

Hip Hop Music continues to rule the music charts

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**Hip Hop Music continues to rule the music charts**

**By Syd Johnson**

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Hip hop music is dominating the online and offline music charts. Hip hop music fans experience an "it's about time" moment every time they turn on MTV, VH1 or any local radio station that doesn't specialize in country music. Even urban channels that used to play only mid tempo rock music have diversified their rotations to include more hip hop music.

Why is hip hop suddenly everywhere?

Suburban Kids! They latched on to the beats, nouveau riche lifestyle full of machismo and bling, and they latched on to the party. Hip hop might have started out as a companion to rap music, but today, the two musical genres are a world apart. Hip hop is funky, full of energy, dynamic, catchy, male, female, American, European, Asian and Indian all at the same time.

Modern hip hop is so dance friendly that frankly no one cares about the lyrics anymore. I can name a bunch of up and comers in the field including Lloyd Banks, Ciara (or anyone else out of the Missy/Timbaland factory) and Chingy. Then, let's not forget the 3 million people that make up G-Unit and D12. That's pretty cool.

Now, can I name one verse of any song, by any of these artists? Of course not! These people are selling hip hop music for the club. If I hear even three seconds of a song from any one of them, I'm on the dance floor. Still, I can't come up with two solid lines to any of their songs. Why?

**Hip Hop Music Masters**

Rap music was artist driven. Hip Hop music is producer driven. Producers are the ones who put together all the ingredients to get you the final product, a hit song. Since the rise of the producers starting with Missy and Timbaland in the mid 90's hip hop music has gone mainstream.

The lyrics don't matter much anymore because the meat of the music— is in the music. Literally, the complicated arrangements, samples on top of samples, guest stars, wanna-be stars and more, all

culminate into MTV ready hit songs.

It's not that hip hop is not deep, or socially conscious. It's just that it has a different lineage. Rap masters were the lyricists. Hip Hop Masters are non verbal communicators. This is the blessing and curse of hip hop music.

That is why hip hop music is so present on radio, cable TV, and now, in the online world. If you think that modern hip hop is a bit much, perhaps you should try one of the streaming radio stations where you can select hip hop music from the 80's and 90's when rappers were still in charge. Get in touch with De La Soul and some of the other early hip hop pioneers.

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### **I'll choose rap over hip hop any day: Rap lyrics keep it real**

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### **I'll choose rap over hip hop any day: Rap lyrics keep it real by Syd Johnson**

If you listen to rap music on a regular basis you will notice the stark differences between rap lyrics and hip hop lyrics. It is widely known that rap came up from the streets where the artists would use their rhyming skills to tell the world about their sense of isolation and not being part of the American mainstream.

Hip hop lyrics from the same place, but this time it was middle class children who did not like how they were treated as their families moved into the suburbs and edge cities.

So what happened?

Along the way, hip hop went mainstream as it was cleaner and dance friendly. Hip hop lyrics made their way from the streets, to the clubs, to MTV and finally to the top of the music charts. Rap lyrics remained where they began, as the music of the down trodden and this gives emerging artists the freedom to experiment without worrying about their best camera angle.

You can still get a good rap album onto the charts with very little time on MTV.

How do rap artists maintain such complete control over their music:

1. Rap lyrics are seen as more raw so the artists can get away with more explicit and sensitive subjects. Whether it's gangs, drugs, homophobia, or domestic violence, rappers have total creative freedom to address taboo subjects without turning off their fans.
2. Rap lyrics are mostly created by individual artist and not song writing committees. An artist could

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free style in person or on paper. It doesn't matter because you don't get the huge song writing teams that dominate pop, country and even hip hop music.

3. Rap lyrics are not music reliant. They actually sound better without huge overpowering beats behind them. Most professional rappers do their best work when they have mike without any musical accompaniment

4. Rap lyrics are not easily recycled since they are based on personal rather than universal experiences. The original lyrics can touch the audience but it is not easily transferred from one artist to another. Rappers can inject pieces of their personality, family history, educational background and more into their songs.

Of course, you can put samples into hip hop or pop songs, but it is very different for a middle class thirteen year old to remake your song and not sound like an idiot.

In the end, I still listen to all types of music. It's just that when it comes to originality and raw musical styles, I'll take rap lyrics over hip hop.

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