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Hip Hop Music And Culture Celebrates 45 Years

By Stevan "Vegas" Smith | Published on: August 20, 2018 | Updated on November 19, 2018


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As a lifelong fan of Hip-Hop music and culture, my personal relationship can be categorized as complicated.

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The marriage stone for a 45th anniversary is Sapphire which symbolizes success in love. Its also said to keep its color only when in sympathy with its wearer. I can dig that, but Ive got to ask myself the questiondo I still love her?

I was born in 1977. That was the year of the New York City blackout that some say financed the Hip Hop game. A lot of DJ's were made that year. When thinking about the driving forces behind the music and culture back then, Kool Herc, Grandmaster Flash, and Afrika Bambaattaa will always come to mind. They are the pillars of what came to be.



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Planet Rock – Afrika Bambaataa & The Soul Force

“One of the most influential songs of everything, ” says Rick Rubin. “It changed the world.”

The vibe for the average Hip Hop fan in NYC was pure. The DJ was the vocal point. Controlling the soundtrack that fueled the energy of the B-boys and B-Girls. From the Graffiti artists to the break dancers to the clothes and how we wore them. The descriptive slang that separated us from everyone in the city.

That was a dope time. But in 2018, the emcee is the vocal point that drives the culture.

Through the years Hip Hop music and culture saw so many eras. There are a number of landmark moments

that come to define rap history. Run DMC made it mainstream, Rakim changed the universal lyrical style, N.W.A. and Public Enemy were two sides of the same coin. Both groups spoke out against injustice, and neither group was here to play games with your a\$\$\$. A Tribe Called Quest and others brought Jazz samples to the sound.

Run DMC Sucker MCs

Run DMC sing Sucker MC's and battle Kool Moe Dee and Special K. Pay close attention to the young Italian guy in the Kangol hat.

Death Row Records brought a new brand of West Coast funk to the game via G-Funk. And soon after, the East Coast saw a lyrical resurgence with Nas, Wu-Tang Clan, The Notorious B.I.G. and others.

And while the East and West played ping pong for supremacy, the South had something to say. Outkast and others were making their mark at the same time. Common represented Chi-Town, UGK and the Geto Boys did it for Texas and the hits kept coming.



OutKast – Elevators (Me & You) (Video)

OutKast's official music video for 'Elevators (Me & You)'. Click to listen to OutKast on Spotify: <http://smarturl.it/OutKastSpotify?IQid=OutKEMY> As featured on ATliens.

Rap is very different today than it was back then and there is a part of the game that hasn't changed.

Nas had a record on his 2001 album Stillmatic called 2nd Childhood. He talked about people who'd reached a specific age of maturity becoming stuck in adolescence.

We all know at least one person like that. That's how I feel about the rap game. It would be easy to point the finger at the rappers for their messages but where is the accountability in the Hip-Hop fan?

From record sales to radio spins to the number of streams and views online, we are the driving force behind what's dope and what isn't. Who's mainstream and who's underground. Who's remembered and who is forgotten. We've come to a place where artists are celebrated for their financial accomplishments and not the quality of their music.

We could blame social media, but this has been going on for much longer than some of us old heads would like to admit.

Hip-Hop fandom has this thing that dates way back to the '80s. It's a problem that is somewhat exclusive to our genre. We discard what we think isn't hot anymore. Not because it's simply not good, but because it isn't new.

Eric B. & Rakim – I Ain't No Joke

Best of EricBAndRakim: <https://goo.gl/HCuKu7>
Subscribe here: <https://goo.gl/EMXvV5> Music video by Eric B. & Rakim performing I Ain't No Joke. (C) 1987 The Island Def Jam Music Group



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I am just as guilty as the next fan. When Rakim hit the scene with a new flow and rhyme scheme, I no longer had an appreciation for the rhyme styles of a Melly Mel. I wanted more complex bars. Unfortunately, this old to

the new mentality has affected even Rakim's career. By the time artist like Nas hit the scene, Rakim's subject matter and smooth delivery wasn't enough to satisfy our appetite to be current.

Fast Forward to today, it's the same for Nas and others from his era. It's cool but it isn't illuminating. The crazy part of this is that the respect isn't completely lost for our legends. We will acknowledge their past accomplishments but won't support their latest efforts. Hip Hop is divided.

Younger artists disrespect old artists because they're old, older artists disrespect the new wave because it isn't their wave. Both of these immature positions have divided a once unified audience who individually had their favorites, but still rocked together. And maybe it doesn't need to be that anymore. It's cool to like trap. It's cool to love boom bap. It's all relative.

It's the meaningless infighting and rejection of our legacy that troubles me the most.

In 2018, we as fans are more focused on the way artists rap than the generation gaps. In celebration of the genre's 45th anniversary, I watched the Hip Hop community post pics of Kool Herc and other legends on social media.

It felt good to see an online trend that I actually cared about. But I knew it was all temporary profiling for the trend of the day. Soon we'd be back to Twitter beefs and endless radio spins of the same four artists.

Hip-Hop has come a long way from the house parties in the ghetto.



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Kool Herc Old School

Kool Herc Old School

Weve experienced enough triumph and turmoil to last three lifetimes. Some would say, because of the front facing content, that the Hip Hop game hasnt grown in its 45 years. I would disagree.

We are more popular and diverse than EVER! Hip-Hop is the most popular genre in the world. It is ingrained in our culture and language. What hasnt evolved is the maturity of its fan base. We can change that.

Support the music that carries the torch of its forefathers. Support the legends that continue to contribute to the culture in more ways than one. Acknowledge those that seek only to profit from our stories of struggle and despair. Push them out of the market by saying lyrics matter. Great production matters. Legacy matters.



We are one. We are together. No one left behind. You must reach back to reclaim that which is lost in order to

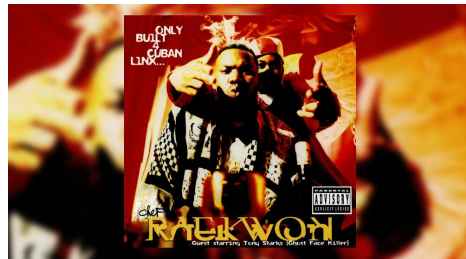
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