

# The Woozy Celebrates Hip-Hop

## With 14 Rap Classics

1. **Grandmaster Melle Mel** - *The Message* (1982)
2. **Afrika Bambaataa & The Soulsonic Force** - *Looking For The Perfect Beat* (1982)
3. **2 Live Crew** - *Cut It Up* (1986)
4. **Boogie Down Productions** - *Super-Hoe* (1987)
5. **Ultramagnetic MC's** - *Critical Beatdown* (1988)
6. **The Jungle Brothers** - *Black is Black* (1988)
7. **Schoolly D** - *Smoke Some Kill* (1988)
8. **Gang Starr** - *Step in the Arena* (1991)
9. **Snoop Dogg** - *Gin & Juice* (1993)
10. **Digable Planets** - *Blowing Down* (1994)
11. **X-Raided** - *Lord Have Mercy* (2000)
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14. **Diamond District featuring Steve Smith** - *First Time* (2009)

## Intro

Rap, was at its root, an opportunity created from a combination of existing African-American musical traditions and a new imperative of expression emanating from newly empowered oppressed peoples. Inner city youth (blacks, Latinos Caribbean creoles, etc) pushed this imperative forward into a musical form that expressed new and bold iterations of an identity informed by civil rights, protest and black empowerment. Rap was in fact a new 'code' that highlighted their unique urban experiences, hopes and disappointment, while also serving as an explosive and infectious artistic outlet.

It is the thesis of The Woozy that hip hop follows in the wake of many musical innovations created by African Americans from the bits and pieces of rhythms, chorals, chants and percussive traditions brought to the new world from Africa. African-American music has re-imagined these basic components and adapted them to form new musical forms such as negro spirituals, delta blues, folk, dixie, jazz, blues, gospel, R&B, Rock, Doo-Wop, Funk, Soul, Spoken Word, Rap,... and beyond.

As far as hip hop being seen as a medium that portrays negative images by “glorifying” negativity let us not forget, hip hop is the voice of the urban landscape and this landscape is rife with negativity. These negatives exist in urban communities across the United States, not because of hip hop, rather, because of the historical effects of a myriad of issues arising from our nations 400 year long embrace and protection of slavery and all of it's consequences and eventualities. THESE realities and the literary devices employed to express them, compose the elements -the chemistry- that serves as the essential DNA and biology of hip hop.

Hearing about the dysfunction, traumatic responses and intergenerational impact of oppression as expressed in hip hop is not the problem. The fact that these problems exist and are perpetuated to this day IS the nexus from which hip hops springs. Hip hop can not be held accountable for the problems of the inner city, rather, its role in providing a vital articulation and expression of these issues while also serving as an urban educational outlet makes hip hop an invaluable cultural resource. Hip hop is, by and large, a celebration of life in the context of a uniquely urban perspective.

The following audio clips illustrate one route, -one progression through the African American song book from the greatest artists of all time.



## **Grandmaster Flash & The Furious Five** *The Message*

Not just one of the greatest rap songs of all time, this classic is perhaps the greatest song ever made from the number 1 rap crew of the first generation of rappers. The immediacy of the song, coming off of the bankruptcy of New York City and the age of urban decay with the disaster of central planning, huge housing projects, the oil embargo, inflation, the horrible effects of redlining, civic over-spending, racism, discrimination and de-institutionalization, this song tells the story of this caustic bog from the perspective of their effects upon the ghettos and boroughs of New York City.

Starting off with a driving, methodical, steady pounding beat, shimmering synthesizers, and percussion that harkens to the Caribbean/Puerto Rican/Dominican/Latin immigrant influence. The cut touts themes of struggle, hopelessness, depression, human waste, vermin, drug use and crushing despair. The song was an anthem for millions of underclass blacks who struggled to survive day by day, hand to mouth. Several perspectives and first person vignettes form the core structure of the song. It is doubtful that any think tank or academic research group could compose a theme more immediate or visceral to illustrate this particular time in NY, without compromising in any way the artistry, beauty, and ass-shaking musical innovation of the composition.

