

Wynton Marsalis Downgrades Hip Hop

Written by Robert ID3386

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Hip Hop continues to get a taste of what rock-n-roll got back when the 'long haired' Beatles started their music 'revolution' back in the '60's.

Hip hop has always been a 'target' for the social mainstream, much in the way rock-n-roll was in its infancy. Hip hop is blamed from everything from gang warfare to drugs.

Now some of this may be true to an extent but all of the social woes are not the fault of hip hop or of hip hop culture.

Seems anyone who wants to make 'headlines' goes at hip hop and right away they have mass people behind them proclaiming that hip hop is the root of all evil.

Bill O'Reily, Oprah Winfrey, Bill Cosby – they and many others have had much to say to down grade hip hop. Now jazz musician Wynton Marsalis is giving his opinion on some of hip hop's biggest stars.

Mr. Marsalis says about hip hop, Luda and 50 Cent "Rap has become a safari for people who get their thrills from watching African-American people disgrace themselves, men dressing in gold, calling themselves stupid names like Ludacris and 50 Cent, spending money on expensive fluff, using language like "b**ch" and "ho" and "n**ger"."

"Now you have to say you're from the streets, you shot some brothers, you went to jail."

Claiming that hip hop and rap degrades African-American culture, Marsalis may have a point – to a degree; but what about society as a whole being partly to blame for the way that African-Americans are looked at? Sure the language in hip hop and rap is forceful and yes the treatment of woman is not acceptable but so is real life – and isn't that what hip hop is suppose to express?

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I can never remember Luda ever saying he shot anyone and Luda does a lot of fine work thru his foundation for the youth. Ludacris is one of today's geniuses in hip hop. He is a ground breaking artist who should not be lumped into a sentence with the likes of 50 Cent. Luda is truly talented, so that puts these two artists' worlds apart.

The 'gangsta' side of hip hop is on its way out. Labels do not want to deal with the headaches associated with large entourages of 'flag' flying people. Gangsta rap seen its hay day with Eazy-E, Tupac (2Pac), NWA and Ice T, the club hip pop is all the rage now. The meaningless head bobbin beats that have no substance when it comes to lyrical content. That is what is selling. People are settling for a hook and a beat.

The true hip hop is dying slowly off. Most of today's artists are in it for the money and not really concerned with what they put out as long as they get theirs. That is the shame here. To take an outlet like the one hip hop MC's have and to waste it on mindless hooks and beats and to act like the world revolves them and their lil click, makes many of us in hip hop weary. Such an outlet should not be wasted as it is being.

So Wynton Marsalis does have a point but not to all of hip hop. Many of us understand the genre but we are confused in its direction.

What is needed is new blood in the hip hop genre. The same old artist with the same old tracks, getting into the same old trouble time after time does nothing for hip hop.

Wynton Marsalis is a jazz musician. At one time jazz musicians were looked at or perceived as pot heads or junkies. Would I lump Mr. Marsalis in what mainstream media portrayed jazz musicians to be? Of course not, he is a talented man who makes good music. Would I talk about Ronnie Laws or Roy Ayers and question the way they dress or what their music stands for or inspires? No, because I have respect for them as musicians whose music fills a void, whose music I enjoy.

The point is all of societies woes are not the fault of hip hop and it is unfair to see that now even talented musicians are degrading hip hop. Sure some of the artists are out of control, it seems, so don't back them. Let them fall off and give the next generation a chance to express themselves.

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We can think of what Wynton Marsalis had to say and learn from it. We can learn that the 'perception' many have of hip hop is wrong.

Wynton Marsalis says, "I call it ghetto minstrelsy. Old school minstrels used to say they were "real darkies from the real plantation". Hip-hop substitutes the plantation for the streets."

That is a sad statement. We really need to re-think the direction that hip hop is headed in when we are perceived like this.