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# Hip-Hop in the Golden Age

February 16-17, 2019

Paul Huston, Keynote Speaker



**JACOBS SCHOOL OF MUSIC**  
Indiana University Bloomington

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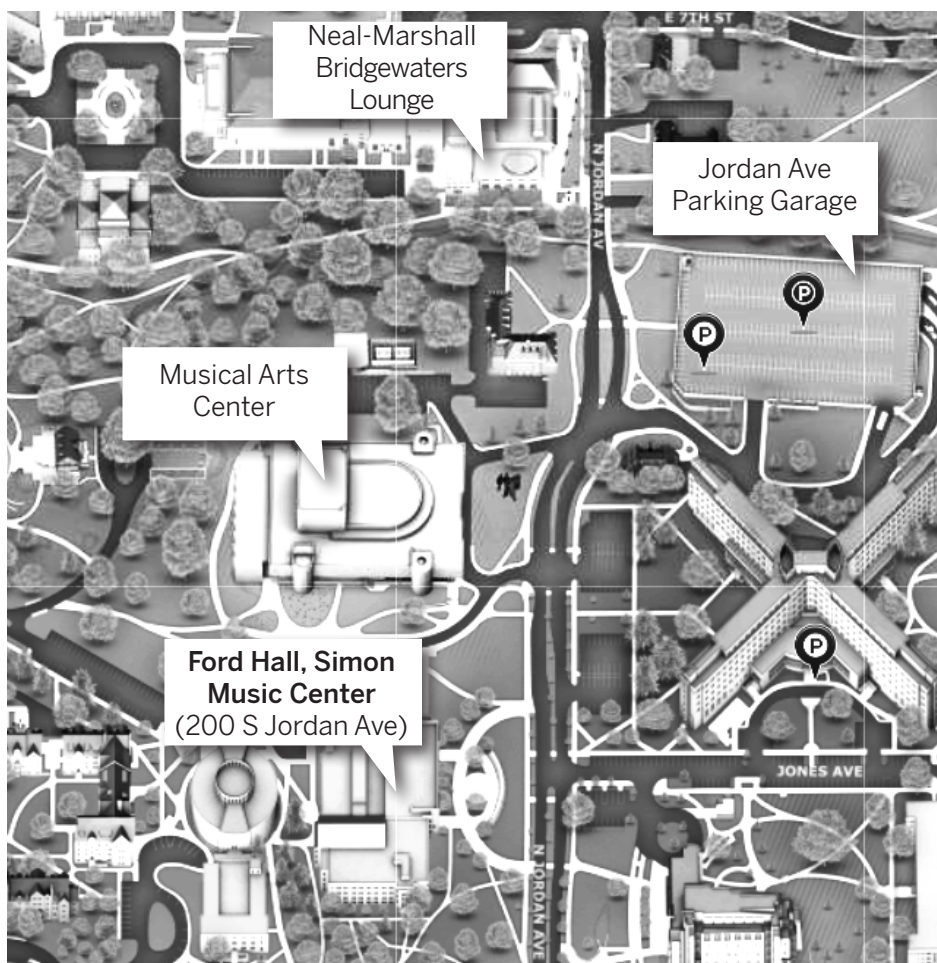
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# Hip-Hop in the Golden Age

February 16-17, 2019

## **Saturday, February 16**

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### **Session 1 (8:30–10:00am): Thinking about the Golden Age**

***Fernando Orejuela (Indiana University), chair***

- Murray Forman (Northeastern University), “The Golden (Age) Cudgel: Hip-Hop Nostalgia and Generational *Dissonance*”
- Kevin Whitman (Case Western Reserve University), “‘Whose World is This?’ Destabilizing the Golden Age in Hip-Hop Studies”
- Mikal Amin Lee (Brooklyn, NY: Fresh Roots Music/Cyphers for Justice/BAM), “Sankofa Sounds: The Golden Age That We Are Destined to Repeat”

### **Session 2 (10:15–11:45): Hip-Hop and its Words**

***Jaritt Sheel (Berklee College of Music), chair***

- Stephen Gomez-Peck (Graduate Center, City University of New York), “‘Money Flow’: Triplet Flow and its Antecedents in the Golden Age of Hip-Hop”
- Robert Komaniecki (Appalachian State University), “Skillful Syllables: An Introduction to Speed Rap”
- James Bungert (Rocky Mountain College), “Verses Versus Choruses in N.W.A.’s ‘Fuck tha Police’: An Alternative Formal Paradigm for Golden Age Hip-Hop”