### **Sample Line:**

*Broken Glass everywhere  
people pissin on the stairs, you know they just don't care  
I can't take the smell, I can't take the noise  
got no money to move out, I guess I got no choice.  
Rats in the front room, roaches in the back  
Junkies in the alley with the baseball bat.  
Tried to get away but I didn't get far  
Cause he man with the tow truck repossessed my car.  
Don't -Push Me -Cause -I'm- Close To The -Edge,  
-I'm -Tryin' -Not -To -Lose -My -Head -a-huh-HUH-HUH- HUH!  
It's like a jungle sometimes it makes me wonder how I keep from goin' under.*



## **Afrika Bambaataa & The Soulsonic Force *Looking For The Perfect Beat***

This song, a production of hip hop legend Afrika Bambaataa based on a sample by Kraftwerk, is simply amazing. The raps aren't whack, but there's just not much to them. But this song definitely belongs on this list because of the pedigree of the group and its contribution to the early phase of rap. music is timeless and Afrika Bambaataa took the nation by storm with his unique Electro Funk style. A combination of funk, rap, electro-dance grooves and a rap crew made up of Afrika Bambaataa, Mr. Biggs, Pow Wow, and The G.L.O.B.E.,. Bambaataa himself was a DJ who used his particular skill to take rap, at a nascent age and turn it into a purely infectious dance hit of synthesizers, drum machines, scratches and an old school rap crew. The theme of the song centers around the Hero's quest, search for and capture of "the world's perfect beat". In this song, the perfect beat takes the place of the the chalice. It certainly doesn't hurt that the song is rave worthy and one of the few songs that can motivate even a quadruple bypass candidate to sprint on a treadmill for the last 5 minutes of a grueling workout.

As an interesting aside, the year before *Perfect Beat* came out, The Soulsonic Force released *Planet Rock* (1982). At this time, word of new songs spread between a combination of radio stations, DJ's, dance clubs and print. I first encountered *Perfect Beat* in the summer of 1983 while hitchhiking across the western United States. I hopped a Greyhound to get across some sparsely traveled territory between Salt Lake City and Reno and found a cassette stuck in the window well. It was *Planet Rock*. It wasn't until almost a year later before *Perfect Beat* and *Planet Rock* made their way to local radio.

### **Sample Line:**

*Universal people looking for the perfect beat  
Mortal world of nations looking for the perfect beat  
Mighty Zulu Nation they have found the perfect beat  
I'm mighty Afrika Bambaata, I present the perfect beat.  
Beat, Beat, Beat, Beat (Scratchin')*



## 2 Live Crew *Cut It Up*

2 Live Crew is an excellent example of an old school classic Rap that uses very basic elements consisting of 2 MC's (Fresh Kid Ice and The Brother Marquis) a DJ (Mr. Mixx) a drum machine (the classic 808), samples (Soulsonic Force's Planet Rock) and a classic rap song structure based on praise for the groups abilities.

2 Live Crew is also an important footnote in rap due to their prosecution for \*obscene lyrics on the single "Me So Horny". The case went to U.S. District Court, and the Eleventh Circuit for appeals whereupon 2 Live Crew emerged victorious. 2 Live Crew's victory in these two cases is seen as key in defining and establishing the rights of Rap artist to exercise free and protected speech. Henry Louis Gates even testified in the obscenity case in defense of 2 Live Crew. 2 Live Crew is also notable for having perhaps the best known and most popular Asian Rappers, Fresh Kid Ice (Chris Wong Won).

### Sample Lyrics:

*I must give credit where credit is due and at the same time make known to you  
Because when you see is when you believe  
that there is not another dj with cuts like these  
and I'm not making false accusations when I'm sayin'  
he rocks the house every show he's playin'  
and with the addition of a rappin' technician someone quite like myself  
enhancin' all the cuts he makes and keep his mixes in perfect health*

#### \*From Kimberly Crewshaw's, Beyond Racism and Misogyny: Black Feminism and 2 Live Crew.

*"Two positions dominated the debate about 2 Live Crew. Writing in Newsweek, political columnist George Will staked out a case against the Crew, arguing that **Nasty As They Wanna Be**, was misogynistic filth and characterizing their lyrics as a profoundly repugnant 'combination of extreme infantilism and menace' that objectified Black women and represented them as legitimate targets for sexual violence. The most prominent defense of 2 Live Crew was advanced by Professor Henry Louis Gates, Jr.,... In a New York Times Op-Ed piece, and in testimony... Gates portrayed 2 Live Crew as brilliant artists who were inventively elaborating distinctively African-American forms of cultural expression... Gates argued, the characteristic exaggeration featured in their lyrics served a political end: to explode popular racist stereotypes about Black sexuality precisely by presenting those stereotypes in a comically extreme form."*



