

Hip-Hop Culture Needs to 'Police' Itself

Written by Robert ID1926

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It is time that hip-hop culture 'police' itself. The internet is a great learning and informational tool, but it also can be used to 'steal' artist's hard work and to take funds from families and from organizations that the artists support.

The recent rash of illegal downloading of hip-hop and rap artist albums has everyone more than upset.

This has happened too many in the industry and it has to stop if artists are to feed their families or if funds from sales are to accomplish other goals.

One hip-hop/rap icon that comes to mind is Tupac Shakur. His material is everywhere for download – illegally.

Part of the sales of his albums go to the legacy building of the Tupac Amaru Shakur Center for the Arts. Every fan thinks it is a great work that Tupac's mother Afeni Shakur is trying to get accomplished, but then they do not support her in her vision for the Arts Center. They would rather download Tupac's tracks illegally. Any 'real' Tupac fan knows how he felt about bootleggers; but still some claim to rep for him and turn around and 'steal' from him and his legacy.

Almost every album is on the net before it even hits stores. Warren G's album is floating on the net and is not due out till October 11th. DJ Quik's 'Trauma' release has tracks floating on the net. Quik has children; would you pull a sandwich out of his child's mouth so you can have some of Quik's newest tracks? These are real people with real responsibilities.

This has happened to Eminem, 50 Cent, Xzibit and many many others but it really hits home when you think of how these artist are suppose to pay their bills and feed their families and do other community sponsored work with album sales money.

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Sure fans can't wait to hear their favorite artist and want to have the newest and latest product put out by them, but why steal from someone you claim to admire? Most artists have love for their fans to but they don't come and steal your hard work or expect you to perform what ever task it is you do for free.

I have talked to some who say well Interscope, or Virgin, or Bad Boy or what ever record company can afford it; well what about the artists? They make theirs off of sales, so if it is provided by a web site (illegally) and downloaded for free who is really loosing – the artists.

This happens in every genre of music, it is not unique to hip-hop and rap. But what is unique to our genre is that we as a culture should watch out for our own.

So what really can be done?

Labels can be notified of sites and forums offering illegal downloads, and hopefully those sites can be prosecuted for theft. Site owners should be aware that people are watching and that 'stealing' from artists will not be tolerated.

Sites that offer illegal downloads can be boycotted. Don't visit them if they are stealing form the artists that you admire. Especially fan sites that say they rep for certain hip-hop and rap artists and then turn around and 'steal' from them. This is rampant among Tupac Shakur sites and forums. Not only is 'The Rose Vol.2' floating the net for download, but even Tupac's classic tracks and albums are. You can find almost any Tupac track on some fan site or in some fan forum for illegal download.

Investigations take time and it is time that the hip-hop culture takes care of its own. We as a culture need to preserve what is ours. What will we do if all the artists say that they can no longer afford to put music out? Where would the culture be with out the sounds that make it?

In these times when the money from sales of albums is going not only to feed artists families, but some of that money is used for many charities and organizations that artists support; this kind of internet theft is affecting many people and we as a culture need to stop abusing our

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artists that we say we admire.

Wait for the release then buy the CD don't download and burn it. Respect the artists and their copyright. Support the culture and the artists who help to make the culture.

*See the latest addition to The Tupac Amaru Shakur Center for the Arts (TASCA) - [HERE](#) .

Have a comment? Go to the forums [HERE](#) or email me [HERE](#) .