*Lunch break (11:45–1:30)*

### **Poster (12:00–1:30)**

Saad Mukhtar (Purdue University): “Fading Memories: Archiving and Annotating Underground VHS Tapes in Breaking Culture”

### **Panel Discussion (1:30–2:30)**

The State of Hip-Hop Studies with Kyle Adams, Amy Coddington, Jarritt Sheel

**Session 3 (2:45–4:15): Hip-Hop and its Music*****Walton Muyumba (Indiana University), chair***

- Claire McLeish (McGill University), “‘All Samples Cleared’: Hip-Hop Sampling Aesthetics and the Legacy of *Grand Upright v. Warner*”
- Jason Dunn (Elon University), “How Parliament Funkadelic’s Lyricism and Musicality Made Their Mark on Hip-Hop”
- Fabian Berthelot (Université de Montréal), “Reusing of Western Art Music through Sampling: Analysis and Hypothesis”

*Break (4:15–7:00)***KEYNOTE ADDRESS (7:00–8:30)****“Prince Paul” Huston****Sunday, February 17**

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**Session 4 (8:30–10:00): Hip-Hop and Place*****Alison Martin (Indiana University), chair***

- Grant Knox (University of Arizona), “He’s Got Next: Implications of Common’s Foundations for Hip-Hop Music in Chicago”
- Alena Aniskiewicz (University of Michigan), “Getting to the Roots: Performing Genre and National Credibility in Polish Hip-Hop”
- John Dankwa (Wesleyan University), “Indigenizing Hip-Hop in a West African Country: The Story of Hiplife Music in Ghana”

**Session 5 (10:15–11:45): Explorations*****Amy Coddington (Amherst College), chair***

- James McNally (University of Bristol), “Skitting, Splicing, and Signifyin(g): ‘Divine Play’ in KMD’s *Mr. Hood*”
- Ike Minton (University of California, Santa Cruz), “Miles Davis’s *Doo-Bop*”
- Samuel Dwinnell (Indiana University), “When was Hip-Hop Queer?”

## ABSTRACTS

### **Saturday, February 16**

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#### **SESSION 1: THINKING ABOUT THE GOLDEN AGE**

*Fernando Orejuela (Indiana University), chair*

#### **Murray Forman (Northeastern University), “The Golden (Age) Cudgel: Hip-Hop Nostalgia and Generational Dissonance”**

This presentation critically engages hip-hop’s Golden Age discourse within the contexts of temporality, generational difference, and “hip-hop nostalgia.” It addresses themes of history, memory, identity, and hip-hop culture’s age-based hierarchies.

It is widely held that hip-hop’s Golden Age creativity constitutes a cultural peak and enduring criteria of value. The implicit assumption is that, despite its achievements, hip-hop’s artistry both before and after the Golden Age is somehow inferior. The term often inspires tension and opposition, especially between different generational groups. As I argue, The Golden Age discourse articulates ideological and authoritative supremacy; it therefore matters greatly whose voices assert judgment and how. The debates around the concept of The Golden Age are increasingly framed within age-based dynamism and the associated values are commonly wielded as a cudgel, deployed in the dismissal of younger hip-hop artists and aficionados. Youths subsequently adopt their own anti-Golden Age stance, wielding pernicious ageist discourses against hip-hop’s older pioneers and veterans.

Age-based nostalgia is intrinsic to articulations of The Golden Age. Hip-hop’s distinct nostalgica modalities indicate what is valued from the past with the identification of icons and benchmarks of youthful hip-hop engagements. This speaks to the significance of people, events, and artifacts that simultaneously convey past virtues, present values, and future ideals. Finally, the presentation poses several questions: is there room for only one Golden Age? Can innovative art not arise from multiple historical periods? And how do different generations develop a proprietary and protective disposition towards the cultural artifacts that move them the most?