## **Boogie Down Productions** **Super-Hoe**

With Sparse production, a drum machine a few samples and some ghetto-ass back-up singers, The Blastmaster KRS-One and Scott La Rock of Boogie Down Productions unleashed this ghetto anthem during the heightening crest of the Rap Borough Battles. In fact, the narcissistic ego of KRS-One is largely the reason Borough rap battles began, as Kris virtually climbed the Empire State Building, holding the microphone like it was a blonde white virgin and proclaimed to all within earshot that HE was the greatest MC in all of New York, and that the Bronx was the birthplace of the heart and soul of the NY rap genealogy.

Legend has it that KRS-One and Scott La Rock met at the Morrissania Men's Shelter where Kris Parker was a youth and Scott La Rock was a social worker. Recognizing Kris' talent, they formed a partnership that only ended with the tragic slaying of Scott La Rock after the first album.

The fact that this song has been a classic since the 80's and lasted over 5 minutes with nothing more than the wit of KRS-One and a every-possible-angle rap on the single subject of his DJ's sexual proclivities speaks volumes to the powers of Boogie Down Productions.

[I really should have included, *The Bridge Is Over* instead of *Super-Hoe* since '*Bridge*' is a rap history lesson that discusses the origins of rap, as seen from the perspective of Boogie Down Productions, but as a disclaimer: I was born in the Boogie Down Bronx at the now defunct Morrissania Hospital definitely endears this particular rap crew to my heart.]

### **Sample Line:**

*We were bein' interviewed there live on air,  
every girl in the city and Scott had an affair.  
KM in the AM had asked his last question,  
but Scott La Rock said "Wait, I've got to mention  
the fact that I'm single, I like to mingle,  
and one more time, bust the fresh jingle."*

*(chorus) Scott La Rock Had 'em allllllll. He is a SuperHoe!*



## **Ultramagnetic MC's** **Critical Beatdown**

Ultra is from the era where ever rapper and rap crew had to have raps that include braggadocio about how much better their mc rapping was than “sucker mc” raps. It is presumed that “sucker mc's” are the ones that are unable to secure record contracts. In this era, Rap was treated as if it were Greek God type affair, where those at the top were the ones that had successfully scaled the Rap mountain and were thus rap deities. It is taken for granted that unless named personally, these Sucker MC raps did not pertain to any other rap deity.

The Ultramagnetic MC's are an old school rap outfit composed of Ced Gee, Tim Dogg, TR Love, Moe Love and the venerable Kool Keith. Ultra preceded WuTang and set the model for New York rap “crews”. They were preceded by the first wave of rap crews, such as the Soulsonic Force, Grandmaster Flash, Sugar Hill. Their samples were innovative and expanded the rap volume. Their DJ was also involved in the seminal Boogie Down Productions *Criminal Minded* disc. This fact alone is enough rap credibility to infuse the entire group across the threshold of Rap Legend status –if they hadn't already done it on their own accord.

Critical beat down features the "spoken word" style of rhyme of Kool Keith. much like too short and Eazy-E, his raps are not complicated, just direct, heartfelt and delivered with a cadence and unique voice that projects confidence, necessity and immediacy. Critical Beatdown follows the old school rap formula. One MC starts with a concept, or the crew has a concept. One MC Raps about it and the next MC on the microphone must meet the bar and exceed it if possible. In this way all of the crews MC's get a shot or two at the Microphone. As the song is developed and edited, this can lead to a dizzying display of lyricism and innovation.

### **Sample Line:**

*Move, while I enter the groove*

*I'm on top and having to prove, to whack MC's who claim to be better than,*

*no way, I'm frankly more clever than all of you -each and every one my son*

*pay close attention -I'll take your brain to another dimension*

*hold it, -mold it, shape it.- you got a knife? yes I want to scrape it*

*up and down sideways anywhere i can -be rude to you.- But I'll rap and be crude to you and eat up, -*

*toy ducks I beat up.*

*I am the oven your brains I want to heat up*

*Mega, supersonic degrees...*



## **The Jungle Brothers** **Black is Black**

One of the first "conscious rappers" and original "Native Tongue" rap groups, The Jungle Brothers black is black pride divined into a maple honeyed ecstasy. It's true first generation "Edutainment" rap with old school James Brown samples, a drum machine and two Jungle Brothers tossin' the mic back and forth. The Jungle Brothers were from that generation of rappers that felt the calling to provide the vital history lessons that were so woefully missing and are still missing in our schools curriculum. Issues of race, class, culture, skin tone, liberation, discrimination and black power realism are all covered at least to a high school proficiency with enough clues for intrepid listeners to follow up on the internet. As a forerunner and original of conscious rap and a deep collaborative influence on BDP, A Tribe Called Quest, Black Sheep and De La Soul, this album and song are undeniable all-time classics.

