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Ce sujet propose les documents suivants :

- un dessin humoristique de Mark Lynch ;
- un article paru dans *The Economist* le 26 juin 2008 ;
- un texte adapté d'un article paru dans *The Guardian* le 22 février 2016 ;
- un article paru dans *Spinditty* le 20 avril 2016 ;
- un article paru dans *MusicRadar* le 6 février 2017.

L'ordre dans lequel se présentent les documents est aléatoire.



Mark Lynch

5 May 2010

www.artizans.com

**The
Economist**

The politics of hip-hop

Can rap change the world?

June 26th 2008

“Writing about music is like dancing about architecture,” intoned Elvis Costello, a pop star. So a columnist approaches the subject of hip-hop (which includes rap) with caution. One cannot hope to capture its sound or fury on the page. Instead, we will ask what it signifies. Is it “pavement poetry [that] vibrates with commitment to speaking for the voiceless,” as Michael Eric Dyson, a professor at Georgetown University, believes? Is it “an enormously influential agent for social change which must be responsibly and proactively utilised to fight the war on poverty and injustice,” as the Hip-Hop Summit Action Network (HSAN), a pressure group, contends? Or is it mostly “angry, profane and women-hating...music that plays on the worst stereotypes of black people,” as Bill Cosby harrumphs?

None of the above, argues John McWhorter, in a

new book called “All About the Beat: Why Hip-Hop Can’t Save Black America”. Mr McWhorter, a fellow of the Manhattan Institute, a conservative think-tank, is a hip-hop fan. He likens the group OutKast to Stravinsky. He admits that some hip-hop lyrics display an ungentlemanly attitude towards women, but he doubts that listening to violent lyrics causes people to behave more violently. If it did, there would be more opera fans stabbing their ex-lovers outside bull-fights.

Mr McWhorter also thinks people take hip-hop far too seriously. Those who disapprove of it vastly overestimate its capacity to corrupt. And those who expect it to foster a political revolution that will dramatically improve the lot of black Americans are going to be disappointed.

The most popular rappers are brilliant entertainers. They have also done a lot to make people aware of the difficulties facing poor urban blacks. But their political views are neither particularly acute nor central to their work. Consider the hot album of the moment: “Tha Carter III” by Lil Wayne. [...]

On the last track Lil Wayne does get serious. He laments that “one in every nine black Americans are locked up”[...]. Troy Nkrumah, the chairman of the National Hip-Hop Political Convention, thinks it wonderful that Lil Wayne is speaking truth to power. But if Lil Wayne is to be taken seriously, it needs to be pointed out that his “one in nine” figure is inaccurate — it is true only of black men aged 20–34, not black Americans in general. [...]

Earnest hip-hop fans often argue that “commercial” rappers such as Lil Wayne are beside the point. Hip-hop’s revolutionary potential is best expressed by “conscious” rappers who focus on important issues rather than babes, bling and booze. The Roots, a group from Philadelphia, are often cited as an example. Their message? “If I can’t work to make it, I’ll rob and take it. Either that or me and my children are starving and naked.”

But crime and starvation are hardly the only options. Even without a high-school diploma, a black man can probably find a job if he looks. And some manual jobs, such as plumber or cable technician, pay quite well. “It may well be that you can’t write much of a rap about training someone to fix heaters or air conditioners,” sighs Mr McWhorter.

Conscious rappers are often well-meaning. [...] When it comes to contentious political issues, hip-hop

offers no plausible solutions; only impotent and sometimes self-destructive rage. [...]

Mr McWhorter summarises the message of hip-hop as: “Things will keep sucking until there is a revolution where the white man finally understands and does a complete 180-degree turn.” This was true half a century ago in the segregated South. But today, it is nonsense.

Some people argue that hip-hop is politically consequential because activists can use the music and the culture that surrounds it to communicate with young people who might otherwise shun politics. There is something to this. For example, in 2004 the superstar P. Diddy fronted a fairly successful voter-registration campaign called “Vote or Die”. And HSN once co-sponsored a rally to protest about a proposed \$300m cut to the New York City school budget. The cut never happened. HSN trumpets this as a great victory. But it is hardly evidence that hip-hop can change the world. That \$300m is a tiny slice of what New York spends on its schools, and lack of money is far from the main obstacle to improving them.

Civil-rights activists in the 1960s were inspired by protest songs, but the songs did not drive the movement. Political change requires hard and often tedious work, as the thousands of weary volunteers working for Barack Obama can attest. Incidentally, one might think that Mr Obama’s spectacular rise undermines the argument that a black man can never get a fair shake in America. But Mr Nkrumah shrugs that even if Mr Obama is elected president, he will be powerless to implement progressive policies because the corporate power structure will not let him.

Not talkin’ bout a revolution: where are all the protest songs?

the guardian

Jonathan Luxmoore and Christine Ellis, 22 February 2016

Last November, the folk singers Nancy Kerr, Martyn Joseph, Sam Carter and Maz O’Connor went to Westminster to perform for MPs. Nothing so remarkable about that, perhaps, but what they were singing about might have made several of their audience a little uncomfortable. The musicians were there to launch Sweet Liberties, a project marking 800 years of British democracy as seen through episodes from the Levellers to the modern-day Race Relations and Human Rights Acts.