#### **Kevin Whitman (Case Western Reserve University), “Whose World is This?” Destabilizing the Golden Age in Hip-Hop Studies”**

Scholarly discourses of hip-hop’s golden age are on repeat. They unfailingly appear to summon theories about the sociopolitical incubation of gangsta rap, impassioned



discussions of misogyny and authenticity, and debates about sampling, censorship, and freedom of expression. While these conversations are right at home in academia, it is curious that the same few hip-hop artists receive disproportionate attention within them. The productions of such artists are certainly worth the research, but the obvious preference for them in scholarship betrays implicit value judgments, and with the dearth of work on other golden-age musicians, disturbing truths are thrown into relief which form the threefold argument of this paper. First, I claim that the institutional canonization of some golden age artists is partially the result of analytic priorities in contemporary humanities fields, whose practitioners have often favored subjects and examples that fit neatly into theoretical frameworks. Second, I argue that this phenomenon is both symptom and cause of a prolonged stasis in hip-hop studies: an entrenchment within the same, tired frameworks, the same examples, and the same citations. This is a feedback loop not unique to hip-hop studies, but one from which the field has only recently begun to recover. Finally, I suggest that the neglected artists—who greatly outnumber the favored—represent active, knowledgeable, passionate hip-hop communities from which the academy has become alienated. This paper is simultaneously an interrogation of canonization in hip-hop studies, and a call-to-action for the institution to restructure its priorities.

**Mikal Amin Lee (Brooklyn, NY: Fresh Roots Music/Cyphers for Justice/BAM), “Sankofa Sounds: The Golden Age That We Are Destined to Repeat”**

The 21st century has seen a black *Zeitgeist* emerge. The increasing levels of violence (or simply the uncovering of a deep existing practice) by the state and citizen alike towards black bodies has ushered in a renaissance of exploration around the very idea of “blackness”. As a post racial war plays out in the media, and in pop culture, the realities of black lives have taken center stage in the second part of the new millennium.

On the frontline of the struggle as always are youth, and Hip Hop as it was in the Golden Era, the soundtrack and the rallying cry. The traditional and conservative views of the diaspora are being challenged and shifted out of comfort for the sake of actual survival, and an opportunity to claim a whole, and wholly new identity for ourselves.

This presentation takes the most significant and influential cultural creation of black people(s) of the last two generations, and considers what many see as its cultural peak, “The Golden Age” to think of how have we continually re-created and transformed ourselves through icons, avatars, allusion and embodying our ancestors to speak back to, through and against power. We’ll consider how it’s co-option in all facets of society, not just the commercial but also the political and academic realms have also undermined its cultural capital. Looking at parallel historical timelines of civic action, and musical/visual production from then to now through performance, visual collage and lecture.

Some of the Artists and thinkers considered: J Cole, Kendrick Lamar, Chance, Sa-Roc, Tricia Rose, Harry Allen, Jeff Chang, Joan Morgan, Native Tongues, Queen Latifah

## **SESSION 2: HIP-HOP AND ITS WORDS**

Jaritt Sheel (Berklee College of Music), chair

### **Stephen Gomez-Peck (Graduate Center, City University of New York), “‘Money Flow’: Triplet Flow and its Antecedents in the Golden Age of Hip-Hop”**

Triplet flow is ubiquitous in modern hip-hop but is still a nascent topic in scholarly discourse on the music. This paper builds on the discussions of flow styles by Krims (2000), Adams (2008), and Komaniecki (2017) in order to more clearly define triplet flow and investigate its origins and development. A model is proposed for analyzing flow based on two parameters: 1) subdivision of the beat or other metrical units and 2) alignment with the underlying metric grid. Additionally, triplet flow is defined as a style of rapping in which evenly spaced articulations divide the beat into threes continuously for at least one measure. Straight flow is defined as a normative style of flow in which beats are divided into twos and fours. I use this approach to analyze flow in the Golden Age of hip-hop and consider how early uses of triplet flow by Outkast, Bone Thugs-N-Harmony, E-40, and Three 6 Mafia differ from modern uses.

MCs manipulate a variety of musical-poetic parameters, sometimes to ambiguous effect, making a definition of any style of flow dependent on more than just rhythm. At the beginning of Chuck D's second verse on “Bring the Noise,” for example, it is difficult to discern whether he is using simple or compound beat divisions because his flow is loose relative to the metric grid provided by the instrumental backing track. Therefore, calling the entire verse an example of triplet flow is problematic. Understanding flow style on a spectrum between idealized norms of, on the one hand triplet flow and straight flow, and, on the other hand, alignment with and freedom from the underlying metrical grid complements traditional Western notation in hearing, analyzing, and discussing styles of flow.