### **Sample Lyric:**

*Today's the day we get together to try to change and make things better  
If not where will be be tomorrow? Drowning in a pool of sorrow  
Daylight shines but still few see that we must fight for unity  
In a picture that's fixed as black and white why's it both that have to fight?  
Uplift the race UPLIFT THE RACE! Leave the soul and out my face  
All for one and one for all, Black is Black.. That's right ch'all...*





## **Schoolly D** **Smoke Some Kill**

Known as "The Illy from Philly". Schoolly is another "spoken word" MC. His formula is simple rhymes told behind the booming bass of the 808 drum machine and stories told with a masculine, no frills matter of fact, crucially black, testosterone fueled confidence.

Smoking marijuana, sex, storytelling, misunderstanding parents, silliness and frivolity, slaying sucker mc's, material possessions, and a simple rap theme following the old formula of rapping on a theme and several verses, perhaps a simple chorus. Schoolly features liberal, brain damaging scratches from DJ Code Money, and on this particular album, healthy doses of Black Liberationist Samples.

### **Sample Line:**

*Woke up early Sunday morn' jumped out the bed -Filas on.  
-thought about -the hangover -kissed the dog, called my mom rover.  
Went into the kitchen captain crunch, turned on the tube -the Brady Bunch.  
Instead of a house, they lived in a palace, Jan was fu\*\*in Mike and Mike was fu\*\*in Alice.  
My little eyes opened up wide, the thing in my pants started to rise.  
Sat down on the couch to cool and chill -cracked me a forty, rolled some kill.  
I was smokin' I was tokin', my mom said, "Boy, you must be jokin'!"  
Threw me outside it was rainin' I was soakin, -that weed so damn provokin'.*





## **Gang Starr** **Step in the Arena**

Guru is an intellectual and technician with a unique voice and musical style reminiscent of the Audio Two and beats similar to Das FX. Guru's raps are smooth enough, but what characterizes them are that , they're mathematical verbal barrages linked together like a old school chain forming a formidable, uninterrupted verbal assault. Where Guru falls short in smoothness and fluidity, he makes up for in intelligence, command, vocal distinction and technical skill.

A rappers gift can come from virtually anywhere and any particular talent from cadence, vision, voice, story, personal experience, culture, time... like a giant equalizer, each rapper's skill depends on a unique mix and Mojo from the rap "EQ" of vocal attributes showcasing the uniqueness of the human voice and individual MC verbal gifts and talents, much like the qualities we seek in radio personalities. Some voices are flat, others, are melodious, or urgent, or piercing or aesthetically pleasing. Guru was one of the MC's that ushered in an era of rap that utilized intellectual and technical skills to make up for a lack of "natural" creativity and ambition, thus opening up a new grab bag for a different type of MC, than the traditional naturally gifted (and this isn't my quote) "big-cocks/biggest-nigger-on-the-ghetto-block" rappers

### **Sample Line:**

*I'm like claws that will rip cause your gift is merely flesh  
Superficial and I wish you, would give it a rest  
But if you don't, -I'll un-sheath my Excalibur  
-Like a noble knight, -so meet a challenger,  
A true hero, -while you're a through zero  
-Getting' beat to a pulp so that you can't run for help...*