In a year that marked the 800th anniversary of the sealing of Magna Carta, the four celebrated the pursuit of democracy and sung songs new and old, written about the rights and liberties that people have fought to achieve and protect over the centuries. “The topics in our songs all deserve to be celebrated — but we’d also like to highlight some uncomfortable truths which matter to vulnerable people today,” says Kerr. “Folk music reflects the creativity of working people, who often used it as a political voice. This kind of project could link present concerns with previous radical struggles and help us find a new collective voice.”

Kerr believes current issues, from fracking to climate change to welfare cuts, offer rich material. She is disap-

pointed that what she terms the “artistic left” seems to have backed off from politically focused music. Where have all the protest songs gone?

The reasons behind the silence range from the generational to the cultural and economic. While politics remains a prominent subject in the arts as a whole, some claim that changing social habits have eroded music’s political significance.

“Protest songs are no longer seen as an effective form of communication,” says Malcolm Taylor, a folk music expert and former librarian at the English Folk Dance and Song Society. “There’s so much ammunition for them, and if you wrote one that happened to catch on, you could potentially reach millions. But whereas Billy Bragg and his generation would have strapped on their guitars and headed for a street corner to make their point, today’s discontents prefer Facebook and other social media.”

Bragg’s generation in the 1970s and 1980s could also draw inspiration from the US, where legendary protest artists such as Woody Guthrie, and Pete Seeger had ended up on Senator Joe McCarthy’s blacklist, and later arrivals such as Bob Dylan and Joan Baez lent musical backing to the civil rights and anti-Vietnam

war movements. Music was, for a time, a powerful countercultural force.

In the UK, too, folk music was long a tool of political protest, influencing writers from Chaucer and Shakespeare to Dickens and Hardy.

The UK's folk protest tradition lived on in the songs of Bragg. But since then, few younger performers have seemed interested in addressing political issues on stage. And while the protest mantle was assumed by punk and new wave bands raging against the Thatcher government, their own counterculture has long since been co-opted by polite society and exploited by the UK's booming music industry.

Much the same appears to have happened with mainstream hip-hop, which once existed as an expression of protest but has since been largely depoliticised by the effects of fashion and business sponsorship.

Taylor believes all forms of protest music have eventually been "appropriated by the establishment to make money". The veteran folk artist Martin Carthy agrees. "There are still some good and effective protest singers and songwriters around, but it's not like it was in the 50s and 60s", he says. "The promoters have long since cottoned on to the commercial potential of protest music; you'd have to be very determined and energetic to make yourself authentic and visible with-

out them."

The decline of radical politics in the 1990s alongside the rise of New Labour undoubtedly contributed to folk music's new docility, the genre offering little in the years when the Occupy movement and anti-Iraq war demonstrators have taken to the streets in protest.

But things might be changing. Carthy recently rewrote a folk classic, Rigs of the Time, with references to "rich corporate farmers" and the European Union's agricultural policy. His daughter Eliza has also worked political messages into songs of her own about the plight of refugees and the Occupy movement.

"We're clearly seeing a widening out of political debate, so I don't see why this tradition couldn't revive. If we've a duty to pass folk music on, we should also bring it up to date and make it relevant to our times," Carthy says.

Kerr hopes the Sweet Liberties project will go some way to providing "a soundtrack for current anxieties" at a time when young people are showing a new readiness to engage with and get involved in politics. "No one's going to write a song today which starts a revolution, but I like the idea of a musical movement where different voices can bring their ideological concerns to bear," the singer-songwriter says.



How Hip-Hop Music Has Influenced American Culture and Society

KATHLEEN ODENTHAL ROMANO, 20 April 2016

Hip Hop has had an overwhelming influence on the black community in America, as well as society as a whole. Hip Hop is more than music, Hip Hop is a culture. Over the past three decades, Hip Hop has influenced and uplifted America, speaking up for generations and providing a voice to a group of people trying to deliver a message. Opponents of the Hip Hop culture argue that the music is aggressive in nature and promotes social rebellion — however provocative lyrics do not negate the fact that Hip Hop is a vocal outlet for many people in America. Hip Hop has provided a platform for rappers to express their opinions about society, the government and the treatment of African Americans in America for decades. This outlet is crucial for the uplifting of the black community and would benefit society entirely if people opposed to Hip Hop tried to embrace the culture rather than attack the culture.

The late twentieth century decade often simply referred to as 'the nineties' marked extensive social changes in American history and social culture. One example of influential new trends that took place in the nineties centers on the evolution of Hip Hop culture. The history of Hip Hop stems from black community consciousness within the United States. Additionally, Hip Hop culture can be viewed as a direct response to the socio-economic issues that spawned from that history. The black community, as well as other traditionally marginalized groups, turned discontent from injustices into productive protest through the restructuring of social attitudes and opportunities by means of musical expression.

