Sample of the World* (Tommy Boy, 1993).  
*Pump Ya Fist: Hip Hop Inspired by the Black Panthers* (Avatar Records, 1995).  
*State of Emergency Society in Crisis (Vol. I)* (Mad Sounds, 1994).  
*Stolen Moments: Red Hot + Cool* (Red Hot, 1994). *Straight from the Hood* (Priority Records, 1991).  
*Thug Life, Volume I* (Interscope Records, 1994).

## **SOUNDTRACKS**

*Above The Rim; The Soundtrack* (Death Row Records, 1994).  
*Bad Boys: Music from the Motion Picture* (Work, 1995).  
*Boyz N the Hood: Music From the Motion Picture* (QWest, 1991).  
*Crooklyn, Volume 1, A Spike Lee Joint* (MCA, 1994).  
*Crooklyn, Volume 2, A Spike Lee Joint, Music from the Motion Picture* (MCA, 1994).  
*Deep Cover: Music from the Original Motion Picture Soundtrack* (Solar, 1992).  
*Do the Right Thing: Music from the Soundtrack* (Motown, 1989). *Gunmen: Music from the Original Motion Picture Soundtrack* (MCA, 1993).  
*Higher Learning: Music from the Motion Picture* (Sony Music, 1994).  
*Hoop Dreams: Original Motion Picture Soundtrack* (GRP, 1994).  
*House Party: Original Motion Picture Soundtrack* (Motown, 1990).  
*House Party II: Original Motion Picture Soundtrack* (MCA, 1991).  
*House Party III Soundtrack* (Select Street Records, 1994).

*Jason 's Lyric: Music from the Soundtrack* (1994).  
*Juice: Original Motion Picture Soundtrack* (Island World, 1992).  
*Listen Up: The Live of Quincy Jones: Music from the Motion Picture* (QWest, 1990).  
*Malcolm X: Music from the Motion Picture Soundtrack* (QWest, 1992).  
*Menace II Society: The Original Motion Picture Soundtrack* (Jive, 1992).  
*Murder Was the Case: The Soundtrack* (Death-Row/Interscope Records, 1994).  
*New Jack City: Music from the Motion Picture* (Giant, 1991).  
*Panther: The Original Motion Picture Soundtrack* (Mercury, 1995).  
*Poetic Justice: Music from the Motion Picture* (Epic, 1993).  
*Posse: Original Motion Picture Soundtrack Album* (A&M Records, 1993).  
*South Central: Music from the Motion Picture Soundtrack* (Hollywood Basic, 1992).  
*Tales from the Hood: The Soundtrack* (MCA Soundtracks, 1995).  
*White Men Can't Jump: Original Motion Picture Soundtrack* (EMI, 1992).  
*White Men Can't Rap: More Music from the Twentieth Century Fox Film White Men Can't Jump* (EMI, 1992).

## NOTES

1. B. Lee Cooper, "From the Outside Looking In: A Popular Culture Researcher Speaks to Librarians," *Popular Culture in Libraries* 1 (1993): 37-46, reviews the factors influencing the apparent lack of popular culture materials in libraries. Many libraries, the author states, lack the knowledge and funding to purchase ephemeral and resource material on popular culture subjects.
2. The Rap community has a bona fide concern about the representation of their art and culture in scholarly publications. "Whose Rap is This? A Dictionary of Hip-Hop Without Definition" by Allen S. Gordon "The Ebony Cat" in *The Source* (November 1995) is a scathing review of Lois Stavsky, I.E. Mozeson, and Dani Reyes Mozeson's *A2Z The Book of Rap & Hip Hop Slang* (New York: Boulevard, 1995). Gordon's overall concern is on the inaccurate depiction of Hip-Hop culture and music by friends and infidels. He calls for Hip-Hop artists and writers to "secure the future" by chronicling their culture.
3. For supplementary information on music technology, read Linda Jacobson, editor, *Cyberarts: Exploring Art and Technology* (San Francisco: Miller Freeman, Inc.. 1992) and "Special Report: Sampling Nation" in *Keyboard* (May 1994): 3 1-62.
4. For additional discussion on Rap and MTV see "Music Videos and Rap Music: Cultural Conflict and Control in the Age of the Image" section in *Gender: Race, and Class in Media: A Text Reader*. edited by Gail Dines and Jean M. Hu-mez (Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 1995).
5. For example, compare Cutty Ranks' "Hustle Hustle" from DancehallSty-lee: *The Best of Reggae Dancehall Music*, Volume 4 (Profile, 1993) with Wreckx-N-Effect's "Rump Shaker" from *Hard Or Smooth* (MCA Records, 1992), and Wreckx-N-Effect's "Rim Shaker" from *NBA Jam Session* (MCA, 1994). All three recordings use the same samples, varying the beat, and lyrics.
6. Gangsta' Rap may represent all styles in the ears of American politics and mainstream media. During an election year, political candidates routinely lash out against popular culture and Rap. Presidential candidates, most conspicuously candidate Clinton in 1992 and candidate Dole in 1995, have attacked specific Rap artists in the hope of obtaining higher returns at the polls. As a result Controversial Rap artists and their music have become cover stories for several mainstream

news magazines, notably "Rap and Race," *Newsweek* (June 29, 1992): 46-53, "When Is Rap 2 Violent?" *Newsweek* (November 29, 1993): 60-67, and "Are Music and Movies Killing America's Soul?" *Time* (June 12, 1995): 24-39.