## **Snoop Dogg** **Gin and Juice**

If there was ever a rapper that earned the right to say, "I did it my way" (more than likely Doggystyle), it's Snoop Dogg. Who can forget when Snoop snapped onto the scene alongside Dre singing, "1-8-7 on an undercover cooop!". Snoop amazingly is an unrepentant gang member, hard core, I mean, **HARD CORE** dope smoker, misogynist rapper, family man, entrepreneur, businessman, comedian, athlete, mentor, record company executive and evader of a murder conviction, the venerable Mr Calvin Broadhaus is perhaps the most sought after music collaborator in the hip hop scene of all-time. Even ten years ago, Snoop had reached the level of National Treasure. I can quite seriously say that the Smithsonian should consider placing him in the Institute while he's still alive. Not only is his rap style one of the most unique, but he's unmatched in his ability to freestyle. His songbook has the mojo to convulse scantily clad assess from Tehran east to Timbuktu. Gin and Juice is a classic that illustrates Snoop at the height of his powers. Perhaps the greatest testament to his legendary artistry is that even though he's a confessed dope fiend, gang banger and rapper who has lyrically degraded women, condemned "snitches" and glorified virtually ever taboo subject imaginable, he was still afforded a White House visit.

### **Sample Lyrics:**

*-May, -I, kick-a-little-somethin'-for-the-G's, -and, make-a-few-ends-as-I-breeze, through  
-Two-in-the-mornin'-and-the-party's-still-jumpin'-'cause-my-momma-ain't-home,  
-I got bitches in the living room gettin' it on,-and, they-ain't-leavin'-'til six-in-the-mornin'  
So what you wanna do? Shit... I-got-a-pocket-Full-of-rubbers-and-my-homeboys-do-too!  
So turn out the lights and close the door, but.. (but what?) We don't love them hoe's!....  
...G's up, Hoes down while you motherfuckers bounce to this...  
Rollin down the street smokin' Indo, sippin' on gin and juice!*



## **The Digable Planets** ***Blowing Down***

From one of the most unique and creative rap albums of all time, The Digable Planets are frequently erroneously referred to as a “one hit wonder” completely ignoring the majesty of their follow up album and the top to bottom quality of songs on their debut. *Blowing Down* is a unique creation that illustrates the magic that can happen when pure ambition meets raw talent among several MC's who combine talents and produce something that is greater than the sum of their parts. *Blowing Down* is a fine illustration of their rhyming style, which could be said to sacrifice clarity and succinctness for the sake of the cadence, syncopation and rhyme flow. Here, The Planets take a page from most rock groups who have nonsense lyrics that sound good, but make absolutely no fucking sense upon closer inspection. Sometimes this works, as it does with The Planets, seeing as the lyrics leave enough of a poetic flow and fragments of almost full ideas that anybody from the hood can “feel” to hint at/suggest at an underlying camouflaged coherent thesis that allows the mind to delve into an unconscious meditation/“planet-ary” groove.

The Planets were composed of two guys and a female, “Doodlebug”. The music and the rhymes mixed beautifully creating a sonic space that fully embraced a higher consciousness while never losing sight of the fact that it had the responsibility of representing Crooklyn. The Planets were more than rappers. They were true entertainers that created mood music that provided fertile ground and a positive auditory relief to the issues confronting the youth of the early 90's.

### **Sample Line:**

*No doubt we turns it out*

*'Cause we keep black movement and castle keep rockin' plus hang with my niggas and hit the dope spots.*

*Play in the corners and maybe even boogie 'till the sun come up or a gun come up...*

*Shootin' at the breeze the local emcees,*

*stylin' wit ease,*

*doin' it like the sun is in here 'cause we bomb rhyme, sayin', butter ain't playin' Blowin out...*



## **X-Raided** **Lord Have Mercy**

“X” is a gang-banger gifted with virtually every possible gift an MC can possess. I believe his claim to being the king of west coast rappers is legitimate. This song illustrates the “journalism” quality of his raps. He dispatches missives from the deepest, and at times, most disturbed corners of our communities. His talent and the beauty of his flow is a 5 star delight. Spicy, sour, sweet, crunchy, smooth, salty, and chewy. Insight is perhaps his greatest gift. There are but a handful of rappers that can self-reflect, and paint both visual landscapes and internal subjective landscapes that give the listener an interactive telescoping view of his worldview. X’s stories are at times beautiful, at other times deeply disturbing and overall as infectious as the Ebola virus. Despite the world X comes from, the sins he’s committed, and his repetition compulsion for the streets, violence and blind loyalty to his gang-banging buddies, he also supplies a rich psycho-developmental back-story that answers many of the “Why’s” for the choices he makes. X provides a complete unexpurgated view of the ghetto gang banger grind pulled together in a style and flow and musicality and classic song structure that is nothing less than an exquisite delicacy that. X’s songs present layer upon layer upon layer for dissection. This song is especially poignant seeing as X is serving a life sentence for a senseless gang retaliation murder. X proclaims his innocence, but his songs indicate that even if he did not commit this crime, karma is responsible for his confinement. In this song X acknowledges a wayward life that seems beyond his ability to escape and he pleads for forgiveness from God. This song is an important window into the reality of our inner cities and the seemingly endless inter-generational cycle of violence.

