

# Hip hop and rap



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Hip Hop & Rap Rap music, popularly known as Hip hop music, originated over a quarter of the century and it is part of the hip hop culture. This genre of music characteristically incorporates rap, which is a rhythmic vocal style, in conjunction with backing beats. The rap music tradition, which has its roots in the African-American and West African music, has gone through various changes through the history. The term 'rap' is essential to comprehend the hip hop music as they are used identically. To define the 'rap', it is a " general term for the musical expression; it is part of a broader movement, known as hip hop, that includes dance, graffiti art, fashion, and political expression." (Safire, 162) Rap and hip hop are used interchangeably. Through the history of the hip hop movement, there have been several significant figures contributed to its development. The origin of hip hop movement may be traced back to the early 1970s when rap was introduced at block parties in New York City as a specific genre, and DJs started cutting off the beating breaks of funk, soul, and disco songs and expanding them. MCs began to talk between songs, joking and normally interacting with the audience in order to introduce the DJs and to invigorate the crowd. Thus, the new genre began to attract audience and became commercially successful. The American funk group the Sugarhill Gang, through its " Rapper's Delight," made a remarkable contribution to the popularity of hip hop music, and many critics consider this as the earliest hip hop single. This hip hop group, credited with the first ever gold single, ensured the commercial feasibility of the genre, which resulted in the wide-ranging popularity of the rap music. " Initially dismissed as a fad, rap music proved its commercial viability in 1979 with the release of The Sugarhill Gang's " Rapper's Delight"" (Dye) The musical qualities and characteristics of the single set the exact framework

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for the rap music and it is rightly considered as the first "rap" record.

A close listening of the songs such as "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised" substantiates the significant role of the reputed jazz artist, Gil Scott-Heron in the origins of rap music. The lyrics and the music of the song "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised" creates an exact background to the listeners who experience the mood of being in the middle of a revolution.

Through the powerful and convincing musical effect, conveyed by congas and bongo drums, the musician is successful in meeting the preconditions of hip hop music and sets the environment of rap. Similar to the effect created by the hip hop music in general, the song by Heron also leads the audiences entirely take part in the music and they are raised to a state where they are all ready to join the musician by dancing and repeating the lines. The song was also crucial to the origin of the hip hop music and this reflects the Black Aestheticians' rejection of the mass media and commodity culture in support of the community identity of the African oral and musical traditions.

According to the "Black Aesthetic movement's most powerful statement was formulated in the music of Gil Scott-Heron who proclaimed: 'The revolution will not be televised'" (Decker, 103) Thus, the song "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised" establishes the role of Heron in the origin of hip hop music.

Literary and musical allusion plays a pivotal role in the rap music or the hip hop tradition and it is the most ideal form of music to illustrate the importance of allusions. A close listening of "The Message," which suggests the struggles and aggravations of the ghetto, as well as "Close Edge" helps the listeners comprehend the characteristics of hip hop music. They also suggest the importance of literary and musical allusions in the rap tradition.

The contrast between the two songs helps the listeners in their comprehension of different forms of music and lyric. In short, all these songs shared one or the other characteristic of the hip hop music, and the origin of the famous rap music is closely linked to the efforts of various artists such as Gil Scott-Heron, the Sugarhill Gang, Grandmaster Flash, and Mos Def.

#### Works Cited

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