### **Robert Komaniecki (Appalachian State University), “Skillful Syllables: An Introduction to Speed Rap”**

The golden age of hip-hop saw a massive proliferation of styles and sub-genres as artists sought their unique identities. One of these sub-genres was speed rap, in which rappers prioritized rapidity over all else, sometimes rapping more than ten syllables per second.<sup>1</sup> What began as a niche curiosity was eventually embraced by rappers in both major hip-hop epicenters of L.A. and New York City. As the 1990s neared an end, Midwest rappers continued to develop this rapid-fire delivery technique, which

came to be known as “chopper” style.

In this presentation, I will give a brief outline of speed rap’s progression over time, beginning with the Treacherous Three’s release of “New Rap Language” in 1980, and ending with a nod to current artists who have adopted this style. Then, I will describe the characteristics of flow (a rapper’s delivery of lyrics) that are unique to speed rap. I will then demonstrate the ways in which other parameters of flow can be affected by the pace of one’s delivery. Finally, I will highlight the tendency of speed rappers to equate rapidity with quality, and call this notion into question by highlighting the ways in which rapid-fire lyrics can impact other possible indicators of quality or skill, such as rhyme scheme, rhythmic diversity, lyrical narrative, and lyrical coherency.

### **James Bungert (Rocky Mountain College), “Verses Versus Choruses in N.W.A’s “Fuck tha Police”: An Alternative Formal Paradigm for Golden Age Hip-Hop”**

In what Ice Cube calls a “revenge fantasy” (Rose 1995), NWA’s “Fuck Tha Police” portrays a courtroom where police are on trial for brutality, with NWA serving as court officials. Verse 1 features several rhythmic intricacies: inconsistent rhyme placement, enjambment, unpredictable beat pauses, and sheer length of thirty-two measures, eight times the length of the chorus. Together, these rhythmic components inhibit a phenomenological anticipation of the chorus, producing a kind of temporal disorientation that intensifies throughout the verse. This disorientation in turn aggravates the song’s message of violent retaliation: unable to anticipate the chorus, the listener is now at the mercy of NWA, which places the listener in the position of the police on trial — at the mercy of court proceedings — while also reciprocating a hint of the American ghetto’s volatility and unpredictability. Taken further, it gives a musical sense of segregation stress syndrome (Thompson-Miller, et al. 2014), which arises from ongoing, collective traumatic experiences, e.g., growing up in late-80s Compton. In contrast, the four-measure chorus promotes temporal stability, a respite (of sorts) from the verse.

This paper hypothesizes that hip-hop songs with relatively intricate verses — common in hip-hop’s Golden Age — invert conventional understandings of pop/rock form where the chorus is primary, forming the hook, the musical focus of the song, and other modules (verse, bridge, prechorus, etc.) are secondary (Covach 2005, Osborn 2013, Summach 2012, Everett 2008). To the extent that its verses most poignantly convey its message, “Fuck Tha Police” serves as a case study to the contrary of the conventional understanding: here, the verses are the primary focus and the chorus, despite its crystal clarity, is secondary. This idea facilitates a new formal understanding of the complex verses of not only NWA, but also contemporaneous rappers like Rakim and KRS-One, while shedding new analytical light on early-90s songs in terms of the growing divide between underground and commercial rap.



**POSTER: Saad Mukhtar (Purdue University), “Fading Memories: Archiving and Annotating Underground VHS Tapes in Breaking Culture”**

This project examines the oral history of the original dance style of Hip Hop, breaking. Breaking is performed to music in sequences of movement while standing, on the floor, and in the air. There is minimal quantitative or qualitative data about the practitioners and scholars culture. Most of the information regarding its history is spoken orally or locked away in Video Home System (VHS) tapes. This impacts future generations who want to learn the culture and dance because primary resources are limited and fragmented on the Internet. A hundred VHS tapes, encoded in analog frequency modulation (FM) on magnetic tape, were transcoded into 10-bit uncompressed and H.264 digital file formats over a 3-month period. Social media was used to crowdsource metadata on selected video clips. It was predicted that metadata collection would contribute to annotating video clips where supplemental explanations were nonexistent on the Internet or inaccessible to non-community members. Established community members collectively identified and verified people, places, and back stories in the video clips. This suggests that memories of moments are still shared orally in the culture but not widely known or documented.