### **Sample Line:**

*Lord forgive me for all the wrong that I did,  
- all of the pain I inflicted as a kid,  
on judgment day consider this before you curse me,  
-I was only a child so Lord have mercy!  
forgive me for all the wrong that I done,  
-all of the pain I inflicted when I was young.  
On Judgment day consider this before you curse me,  
I was only a child so Lord have mercy! Forgive me!*



**Rob Swift**  
**Featuring Supernatural**  
**& DJ Radar**  
***Interview with A Colored Man***

A unique opus/mix of several song fragments (samples) based around a fictional live audience interview of “Colored Man”, an African-American superhero African-American special powers that are revealed through the course of this short and sweet song. “Colored Man” has a firm MC/hip hop veracity and black liberationist perspective relating a depth and complexity of character that expands the genre of science fiction rap and reality from a Neil De Grasse Tyson type perspective.

**Sample Line:**

Interviewer: Let’s get right to the First Question. We all know you were born on planet Ebony. Now just how far is planet Ebony from Mars?

*Colored Man: 300 and 60 degrees from Mars and we got Black Stars*

*7 suns, -that's what we got -we run on Ebony -yo we speak Ebonics*

*-smoke chronic, -got robots that got bionics,*

*-think we on planets, -don't understand it?*

*-do you understand? -it's me your friendly neighborhood colored man.*

*-Walking through, -on my T, my colors are red, black and green*

*- on the back of my cape is, “no escape”, -the planet ebony I live on is truly great.*



## **Quasimoto** **Spaces**

\*Quasimoto aka Lord Quas is a cutting edge beat junkie with the creativity of a schizophrenic savant prodigy who has dedicated himself to his own particular form of hip hop artistry with the dedication of a cult leader. Quasimoto is one of those rappers that are so prolific and immersed in the genre that he has to release albums under multiple names and with multiple collaborators to satiate his need to create and his need to give voice to the various angles and personalities his creativity takes. *Lord Quas* is a student of the game, firmly founded in the history of rap, and forcefully pushing into the unknown territory that lies ahead. Creative songs, innovative samples, eclectic vocal and musical styles, he employs an urban graffiti style sensibility to the musical tags he leaves. This particular song, *Spaces* is a perfect showcase of his talents. In it he creates a 7<sup>th</sup> heaven, dream like mix of an audio interview with a white stoner and the voice of Quasimoto rapping from multiple tangents about literal mental "spaces".

### **Sample Line:**

*Hey Yo, it's the mastadon, yo I'll hit you all spacey.  
Lord Quas, Mister Buddha Madlib Master Bass MC's.  
Comin' through like Thelonus Monk,  
Came real dropped harmonious Funk.  
I'll leave you suckin' like a crack heads ass  
dropped the math on that ass fast cause if we in a battle you know you end up comin' up in last place.  
Hit you with the slow and fast pace -on conceptual mode agree to wreck the whole space...*

*\*Quasimoto goes by many names. He's perhaps better known as Madlib, Madvillian & The Loop digga. He has collaborated with MF DOOM (they share very similar vocal styles), J Dilla (Jaylib) & The Peanut Butter Wolf.*



## **Diamond District** **Featuring Steve Smith** ***First Time***

One of the most creative and gifted rap groups ever assembled I'm eager to hear a follow up to this grand opus of grandmaster level of word wizardry. Old school beats, old school raps updated with an amazing cadence and style that's barely decipherable, due to a complex infection of alliterative machine gun verbal assaults from all three MC's. From top to bottom, every cut works, is complete, is coherent and stupendous. The full effort is nothing less than mind blowing. The whole flavor of the album is so stunning I was expecting to see 3 well known producers/rappers or vagabond cast off members from 80's and 90's hip hop hall of fame groups. I was shocked to see this crew was organic and young. 3 ghetto wildflowers blossoming and in fact fully bloomed at the pinnacle of rap power from Chocolate City's Diamond District.

