

The origin of hiphop and how music has changed

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Hip-hop is one of the most popular genres of music in the world today.

However, the hip-hop of today's world is very different from the hip-hop that started it all. Hip-hop has simply evolved to a different type of music than the hip-hop that started it all. Hip-hop started in Brooklyn in 1973 at a block party with DJ Kool Herc, known as the father of hip-hop, mixing the beats. However, hip-hop has changed. There are the advances in technology to help make different sounds for songs.

There is the fighting between artists and rappers because of their geographical backgrounds, meaning the areas that they are from. There are many artists making breakthroughs with new styles and different types of lyrics, many of whom set the bar for the prominent artists of today. Hip-hop is a game, but it has many more than one winner, and many more than one loser. First of all, a little bit of background information on the roots of hip-hop is needed. 1955 was a year of many events.

The Scrabble board game debuted, Elvis Presley performed for the first time on TV, the first McDonald's opened, "In God We Trust" was added to all the American coins, Disneyland opened in Anaheim, California, Rosa Parks took her stand against racism by not giving up her seat on a bus to a white person, and finally, Clive Campbell was born in Kingston, Jamaica. Campbell spent his early childhood living in a city named Trenchtown, in the same public housing that produced many other prominent world figures such as Bob Marley, Peter Tosh, and Alton Ellis.

Campbell's father had a good job in Jamaica; a job that paid him enough money to be able to move to a house with their own front and back yard, but

it was in the public housing in Trenchtown where Clive would get his first taste of the beats he emulated as a DJ in the Bronx, New York. Clive would spy through windows and holes in the walls of places that held adult dancing; modern day night clubs; just to be amazed at the DJs wheeling in the huge speakers and amplifiers.

In 1967, at the age of 13, Campbell and his family migrated from Jamaica to the Bronx in New York. By 1969, Clive was going to the parties that he would peep through holes to see in Jamaica. He was a break-dancer, but he was very displeased by the DJs. He even heard other people in the crowds saying the same things. He didn't understand why they would cut songs out at times or why they would keep replaying one part etc.

He said to himself that he could do that too, but he did it from a "dance floor perspective. So he became DJ Kool Herc; Herc coming from the nickname "Hercules" that he got when he came to New York because he was much larger than other kids his age. He always kept the attitude that he was DJing for the people, not for himself. To the younger people who listen to hip-hop, it's about how many technological toys that go into making a beat for a song, but to an older person, it's about the manmade beat made from a turntable and the precise lyrics made by the MC. There were no soundboards or auto tune or computerized beats.

A DJ scratching two records to make the rhythm, the beat coming from a drum, and the MC's actual voice made the song; no computerized blending of songs; no electronic sounds to make the beat; no auto tune to make any random person's voice sound like they could hit every key from top to

bottom on a piano. The music was real. Today, there's stuff like 24-track Recorders, 36-channel Console with Automated DAT recorders and ADS hard disks, mach synchronizers, automated faders, audio monitors and monitoring systems (to monitor the monitors), MPC's, and APC's and the list just goes on.

There is auto tune on so many people's voices that nobody knows if the artist is ever singing or not. Live performances are done, a lot of times, by lipsyncing. It's amazing how people buy tickets to go see their favorite singers live but really they are just listening to the same thing as the CD while the artist moves his/her mouth and runs around the stage. While violence has become hip-hop's defining characteristic from the 90's on to modern day 2010, hip-hop actually started out as a means of ending black-on-black fighting two decades earlier.

Hip-hop is engulfed with violence, mostly pertaining to the geographical backgrounds of artists and rappers. The biggest rivalry is West Coast hip-hop vs. East Coast hip-hop. The headliners of this rivalry, and most famous of all hip hop controversies, was the controversy surrounding the Notorious B. I. G. and Tupac Shakur. These two rappers are enthroned as two of, if not the, greatest hip-hop artists of all time. Christopher Wallace, known by his performing name " The Notorious B. I. G. " was from New York. Tupac Shakur, performance name just Tupac, was from California.

Big and Pac were actually really good friends before all of this West Coast/East Coast stuff started. It all started with Tupac thinking that Biggie and his crew set up the 1994 robbery that he was a victim of in New York.

Tupac was shot that night, and being very ecstatic from being shot, blamed it on Biggie. He didn't stop there. The feud between Biggie and Tupac would not stop. Tupac ran with the idea that the shooting was a setup by Biggie; and Biggie, as much as he tried to make Tupac understand, could not get through to him. That was not the end of the controversy.

Biggie came later released the very controversial song, " Who Shot Ya? ", in which one of the lines is " Who shot ya? Separate weak from obsolete, hard to creep them Brooklyn streets. " The media jumped all over this saying that this was Biggie taking a shot at Tupac. Biggie and his record company, Bad Boy Records, run by rapper P. Diddy, said that Biggie had recorded that song long before the Tupac altercation. Tupac and his record company, Death Row Records, didn't believe that at all. Tupac then retaliated in his song " Hit ' Em Up" by saying, " Who shot me?

But ya punks didn't finish now you're bout to feel the wrath of a menace... Nigga I hit ' em up. " Tupac and Biggie kept going at it, but it heated up even more when Death Row Records took a shot at Bad Boy Records and P. Diddy, the president of Bad Boy and executive producer of all of Biggie's tracks, at the 1995 Source Awards. Death Row CEO Suge Knight said " Any artist out there that want to be an artist and stay a star, and don't have to worry about the executive producer trying to be all in the videos...all on the records... dancing, come to Death Row! " All of this hatred led to the real violence of this era of hip-hop.