**SESSION 3: HIP-HOP AND ITS MUSIC**

Walton Muyumba (Indiana University), chair

**Claire McLeish (McGill University), “All Samples Cleared’: Hip-Hop Sampling Aesthetics and the Legacy of Grand Upright v. Warner”**

In 1991, Gilbert O’Sullivan sued Biz Markie for sampling his song “Alone Again (Naturally),” in Markie’s rap, “Alone Again.” This lawsuit, *Grand Upright v. Warner*, became a landmark case for music copyright, and for some scholars, represented a symbolic end to hip-hop’s golden age.<sup>1</sup> This paper uses the lawsuit and its legacy as points of entry into debates about hip-hop during a time of aesthetic transformation. Specifically, I present a corpus study spanning 1988 to 1993, consisting of hip-hop songs of various subgenres drawn from Billboard charts. Unlike previous studies on this period, I consider both canonical artists, whose mastery of sampling is widely admired (such as Public Enemy and De La Soul), and more commercially successful artists (like MC Hammer, and Sir Mix-A-Lot), who typically used fewer samples. My corpus study reveals an overall decline in the average number of samples per song, and a radical shift in how these samples are used. I situate my claims within the broader discourse of hip-hop historiography, as well as the intersections of legal institutions and musical aesthetics.

### **Jason Dunn (Elon University), “How Parliament Funkadelic’s Lyricism and Musicality Made Their Mark on Hip-Hop”**

“Ooh, that’s funky!” you say as you hear something in a song that surprises you and makes you want to move. The feeling of funk is well known in our hearts and minds, but what exactly is Funk music and how have its ideas lasted for so long? On the surface, Funk is syncopated music with the goal of making people dance. However, Funk has other purposes that resonate strongly with the African-American community and thus have influenced the course of popular music in a multitude of ways. By analyzing the text-music relationship in the recordings of Parliament-Funkadelic, a Funk collective most active in the 1970s, and that of two Hip Hop sub-genres, I will demonstrate some of the musical and lyrical borrowing from Funk that has changed the course of commercial and underground Hip Hop. Certain melodic and rhythmic characteristics in Parliament-Funkadelic’s music reflect their lyrics about outer space and inner nature. These characteristics have resurfaced in Hip Hop, often reflecting similar themes, but sometimes repurposed to suit a different attitude. By putting a brand new twist on an established genre of music, Parliament-Funkadelic is just one Funk band that has resonated with people across genres and generations.

### **Fabian Berthelot (Université de Montréal), “Reusing of Western Art Music through Sampling: Analysis and Hypothesis”**

The use of Western art music samples in hip-hop is a practice that goes back to the Golden Age of hip-hop in the 1980s, having been initiated by Afrika Bambaataa’s use in 1985 of a sample taken from Stravinsky’s *Firebird*, the now legendary sound file ORCH5. This talk will focus on such art music sampling in recent Hip hop produced in France, focussing on the example of French rapper Vald’s use of Frederic Chopin’s *Nocturne op.9 no 1 in B-flat minor* in his 2014 song ‘Elle me regarde.’ An analytical framework for the study of the use of classical samples will be proposed, one that combines historiography, intertextual analysis inspired by postmodern theory, as well as spectrographic analysis. This analytical framework will then be briefly applied to other French hip hop repertoire that samples art music, such as Scred Connexion’s ‘Le poids des préjugés’ (2009), Scylla’s ‘Erreurs Génétiques’ (2013) and Ménélik’s ‘Liquide’ (2017), in order to better understand how the presence of sound excerpts of recordings of Chopin, Grieg or Liszt interact musically with the hip-hop environment into which they are incorporated. Finally, this talk will conclude with some hypotheses about the reasons that lead hip-hop musicians to perpetuate this practice through ages.