Neither the needs of the message or the lyrical mysticism are compromised. Once again there are multiple layers that can be unpacked in each sentence, let alone song. The entire album keeps coming song after song after song.

### **Sample Line:**

*First things first, the first born, -wanted to be the first to put D. I. C. on*

*-First to cross the finish line for my first y'all*

*First to see the flow list yes first to serve y'all*

*First person that I met was mom's, -First song I remember hearing I think was 'after the love is gone' by earth first element then with fire inspired by the most higher person that I admired...*



# **A Short History of the Evolution of African Music in America**

Slavery and migration transported African rhythms and structures to new lands that provided opportunities for hybrid innovations with new instruments and new musical styles that were previously unimagined. In this regard, Black music in America represents a cultural document that chronicles the progression and evolution of Black music from slavery to the present day.

## **1. Scott Joplin - Gladiolus Rag**

Scott Joplin was a Black man born during reconstruction. Despite this enormous handicap, his talent outshone the specter of racism as he popularized ragtime and became one of the best selling songwriters of the late 19th Century.

## **2. Original Dixieland with Al Bernard - St. Louis Blues**

Dixieland was a code word for Black Music. This clip is a fine example of it's structure and appeal as yet another innovation created by Black artists.

## **3. Robert Johnson - From 4 Until Late**

King of the Delta Blues, Robert Johnson lived the same kind of vagabond life he sang about. A hardscrabble life lived in the heart of the south 50 years after the end of slavery.

## **4. Paul Robeson - Ol' Man River**

One of the greatest athletes, scholars and actors in American history. At one time, he was the highest paid entertainer in the United States. In this song, he sings a well known work song for blacks who toiled loading cotton on the Mississippi while under duress, threat of violence and mostly for free. Robeson's voice is addictive and beautiful.

## **5. Billie Holiday - He's Funny That Way**

Billie Holiday sings the blues like only she can. Due to the effect of racism and 2nd class status, the vast majority of blacks in her era had an upbringing not dissimilar to her. The artistry she brought in voicing the pain and longings of millions was exquisite.

## **6. The Mississippi Sheiks - Ram Rod Blues**

Mississippi Sheiks is an excellent example of a Black country blues group that gained renown in the 30's

## **7. Mississippi John Hurt - Shortnin' Bread**

John Hurt was discovered, lost and re-discovered decades later. His unique 3 finger style brought a homespun charm to compliment his simple vocal style. Hurt was an authentic sharecropper who made money playing his guitar for small dances and clubs. Once his recordings became known he became one of the most admired and covered blues artist in modern times. 'Shortnin' Bread' is one of those songs that straddle the line between racist artifact and folk song.

## **8. Billie Holiday - Strange Fruit**

A song about the horror of lynching, based on the poem by Lewis Allan, this one song, a grassroots anthem, did more to give voice to the anti-lynching movement than previous decades of organized protests

## **9. The Impressions - This Is My Country**

One of the freedom songs of the Civil Rights Era written by Curtis Mayfield.

## **10. James Baldwin - Baldwin's Nigger**

During a visit to England James Baldwin Explains that his genealogical search ends with a bill of sale as "Baldwin's Nigger". Baldwin's form was literature, but in the civil rights era, it was his public speaking and essays that influenced the critical analysis of a new black consciousness. Baldwin and a cadre of Black grassroots educators, including Kwame Toure (Stokeley Carmichael), Martin Luther King, Jr., El Hajj Malik El Shabazz (Malcolm X), Robert F. Williams, and many others took the word of a new Black identity on the road and completed the world's largest and most successful re-education campaign resulting in the transformation of 22 million American Negroes into a proud, ambitious and politically active Black people.

## **11. Dick Gregory - Black Ain't A Color**

In this talk Dick Gregory, uses small doses of humor in his un-repentant analysis of the Black/White dichotomy. Gregory embodied a Black power attitude of fearless Black love and truth that demanded recognition and exemplified an intelligent boldness and cockiness that is the root of hip hop culture.

## **12. The Last Poets - Medley**

The Black Poets were literally "Rap" before Rap was Rap. They had the music, the rhymes and the socially conscious message. The only thing missing was a DJ with a melody, drum machine, hook and bridge.

## **13. Verrett Lee - Oh Freedom**

The great Verrett Lee sings 'Oh Freedom', A post-Civil War era freedom song brought back into fashion by the Civil Rights era.

