

World Hip-Hop Questions US Rap - H2A Represents

Written by Robert ID2574
Sunday, 30 April 2006 22:10 -

In a recent BBC article, Executive Director Rolando Brown of the Hip-Hop Association once again represented hip-hop culture with intellectual thinking. In response to the misrepresentation of Hip-Hop culture, The Hip-Hop Association (H2A) was formed in March 2002 in response to this misrepresentation of Hip-Hop culture. The goal of The Hip-Hop Association (H2A) is facilitating, fostering and preserving Hip-Hop's original vision, and in this article it is good to see that, hip-hop culture has Rolando Brown of The Hip-Hop Association (H2A), and others, to represent us as a culture.

World Hip-Hop Questions US Rap (BBC News)

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/4950692.stm>

A recent international hip-hop festival which brought together rap artists from around the world has raised the question of why non-US rap is so political - whereas mainstream American rap appears frivolous.

Many of the performers at the three-day Trinity International Hip-Hop Festival in Hartford, Connecticut, were critical of the way that US rap - which is by far the best-selling - appears concerned mostly with money, drugs and sex, and has little to do with its roots in the angry political expression of hip-hop and rap groups like Public Enemy or KRS One.

"There's this negative perception of hip-hop as being a criminal art form, as being the home of the uneducated and non-thinking people," said Nigerian MC Oke. "When you go across the continents of the Earth, people are embracing hip-hop as the force to change and transform the world."

'sex, money and drugs'

The artists, who came from countries as diverse as Brazil, Kenya, and Iraq, were brought together by a group of Hartford students in collaboration with American non-governmental

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organization World Up.

The festival was designed to promote international understanding and community development through hip-hop. Rolando Brown, of event sponsors the Hip-Hop Association, said the festival highlighted there was "more of a focus on positive community development" outside the US.

"Some will argue that it's because of a lack of an economy, others would say it's because the international market has always been a little bit more conducive to development than the US has," he added.

MC Dola, a Tanzanian rapper who is one of the biggest-selling artists in East Africa, said that outside of the US, stars maximise their appeal by talking about social issues and rapping in their own language.

"We have been able to filter out the elements of sex, money and drugs - you don't get that in Tanzania," he explained.

"You don't get airplay if you talk about these things in your music. Over 99% of the rap in Tanzania is in Swahili - and it actually has a political message to it.

"They are the records that sell and appeal to a wider demographic of people than any type of music."

Changing market

However, many artists in Hartford blamed the current preoccupations of US hip-hop on the music industry, and stressed they believe record labels and radio conglomerates are actively promoting negative stereotypes to bury rap with a positive or political message.

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"Being sensational about violence or sex or drugs is a huge part of it," said Chee Malabar, a rapper with Asian-American act The Himalayan Project.

"It's easier for Americans to buy into that than it is to look in the mirror and say, 'some of the social policies and institutional hierarchies are messed up'".

"That's hard to sell, and ultimately it's about selling."

But Jacqueline Springer, of the BBC's urban music station 1Xtra, said that she strongly disagreed with this opinion.

"People haven't appreciated that although rap is the biggest-selling genre now, it's layered, so there are people who are underground, who have more of a political voice," she said.

She also pointed out that the age of the average rap fan has decreased, which has transformed what rap artists produce.

"They don't really want to hear about your opposition to George Bush - they'd much rather hear about what you want to do with George Bush's wife," she said.

"They don't want too much politics or too much sociological content rammed down their throats, because they're looking at rap as a fantasy - 'if I can be famous, I can get iced-out teeth as well'."

Article source: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/4950692.stm>

Some Hip-Hop Association (H2A) Dates to Save

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2006 H2Ed Summit, "Elevate: Using Hip-Hop to Educate!"

Summer Teacher Institute at the Rock And Roll Hall of Fame & Museum

Cleveland, OH | June 26 – 30, 2006 | www.h2ed.net

Freshest Youth Festival

New York, NY | November 6 – 10, 2006 | www.h2oiff.org/freshestyouth

5th Annual H2O [Hip-Hop Odyssey] International Film Festival

New York, NY | November 28 – December 10, 2006 | www.h2oiff.org/festival

SUBMIT YOUR FILM!

Submissions Deadline - June 31, 2006 | www.h2oiff.org/submit

Please visit and support The Hip-Hop Association (H2A) at <http://www.hiphopassociation.org>