7. For further reading on language and lyrics, see Robert L. Root, Jr., "A Listener's Guide to the Rhetoric of Popular Music," *Journal of Popular Culture* 20 (Summer, 1986): 15-26, Edward G. Armstrong, "The Rhetoric of Rap and Country Music," *Sociological Inquiry* 63 (February 1993): 64-83. For information on African-American language and meaning, see Thomas Kochman, editor, *Rappin' and Stylin' Out: Communication in Urban Black America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972) and *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), edited by Henry Louis Gates. For current African-American language usage see James Percelay, Montcria Ivey, and Stephen Dweck, editors, *Snaps: "If Ugliness Were Bricks, Your Mother Would Be a Housing Project" . . . and More Than 450 Other Snaps, Caps and Insults for Praying the Dozens* (New York: Quill, 1994) and *More Snaps: "If Ugliness Were an Album Your Mother Would Go Platinum"* (New York: Quill, 1994). For listening *Snaps The Album Vol. I* (New York: Big Beat, 1995).

8. For further reading: W.E.B. Du Bois, *Du Bois Writings* (New York: Library of America, 1986) and David Levering Lewis, editor, *W.E.B. Du Bois Reader* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1995). LeRoi Jones, *Blues People* (New York: William Morrow, 1963); Addison Gayle, editor, *The Black Aesthetic* (Garden City, NY.: Doubleday, 1971); Molefi Kete Asante, *Afrocentricity* (Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, Inc., 1988); Maulana Karenga, *Introduction to Black Studies*, 2d ed. (Los Angeles: The University of Sankore Press, 1993).

9. *The Ice Opinion Ice-T*, read by the author (Los Angeles: The Publishing Mills, 1994).

10. The omission of Controversial Rappers N.W.A., Eazy E, Ice Cube, and others from *Schwann Spectrum* issues is a perplexing oversight.

11. For help in accessing material on the information highway see "Wired for Sound" section of *.net: The Internet Magazine* issue 4 (March 1995): 39-56 and *Empower Magazine: Black America's Magazine for the Information Age* (3rd Quarter 1995).

12. See "Home Living with the Beastie Boys," *Blender* (1.4 1995), CD-ROM format.

13. Extended play (ep) single releases, and radio versions are not included in this essay because these commercial recordings do not always represent the artist's Rap style, for example, Montell Jordan and R. Kelly.

14. For a comprehensive sound recording listing see: *Phonolog Reports* (San Diego; Trade Service Publications 1980-).

15. For further information connect to: The Nation of Gods & Earths (5% Nation of Islam) homepage (<http://sunsite.unc.edu:SO/nge/What.html>).

16. Womanist is used to specify African-American feminist, see Alice Walker's *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984): xi.

17. Several articles have been written on women in Rap music. For an overview see Dominique DiPrima, "Beat the Rap" *Mother Jones* (Sept./Oct. 1990): 32-36, & 82; Gordon Chambers and Joan Morgan, "Droppin' Knowledge; A Rap Roundtable" *Essence* (September 1992): 83-85, 116-120; and Robin Roberts, "Sisters in the Name of Rap: Rapping for Women's Lives," in Kim Marie Vaz, editor *Block Women in America* (Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage Publications, Inc., 1995): 323-333.

18. For further information read: "Rap and Race," *Newsweek* (June 29, 1992): 46-53,

19. "Street Smart Strategies: The Rap Flap at Sno-Isle," by Patricia Shaw, *ALKI 9* (July 1993): 9-10. This article is an overview of the censoring of a N.W.A. sound recording by a public library. "You Can't Play That: A Selective Chronology of Banned Music, 1850-1991," by Edward J. Volz, *School Library Journal* 37 (July 1991): 16-18, is a historical overview of the censorship of music in libraries. Jeffrey B. Kahan's "Bach, Beethoven, and Homeboys: Censoring Rap Music in America," *Southern California Law Review* 66 (September 1993): 2583-2610, is a legal review of the censorship of Rap music in America.

20. *It's On (Dr. Dre) 187um Killa* (Ruthless/Relativity 1993). an extended play recording.

21. For further information on the impact of Eazy E's death on the Rap community read: Frank Williams, "Eazy E: The Life, The Legacy," *The Source* (June 1995): 52-62, *RapPages* cover stories "Remembering Eazy-E: His Life & His Legacy" (August 1995) and feature stories "Eazy E 1964-1995, Through the Eyes of Those Who Knew Him Best," *Rap Sheet* (July 1995).

22. David Dufresne *Yo! Revolution Rap: L'Histoire, Les Groupes, le Movement* (Paris: Ramsey, 1991). a French publication, presents an overview of Rap music in America. The author also includes a section on French Rap artists and music.

23. James Michael Broadies. "Black Music Searching for Respect in Academia," *Black Issues in Higher Education* 7 (February 14, 1991): 1, 16-19 and Warren C. Swindell, "Research and the Inclusion of Africana Music in the Popular Culture Field," *Popular Culture in Libraries I* (1993): 47-49.