## **14. Bob Marley - Concrete Jungle**

Bob Marley sings about the concrete jungle, Trenchtown, Jamaica a former livestock farm that thousands of destitute Jamaicans called home.

## **15. Peter Tosh - Go Tell It On The Mountain**

This song is another traditional African-American spiritual song from the Civil War era brought to prominence by the Civil Rights movement.

## **16. Marvin Gaye - Anger**

Marvin Gaye followed up his amazing album, 'What's Going On', with an album composed for and about his marriage and divorce from Berry Gordy's sister, Anna. Part blues, part funk, soul and doo-wop, Marvin expanded the African-American songbook.

### **17. Jimi Hendrix - Long Hot Summer Night**

Hendrix melded blues with rock and pioneered psychedelic rock. As a black man in a game where almost all guitar gods were white, he turned the scene upside-down with constant innovation, a deluge of tracks and a charisma matched only by his voracious need for cutting edge experiences.

### **18. Richard Pryor - Eulogy**

Richard Pryor, the son of a prostitute and pimp was raised in a whorehouse. His comedic routine broke from mimicking Bill Cosby into a whole new political/racial/cultural assault of vulgarity, preposterous scenarios and bitter, cutting truth. Richard Pryor liberated millions of African-American's by saying exactly what was on his mind.

### **19. Gil Scott-Heron - The Revolution Will Not Be Televised**

This song is a classic. A black liberationist opus that injected intelligence, consciousness, political awareness and a little fear into ghetto's, colleges, and suburbs the world over.

### **20. Curtis Mayfield - Doo Doo Wop**

A song about jail, injustice and the effect of incarceration upon the psyche of the oppressed, this song, written for a Miguel Pinero play, gave voice to the trials and tribulations of Blacks and Puerto Ricans caught in New York's criminal justice system.

### **21. Miles Davis - Honky Tonk (Take 5)**

Miles Davis, like Hendrix, did nothing but innovate and push the boundaries of music.

### **22. The Edwin Hawkins Singers - The House Of The Lord**

This song is a gospel classic from an inspired album that brought the roots of gospel into the homes of millions with it's hit, 'Oh Happy Day'.

### **23. The Sugarhill Gang - Rappers Delight**

This is the song that started it all. Soon after Rappers Delight came out, everyone was talking about the song that didn't have singing, rather guys "talking fast" to the music. No one knew the word "Rap" yet. In the days where most people relied on the radio to hear music, everyone wanted to catch this song so they could hear the words and break down the message. For those that could memorize the lyrics quickly, they had to give multiple performances a day of "Rappers Delight". Sylvia Robinson of Sugarhill Records started a cottage industry of purloined beats, borrowed bass lines and stolen bridges to fuel the nations insatiable desire for the next 12" rap song.

### **24. Kurtis Blow - The Breaks**

'The Breaks' was the next real hit song in Rap History following upon 'Rappers Delight'. During the early years of Rap, it was about waiting for 12" tracks to drop.

### **25. Boogie Down Productions - The South Bronx**

In this song, The Blastmaster KRS-One gives a Hip Hop history lesson that marks The Bronx as the birthplace of Hip Hop.

## **26. Bob Marley - Redemption Song**

Perhaps the greatest folk song of all-time, 'Redemption Song' is infused with a deeply heartfelt message that is firmly rooted in the personal, but points the direction towards a political liberationist perspective. This song reveals in an essential way why Rap was necessitated. A new musical form was needed to tell the story of a uniquely Black American human desire for freedom and recognition despite 450 years of oppression and the modern nightmare of techno-marginalization within concrete slums and vertical ghettos.

## **27. Schoolly D - Black Man**

Schoolly D uses a Black Liberationist speech as the core foundation of his song, 'Black Man' illustrating the deep links between Black consciousness and Hip Hop.

## **28. RUN-DMC with Aerosmith - Walk This Way**

'Walk This Way' by Run-DMC and Aerosmith was the song that finally broke Rap into the mainstream for good. When this song came out, MTV had a policy of only playing Michael Jackson while largely ignoring all other Black artist. 'Walk This Way' stormed the nation by merging rap with rock and uniting black and white youth through by way of a love of two musical styles that had previously been seen as incongruous. It was an artistic collaboration that achieved what reason, logic, and love could not, catapulting rap to a plateau from which it would never have to look back.