

Where is REAL Hip Hop At

Written by Westside ID4301
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Today with mainstream radio confusing what hip hop is and so called hip hop web sites calling Kelly Rowland, Christina Aguilera and the like hip hop; it seems everyone has it so twisted that no one really knows what real hip hop is anymore.

At best what they are pawing off as hip hop is a mix of pop and R&B. Sure there are some great hip hop artist out but many more that are just lost in the shuffle because it has gotten to the point where even record labels are confused about what hip hop is.

Take Soulja Boy; receiving a nomination for a Grammy Award for Best Rap Song for the 50th Grammy Awards? Are they serious? His music is pop or snap but not hip hop. It is painful to watch and even more painful to listen to.

MySpace is loaded with many great hip hop and rap artists and looking there the A&R people could only find Soulja Boy?

There is really no place for an A&R position today as record labels are not really developing any new artists. To get a deal or distribution you have to bring numbers, and if you got numbers why do you need them? That is like saying go make your mark and when the money starts coming in call us and we will be there to help get our share. The major labels and some unscrupulous distribution companies can not see that the lack of their sales is all brought on by themselves. They are just rapist waiting to pounce on any artist who lets them.

Since Tupac (2Pac) died and the West Coast committed suicide, the West Coast has not regained any true stature in the hip hop community. After Tupac was murdered it seems the West Coast looked around and said 'What do we do now'? And they, for the most part, are still looking around waiting for a savior but with the attitude of many of the West Coast artists they will remain looking around until they understand that you have to make music that the world will like and get behind. The 90's gangsta rap has its place but music has to be radio playable to sell. Hip Hop has to be something to relate to to be accepted. And one has to think if all these dudes and dudetts where REAL gangstas – we would be living in a Red or Blue country.

West Coast hip hop and rap artists do not support each other; most of them are to busy hating

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on each other to make any significant gains in the music industry. There are so many 'Kings', 'Best of the West', Greatest and so many self centered titles that no one has been able to come out of the West and make a lasting mark. And those who do bounce out of the West and get a deal in most cases get locked down or can't maintain themselves long enough to make a lasting mark. Maybe Crooked I can do that if he ever drops an album. He has said that being on Death Row Records was holding him back, and he has been off the Row for some time and fans are still waiting for an album; we will see.

It seems the West Coasts worse enemy is the artists themselves and their 'clicks'.

And this is not just a West Coast thing. The East Coast is suffering from a lack of new artists being recognized for their talent also.

It should be said the Down South artists have gained more than anyone lately and not really because of 'crunk' but because they are willing to work together and they are not afraid to promote each other. It took them so long to get noticed that it seems that many of them respect the position they have gained; but this is not true of all southern hip hop and rap artists but it is true of many.

Even Snoop, who seems to be ego trippin', is loosing his grip. Although he turns up it seems on every mix tape coming out from California and New York, not to mention the police blotters; you sorta get tired of hearing him pop up everywhere with his 16's.

Mix tapes full of featured artists only show the artist has no real faith in his work and feels compelled to have a multitude of featured artists with him to help carry him. Rule of thumb I use is one or two features that compliment the artists talents together is great, more than that the artist is not comfortable with his talent and feels he needs help to make it; so he should be in a group not a solo artist.

So many different sub genres have come and gone. Hyphy came and went, Reggatone came and went and true hip hop has come and went it seems, at least in the mainstream. To get real hip hop you have to look to the underground artist. Those that the record labels overlook because they are not of the mold that the industry has set for a hip hop or rap artist.

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Yeah we can look at some of the notables among the hip hop community like NAS, KRS-1, Chuck D, Ice Cube, Common, Big Daddy Kane, Wu Tang Clan, Too Short and the like to bring us some good hip hop but who is going to take their place?

Artists like Jasiri X, NYOIL, Immortal Technique, Kemo the Blaxican, 1223, UND, K-Loron and many others deserve to be there but they remain great 'underground' artists because they do not fit the mold of the 'pop hop' or meaningless dribble that the industry is calling hip hop.

The 'so called' artists that do break out seem to not respect the culture of hip hop or the power of their mic. Music that celebrates death and is filled with destruction, hopelessness & misogyny is not the best of the hip hop culture. Hip Hop should not be viewed as a 'destructive force' that glorifies death, destruction and degeneracy. Nor should it disconnect us or promote self-destructive behavior.

Hip Hop should have substance that will uplift, elevate and empower our people to be all they can be and to notice what is going on around them and report on it.

Sure party tracks and good time tracks are also needed but the reality is what is now called 'hip hop' is not hip hop.

I feel a movement or a coming together must take place to re-claim the culture of hip hop before it is so twisted that no one remembers or questions what real hip hop is.

All artist – Black, Brown, Asian, West Coast, East Coast, Down South and all points in between need to come together for the main idea of pure hip hop and not treat the genre as a 'money grab': getting mine and that is all it is about.

A coalition of artists, maybe lead by influential hip hop artists and industry people who understand what real hip hop is and how to direct and guide the up and comers so the culture remains strong and growing in the right direction is needed.

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Real Hip Hop stand up: if we don't re-claim what is ours, I am afraid it will be lost – or what it really is will be lost to this hip pop movement that seems to be going on now.