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## **Sunday, February 17**

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### **SESSION 4: HIP-HOP AND PLACE**

Alison Martin (Indiana University), chair

#### **Grant Knox (University of Arizona), “He’s Got Next: Implications of Common’s Foundations for Hip-Hop Music in Chicago”**

The Golden Age of Hip-Hop (ca. 1988-1995) is home to a host of stylistic and cultural developments that would help us contextualize the decade(s) prior and following. Although, much of the scholarship pertaining to this period discusses the landscape of hip-hop music in on the east and west coasts, there are a number of significant developments going on in cities such as Chicago, Atlanta, and Detroit. Specifically, much of the identity that is associated with Chicago hip-hop then and now responds to its resistance to mainstream exposure and that identity has remained consistent despite its emergence onto the mainstream hip-hop scene. Because of this, scholarship evaluating the history Chicago hip-hop remains limited and we are left with an incomplete narrative of how Chicago hip-hop came to be the regional power that it is today.

Common’s 1992 album *Can I Borrow A Dollar?* remained consistent with innovations and developments of the Golden Age while paving the way for Chicago to emerge as a mainstream player in the hip-hop landscape. Although the Chicago sound is diverse and its evolution cannot be reduced to one artist’s profile, this paper will evaluate stylistic elements found in this album which are consistent with the Golden Age as well as the evolution of Common’s style throughout his career which exhibit many of the stylistic distinctions we associate with Chicago hip-hop.

#### **Alena Aniskiewicz (University of Michigan), “Getting to the Roots: Performing Genre and National Credibility in Polish Hip-Hop”**

In 2012, the Polish rapper Doniu told *The New York Times*, “If Mickiewicz was alive today; he’d be a good rhymers.” Identifying Mickiewicz—the nineteenth-century writer considered to be Poland’s national poet—as a precursor to the “rhymers” of contemporary hip-hop, Doniu’s assertion speaks to Polish hip-hop communities’ negotiation of musical and national identities. This paper traces the migration of hip-hop from American cities to the streets of Poland—from rap pioneers to “Mickiewicz the rhymers.” Framing the work of the Polish rapper Peja within popular and scholarly conversations on credibility (both genre and national), I demonstrate that in his appeal to both hip-hop conventions and national literary traditions, Peja cultivates legitimacy by asserting his place within the Polish literary canon. Having begun his career by paying homage to Golden Age artists like Public Enemy and the Beastie

Boys, he increasingly localized the music, blending the genre's ethos of creativity and community with narratives of Poland's artistic agitators who voiced the concerns of the nation over a hundred years ago. In identifying themselves with the Polish poets of the tumultuous nineteenth century, Peja and his fans reframe the characteristic narratives of hip-hop—usually associated with marginalized communities within a nation—and cast Poland as the oppressed subject, abused by its eastern neighbors and let down by the West. Drawing on two “golden ages”—those of hip-hop and Polish poetry—Peja negotiates global and local identities and engages in a dialogue about what it means to speak for Poland today.

**John Dankwa (Wesleyan University), “Indigenizing Hip-Hop in a West African Country: The Story of Hiplife Music in Ghana”**

Hiplife emerged in Ghana in the 1990s as a fusion style of popular West African highlife music and American hip-hop. While some of the early artists drew heavily on American models of hip-hop music, others soon developed a distinctive style in which a musical background of electronically programmed highlife beats and loops merged with rapped performances in Ghanaian languages. Growing out of the context of Ghanaian middle-class boarding schools with their characteristic multilingual culture and typical modes of code switching, hiplife today is a flourishing musical genre that is undergoing constant innovation. Considering hiplife music in its socio-historical context, this paper looks at the processes of genre construction within the broader framework of indigenization. It establishes hiplife as part of a transnational hip-hop culture while at the same time linking it to local forms of music, oral culture, and traditional musico-linguistic genres, thereby constructing a hybrid genealogy that makes it distinct.

**SESSION 5: EXPLORATIONS**

Amy Coddington (Amherst College), chair

**James McNally (University of Bristol), “Skitting, Splicing, and Signifyin(g): ‘Divine Play’ in KMD’s Mr. Hood”**

Created immediately before the first sample-clearance lawsuits put hip-hop production under a regulatory microscope, KMD's 1991 debut *Mr Hood* was a masterpiece of unconstrained invention. Exuberant, funny and politically charged, it was an unusually complex album – one that while distinctly ‘of’ hip-hop’s golden age, often evoked a significantly longer (and broader) view of African American history than the two-and-a-half decade reach of its sampling palette.