People all over the West Coast would send Biggie death threats; and people all over the East Coast would do the same to Tupac. This feud had gone too

far. Tupac was shot five times in a drive-by shooting in Las Vegas on September 7, 1996. He died six days later in the hospital from complications from the shots. On March 9, 1997, on his way back to his hotel from an afterparty, Christopher Wallace a. k. a. The Notorious B. I. G. was shot four times in the chest and died not even an hour later at the hospital. The music that was supposed to end fighting amongst people was the epicenter of one of the biggest music rivalries of all time.

There are many artists and producers who have helped hip-hop evolve too. Many of them brought new styles to the game and many of whom are just lyrical masterminds. A few of these people are The Notorious B. I. G. , Tupac, Eminem, Grandmaster Flash, and Afrika Bambaataa. Afrika Bambaataa was one of the original hip-hop pioneers along with DJ Kool Herc residing out of Brooklyn. He created the first hip-hop gang, Zulu Nation, of which Kool Herc was a part of. Bambaataa brought so much to the musical table with his electro beats mixed with pop and funk.

He set the bar for a lot of DJs in the Bronx area by branching off some of Herc's material and twisting his style into it. Another DJ from the Bronx area that came to America around the same time that Herc did was Grandmaster Flash. Flash is held as the number one hip-hop DJ of all time. Flash studied Kool Herc very carefully and as he started practicing his own DJing, he developed three innovations that are standard modern day DJ techniques. One of the innovations is the backspin. Short drum breaks in the song were very popular with the fans in the crowd.

So Flash realized that if he used duplicates of the same record, while one of the records was playing the drum beat, he could search the other record for the same beat and when the first one finishes, he could switch over to the second one and have the beat ready to play. Flash could play the same beat infinitely and it was a big hit with the crowd. Another of Flash's innovations was Punch Phrasing. Punch Phrasing was the act of playing one significant sound multiple times on one turn table while the actual song is playing out on the other turntable. This may have been the most uncommon of the three innovations Flash developed.

The third innovation that Flash developed and perfect was the art of scratching or cutting. Cutting or scratching (same thing but referred to as either of these) is the art of repeating a beat or musical phrase by moving the record back and forth frequently and quickly. This is the most popular and most important innovation that Flash developed. The Notorious B. I. G. was at his prime when he was killed at the age of 24. He is still unanimously put in the top 5 hip-hop artists of all time by countdowns done on various TV Networks and Magazines such as MTV and Rolling Stone.

The Notorious B. I. G. was known for his gifted story telling techniques that he used in his lyrics of himself struggling as a poor young man trying to make money to survive. Something about his lyrics and stories just made every one of his songs a hit. Hip-hop and rap of the modern era would not be what it is if Biggie were still alive. Tupac Shakur is under the same exact category as The Notorious B. I. G. Known globally by just his stage name,

Tupac is heralded more often than not as the greatest hip-hop artist of all time. Pac spent countless hours in the studio until his death in 1996.

He did not possess the same kind of story-telling talent that Biggie did, more because of the fact that he didn't face the struggles that Biggie faced as a child than anything else. Tupac made songs with rhymes that were so unmatched that whenever one of his songs came out, it was automatically in the Billboard Top 10 on the week it debuted. Tupac sang about the tragedies in the world in many of his songs. His most famous song, "Changes," talks about how the people in the world need to change the way they do everything to survive.

War needs to end, and peace needs to rise up. That was Tupac's message. Another person who has helped hip-hop massively evolve is Marshall Mathers also known as Eminem. Eminem may very well be the greatest lyricist of all time. He comes from the Detroit ghetto and he is not afraid to tell it to everyone. He is very controversial in all of his songs mainly because a lot of them have to do with making fun of other people; even his own family members; making fun of himself, or even talking about his prior drug addictions. However, here is the catch. Eminem is white.

Eminem is held as one of the top 10 hip-hop artists of all time, but he is the only white person on the list. That is what creates even more controversy over his music, because hip-hop is dominated by the African-American and Hispanic races, and who's to blame for that? The beats and styles of hip-hop are all derived from Africa and the Hispanic Countries of Central America. That is most common reason why controversy surrounds Eminem, and also

because of the fact that he does not care what anybody says about him because frankly, he is the top-selling artist of the 2000's.

Hip-hop is a genre of music that is derived essentially from Africa and Central America. It became its own style of music in 1970 with DJ Kool Herc, the founding father of hip-hop, DJing block parties in the Bronx. He and two other Bronx native DJs, Afrika Bambaataa and Grandmaster Flash, are the forefathers of this genre. With their DJing hip-hop took off as a type of music that would bring all African-Americans and Hispanics living in America to a common place, but the genre has totally changed. Because of different geographical backgrounds, hip-hop was developed into a focal point for territorial rivalries.

Also, the three original pieces of a hip-hop song: the turntables creating the rhythm, the MC vocalizing his/her lyrics, and the beat being made by a drum; barely exist in many of the modern day hip-hop songs. The beats are made electronically, the singer's voice is enhanced with auto tune, and the rhythms are all computerized. However, there are still artists out there trying to get hip-hop back to what it was before the controversies and rivalries. To quote Cassidy, one of the top freestyle artists in hip-hop, " hip-hop on life support but there's still a chance. "