

Greatest 100 RapHip Hop Singles

Written by Westside ID62

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Rap music originated as a cross-cultural product. Most of its important early practitioners-including Kool Herc, D.J. Hollywood, and Afrika Bambaataa-were either first- or second-generation Americans of Caribbean ancestry. Herc and Hollywood are both credited with introducing the Jamaican style of cutting and mixing into the musical culture of the South Bronx.

By most accounts Herc was the first DJ to buy two copies of the same record for just a 15-second break (rhythmic instrumental segment) in the middle. By mixing back and forth between the two copies he was able to double, triple, or indefinitely extend the break. In so doing, Herc effectively deconstructed and reconstructed so-called found sound, using the turntable as a musical instrument.

In 1979 the first two rap records appeared: "King Tim III (Personality Jock)," recorded by the Fatback Band, and "Rapper's Delight," by Sugarhill Gang. A series of verses recited by the three members of Sugarhill Gang, "Rapper's Delight" became a national hit, reaching number 36 on the Billboard magazine popular music charts. The spoken content, mostly braggadocio spiced with fantasy, was derived largely from a pool of material used by most of the earlier rappers.

The backing track for "Rapper's Delight" was supplied by hired studio musicians, who replicated the basic groove of the hit song "Good Times" (1979) by the American supergroup Chic. Perceived as novel by many white Americans, "Rapper's Delight" quickly inspired "Rapture" (1980) by the new-wave band Blondie, as well as a number of other popular records.

In 1982 Afrika Bambaataa's "Planet Rock" became the first rap record to use synthesizers and an electronic drum machine. With this recording, rap artists began to create their own backing tracks rather than simply offering the work of others in a new context.

A year later Bambaataa introduced the sampling capabilities of synthesizers on "Looking for the Perfect Beat" (1983) - of quick mixing, in which sound bites as short as one or two seconds are combined for a collage effect. Quick mixing paralleled the rapid-editing style of television advertising used at the time.

Shortly after Flash introduced quick mixing, his partner Grandmaster Melle Mel composed the first extended stories in rhymed rap. Up to this point, most of the words heard over the work of disc jockeys such as Herc, Bambaataa, and Flash had been improvised phrases and expressions. In 1978 DJ Grand Wizard Theodore introduced the technique of scratching to produce rhythmic patterns.

During the mid-1980s, rap moved from the fringes of hip-hop culture to the mainstream of the American music industry as white musicians began to embrace the new style. In 1986 rap reached the top ten on the Billboard pop charts with "(You Gotta) Fight for Your Right (To

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Party!) by the Beastie Boys and "Walk This Way" by Run-DMC and Aerosmith. Known for incorporating rock music into its raps, Run-DMC became one of the first rap groups to be featured regularly on MTV (Music Television).

Also during the mid-1980s, the first female rap group of consequence, Salt-N-Pepa, released the singles "The Show Stoppa" (1985) and "Push It" (1987); "Push It" reached the top 20 on Billboard's pop charts.

In the late 1980s a large segment of rap became highly politicized, resulting in the most overt social agenda in popular music since the urban folk movement of the 1960s. The groups Public Enemy and Boogie Down Productions epitomized this political style of rap. Public Enemy came to prominence with their second album, *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back* (1988), and the theme song "Fight the Power" from the motion picture *Do the Right Thing* (1989), by American filmmaker Spike Lee. Proclaiming the importance of rap in black American culture, Public Enemy's lead singer, Chuck D., referred to it as the African American CNN (Cable News Network).

Alongside the rise of political rap came the introduction of gangsta rap, which attempts to depict an outlaw lifestyle of sex, drugs, and violence in inner-city America. In 1988 the first major album of gangsta rap was released: *Straight Outta Compton* by the rap group NWA (Niggaz With Attitude). Songs from the album generated an extraordinary amount of controversy for their violent attitudes and inspired protests from a number of organizations, including the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation).

However, attempts to censor gangsta rap only served to publicize the music and make it more attractive to both black and white youths. NWA became a platform for launching the solo careers of some of the most influential rappers and rap producers in the gangsta style, including Dr. Dre, Ice Cube, and Eazy-E.

In the 1990s rap became increasingly eclectic, demonstrating a seemingly limitless capacity to draw samples from any and all musical forms. A number of rap artists have borrowed from jazz, using samples as well as live music. Some of the most influential jazz-rap recordings include *Jazzmatazz CD* (1993), an album by Boston rapper Guru, and "Cantaloop (Flip Fantasia)" (1993), a single by the British group US3. In the United Kingdom, jazz-rap evolved into a genre known as trip-hop, the most prominent artists and groups being Tricky and Massive Attack. As hip-hop/rap became increasingly part of the American mainstream in the 1990s, political rap became less prominent while gangsta rap, as epitomized by the Geto Boys, Snoop Doggy Dogg, and Tupac Shakur, grew in popularity.

Since the mid-1980s rap music has greatly influenced both black and white culture in North America. Much of the slang of hip-hop culture, including such terms as dis, fly, def, chill, and wack, have become standard parts of the vocabulary of a significant number of young people of

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various ethnic origins. Many rap enthusiasts assert that rap functions as a voice for a community without access to the mainstream media. According to advocates, rap serves to engender self-pride, self-help, and self-improvement, communicating a positive and fulfilling sense of black history that is largely absent from other American institutions. People who loves hip-hop culture and rap argue that no matter who is listening to the music, the raps are justified because they accurately portray life in inner-city America.

Top40 Charts asked over 200 musicians, songwriters, disc jockeys and radio programme producers to vote for the 100 greatest hip-hop/rap songs. Here are the results, in this awesome collection of the best and most influential hip-hop/rap songs of all time!

Songs are arranged by their ranking:

[Top 100 Greatest Hip-hop/Rap Singles of all time](#)

*Tupac comes in at # 12 with California Love and at #73 with Dear Momma