

Hip Hop and Post Racial Politics

Written by Robert ID4557

Tuesday, 02 December 2008 23:29 -

On November 4th, 2008 The United States of America elected Barack Obama the first African American president in the country's history. Brooklyn tallied more votes for President Obama than any other county in New York State and the fifth most in the country. Much has been made about the country's ability to look past hundreds of years of racial insensitivity to elect a Black president only four decades after the end of Jim Crow.

President Obama's victory is credited with his ability to brand himself as a post racial candidate. He was able to galvanize the Black electorate while maintaining a broad appeal to a white, Latino and a broad swath of America.

How did he do this? Many claim that Barack is not the anomaly that he may be seem but rather a function of the times. A statement of the reality that this is a new America. An America that learned the lessons of the Civil Rights struggle. That each man or woman should be judged not by the color of his or her skin but by the nature of their character.

During the campaign several journalists and experts cited Hip Hop as one of the unifying cultural factors that precipitated the breakdown of these racial barriers. Black and white people in the post Civil Rights Era grew up watching images and hearing the sounds of Black and Latinos. So much so that the presence of an African American running for president or serving as CEO or principal simply was not an alien concept.

On Thursday January 22nd, two days after the inauguration of President Barack Obama, Brooklyn Bodega and The Brooklyn Historical Society will be producing the first installment of Making History Now - How Video Music Box elected America's first Black President -Mass media, the removal of cultural barriers, the impact of Hip Hop culture and a post racial America.

"Video Music Box" one of the first Hip Hop music video programs founded by Brooklyn cultural icon Ralph McDaniels is credited as one of the first to broadcast Hip Hop culture to a wide audience. Broadcast via public access on WNYC "Video Music Box" was THE source of Hip Hop and R&B videos in the New York Metropolitan Area. Artists such as the Notorious B.I.G. and Jay Z have praised Uncle Ralph, as he is known, as well as Video Music Box as giving them their first major exposure.

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We will discuss with Uncle Ralph and others: The impact of Hip Hop culture on the larger political and economic fabric of the country. The end of the so-called "Bradley Effect." We will also delve into how specifically "Video Music Box" and the use of the nascent video cultural form united America and how new media including blogs, podcasts and social networks continue to do so today.

Panelists (More TBA):

Ralph "Uncle Ralph" McDaniels, founder "Video Music Box"

Christina Norman, former president of MTV

Jason King, Artistic Director, Clive Davis Department of Recorded Music, NYU

Moderator: Wes Jackson, President, Brooklyn Bodega and Executive Director, Brooklyn Hip Hop Festival

"Making History Now"

How Video Music Box elected our first Black President will be held at

The Brooklyn Historical Society

128 Pierrepont Street Brooklyn, NY 11201

January 22nd from 6-8:30pm

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www.brooklynhistory.org

Phone: 718-222-4111

Tickets will be available starting December 15th at The Brooklyn Historical Society and via www.brooklynbodega.com

\$6 for Adults, \$4 for students