[...]

Despite the national prevalence of Hip Hop in the United States, there remain a strong and vocal fraction of the community who believe that Hip Hop represents social subversion, chauvinism, aggression, vulgarity, profanity, and little else. One such argument likens the Hip Hop community to a mere vehicle for antagonistic social insurrection rather than a credible method of productive social restratification. [...] This argument attempts to undermine the intentionality of Hip Hop and its effects, and thus promotes the notion that any positive socio-cultural change was a mere offshoot of rebellion concerning a historically touchy topic.

Nevertheless, while the bases of Hip Hop opponents' arguments are founded and reasonable, they do not in any way mitigate the overall influence of Hip Hop Nation as a notable medium of social mobility and cultural affectation, particularly for black and other such marginalized communities. "More than simply entertainment, hip hop is a major part of contemporary identity circuits — networks of philosophies and aesthetics based on blackness, poverty, violence, power, resistance, and capitalist accumulation" (Pardue 674). Music has been a powerful technique for engendering social awareness throughout American history. Music simultaneously reflects trends, ideals, conditions in society, and inspires attitudinal progression and social change. To this end, Hip Hop in the United States can be perceived as "a blend of reality and fiction" insomuch that "rap music is a

contemporary response to conditions of joblessness, poverty, and disempowerment [...]” (Smitherman 5). The increasing popularity of Hip Hop culture throughout the nineties can therefore be likened to an actual social revolution of significant proportions. Traditionally oppressed groups are able to use the music to convey their plight and circumstances, and in that way rebel against both overtly and covertly oppressive conventionalities within that society. [...]

Despite heavy debate over the specific extent of Hip Hop’s ability to influence a society, the fact remains that the Hip Hop Nation developed in the nineties retains heavy cultural significance and should therefore be regarded seriously and with due consideration in any conversation about recent progressions in U.S. culture.

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5 reasons why your protest song is making things worse

By Tim Cant February 6, 2017

During such turbulent eras musicians have traditionally turned to making protest music, but from Bob Dylan’s meaningless *Blowin’ in the Wind* to Mike Reid’s challenging UKIP Calypso, protest songs are exclusively dreadful pieces of music. Theoretically, their musical shortcomings are mitigated by their ostensibly world-changing powers, but in reality, their effect is limited to say the least.

In fact, creating protest music isn’t just a waste of time, it’s likely to be counter-productive to your cause. If that sounds like an alternative fact, prepare to have your prejudices blown away by MusicRadar’s top 5 reasons why your protest music is actually making things far worse.

1. You can’t change anyone’s mind

No matter how catchy your melodies or funky your beats, don’t fool yourself: your opponents aren’t going to be swayed by your arguments. Even if your message is objectively accurate, it’ll likely have the opposite effect to that which you intended according to this research paper, which notes that “If people counter-argue unwelcome information vigorously enough, they may end up with ‘more attitudinally congruent information in mind than before the debate,’ which in turn leads them to report opinions that are more extreme than they otherwise would have had.”

2. Social media is an echo chamber

Unsurprisingly, Facebook has become the primary source of news for younger generations, but once you’ve dropped your 2-step folktronica truth-bomb on your timeline it’s only likely to reinforce your similarly-minded friends’ opinions.

This is because — as everyone apart from the supremely naive realised years ago — social media is an echo chamber that can isolate us from opposing political ideas. What’s more, when people ‘like’ something they’re given the feeling that they’re helping, reducing the likelihood they’ll actually do something useful.

3. You’re making money for the man

So, you’re fully committed to dismantling the exploitative capitalist system with your freaky breakcore sounds, but who is really benefiting from your supposedly anarchic antics? You’ve bought a computer (which is unlikely to be organic and locally-sourced), forked out to your ISP to upload the data, and everyone who finds your music is almost certainly going to be data-mined to within an inch of their lives by unscrupulous tech giants.

What’s more, your incendiary bangers may be bookended by ads, making a mockery of your anti-establishment stance.

4. Your elitist views aren’t valid

If you’re reading this — let alone making socially-aware future bass music on a MacBook in your local independent coffee shop — you’re not just a regular Joe. You’re a member of the liberal elite, an ill-defined section of society that everyone hates. It doesn’t matter that you’re working in the service industry and scraping by on an income that your parents would consider a pittance: your snobby, highfalutin attitudes are driving a wedge between the classes and you’re indirectly responsible for the rise of right-wing populism in Europe. [...]

5. Individualistic self-expression is useless

In his documentary *HyperNormalisation*, film-maker Adam Curtis argues that individualistic self-expression is actually antithetical to effecting political change:

“I sometimes wonder whether the very idea of self-expression might be the rigid conformity of our age. It might be preventing us from seeing really radical and different ideas that are sitting out on the margins - different ideas about what real freedom is, that have little to do with our present day fetishization of the self. The problem with today’s art is that far from revealing those new ideas to us, it may be actually stopping us from seeing them.”

[...]

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