

ABSTRACT

It is said that music is a reflection of the society around us. It is the memory of the great times, and a guiding light during the dark times. It is the textbook of the past worlds, the snapshot of the present, and the telescopic view of the future. Not only has music been an integral part of the history of this nation, but the world as well. It is the voice of the people.

Music has always been a staple in the black community. During times of despair and tribulations, black people have been known to turn to music as their refuge. Throughout history, music has been known as a form of communication for the community. This can be seen during times of slavery, the Civil Rights Movement (1950s and 1960s), and even the Black Power Movement (1965-1974). The music was a way of speaking up and bringing awareness to the truth about discrimination in America. It was also a commercial commodity used to communicate pride, hope and prosperity to all who listened.

In this paper, I will look at music's role in the Black Power Movement and the current Black Lives Matter Movement. Through qualitative research, I was able to look into the ways that black music artists have/are orating politics, protests, and aspirations through music during both eras. I also took a quantitative approach to evaluate the structure of record labels, comparing and contrasting their control over music being produced, and how labels responded to and reflected the current events.

Black Power Movement (1965-1974)

Black Power Movement

- Came after the Civil Rights Movement
- Devoted to the equality and justice of black people of color
- This was a movement in that worked to empower the black community
- A Protest against the dehumanization and discrimination of colored people

Black Panther Party:

- Originally named the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense
- **Was a huge part of but they were not the movement**
- They were not a terrorist group like the media wants you to believe
- Their purpose was to take care of the Black community.
 - *Held after school programs
 - *Made sure police weren't abusing their power in black neighborhoods

Black vs. African American

The use of the word Black rather than the word African American was a big part of my research. Although African American is the more politically correct answer, I chose to use the word Black. When looking in the dictionary, I found that there are almost all negative connotations that go along with the word Black. During these movements, the word Black is used as a symbol of positivity. It was a symbol of strength and pride. This is something that was/is needed during both movements.



Breathing With No Air: Black Orality and the Music Industry during Protest Movements

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Music

Soul Music:

"The word soul meant a lot of things, in music and out. It was about the roots of black music, and it was kind of a pride thing too, being proud of yourself and your people. Soul music and the civil rights movement went hand in hand, sort of grew up together," (Vincent 2013).

"During this heated time in American history, entertainers were often political and political leaders were unmistakably entertaining," (Vincent 2013)

Some songs:

- "Say It Loud" by James Brown
- "Nina Simone Sings the Blues" by Nina Simone
- "What's Going On" by Marvin Gaye
- "Seize the Time" – Elaine Brown

Is Hip-Hop the soul music of the Black Lives Matter Movement?

Music is still an essential part of the world today. In the past, soul music was the driving force behind the movement. Today things have changed. Soul music is no longer the power house that it once was. Hip Hop is a powerful force that has taken over the industry. Could this genre be the music of the Black Lives Matter Movement?

Some songs:

- "Formation" by Beyonce
- "Freedom" by Beyoncé
- "Complexion" by Kendrick Lamar ft. Rapsody
- "Treat Me Caucasian" by Mick Jenkins



#BlackLivesMatter Movement (2012-Present)

#BlackLivesMatter Movement:

- The current focus of the Black Lives Matter Movement is police brutality.
- After countless deaths of innocent men and women by the hands of police, their hope is for justice and reform within the policing systems.
- The tragic events that have transpired are not factors of history repeating itself. They are the continued issues of our nation being televised.

#BlackLivesMatter Organization

- Began in 2012 after the death of Trayvon Martin
- "Black Lives Matter is an ideological and political intervention in a world where Black lives are systematically and intentionally targeted for demise. It is an affirmation of Black folks' contributions to this society, our humanity, and our resilience in the face of deadly oppression."

Music Industry

"To remind people that black lives matter. Not even to be corny or anything, but to remind people and show people that even though people say that we have come so far in America, we're this post racial America. We still have so far to go." – Daman! (rapper)

"Marketing is about messaging. Marketing is about making sure fans know who your artist is, what your artist has, and how they can get it, and when they can get it. And it is increasingly challenging, even with an established artist but especially with a new artist, to cut through all these different messages that they're getting about everything and have them hone in on that." – Naima Cochrane (Artist Manager)

We don't have the same outlets we used to have...The way to grab attention is becoming harder and harder" – Naima Cochrane (Artist Manager)

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