Taking cues from Henry Louis Gates and African American collagist Romare Bearden, this paper will assess KMD's forward-thinking practice in terms of these

deeper resonances. It will look, in part, to rapper Zev Love X's self-conscious allusions to African American folklore tropes, including an expert use of the double-voiced tradition of 'signifying' – a stylised form of verbal indirection/encoding. Looking to Bearden, particularly his idea of 'divine play', the paper will explore how these traditions carried through into KMD's sophisticated collaging of borrowed dialogue in skits and interstitial passages. It will argue that, in making a surreal cast of zombie players – including Sesame Street's Bert and Ernie and a tricksterish 'white voiced' hustler Mr Hood (cleverly composited from dialogue found on a language-learning LP) – signify on race, politics and everyday life, KMD occupied a subversive tradition of avant-garde Black art. It will contend these skits transformed the episodic Mr Hood into satiric drama: a double-voiced, Afro-futurist vaudeville that was both a highpoint of golden era sampling invention, and a template for X's re-emergence as MF Doom.

### **Ike Minton (University of California, Santa Cruz), “Miles Davis and the House of Doo-Bop: Black Again for the First Time”**

This presentation examines the circumstances and significant events around Miles Davis's final studio album, *Doo-Bop* (1992), as it pertains to the relationship of jazz / hip hop / and rap music. By examining this album, its public reception, writings on Davis's work, and writings on “jazz-rap,” I aim to highlight and situate Davis's contribution to the collaborative efforts between musicians from jazz and hip hop of the era, as well as the general narrative of the relationship of jazz / hip hop / and rap music, their hybrid forms, and methods of production. Ultimately, the ideas for this presentation came from the following questions: How does *Doo-Bop* fit within the overall trajectory of Davis's work? What does Davis's work signify in conversations about jazz and hip hop from this era? How does discussion of Davis's work relate to today's hip hop climate vis-à-vis Kendrick Lamar and his work with producers and artists such as Flying Lotus, Thundercat, and Kamasi Washington?

Released posthumously in 1992 and comprised of musical elements from jazz, hip hop, and rap music, reception and critique around Davis's *Doo-Bop* was underwhelming and in general, negative. To this day the album remains unknown to many – even in hip hop circles. Davis's work, however, should not be overlooked and further study reveals that while the musical output may have been unfavorably received at the time, perhaps a deeper meaning lies at the heart of Davis's foray into hip hop.

### **Samuel Dwinnell (Indiana University), “When was Hip-Hop Queer?”**

Hip-hop's history has long remained a subject of intense debate—not least within hip-hop itself, where practices of musical sampling, lyrical citation, and self-conscious image-making so often conspire to rewrite hip-hop's ongoing story of revolution and recursion. The recent release of several films and television shows about hip-hop's early years and “golden age”—such as the biographical film *Straight Outta Compton*

(2015), the Netflix series *The Get Down* (2016), and the Netflix movie *Roxanne Roxanne* (2017)—not only lodge new claims about hip-hop’s history within domains of popular culture, but also reignite debates about the racial, gendered, and sexual contours of hip-hop’s formative past.

In this presentation, I discuss aspects of *The Get Down*, *Straight Outta Compton*, and *Roxanne Roxanne* in order to examine the representation of queer lives and identities within recent historical accounts of hip-hop’s first two decades from the mid 1970s to the mid 1990s. As I argue, each of these three cultural texts purport to revise hip-hop’s history for a contemporary era in which earlier tropes of homosexuality—including the barbed charge of “homophobic insult,” the “scandalous” accusation of same-sex intimacy, and the classic Foucauldian “confession” of homosexual desire—perhaps no longer compel such a sensational allure. If the “insipid yet recurring question [of] ‘who’s out in hip hop’” (Snorton) animated fans and pundits before, today’s chroniclers of hip-hop’s history often pursue black queer representation with studied dispassion, even as they propel familiar “progress” narratives of ever-increasing (black) queer visibility. I ask at what cost—such as under what conditions of anti-blackness and neoliberal homonormativity—queer blackness becomes legible within historical accounts of hip-hop.

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...and to Paul Huston, the presenters,  
session chairs, and all who helped bring this  
conference together, we say...

**THANK YOU!**



## PRESENTER BIOS

**Alena Gray Aniskiewicz** is an advanced doctoral candidate in Slavic Languages and Literatures at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Her work has focused on the maintenance and manufacture of literary history and cultural heritage in 20th- and 21st-century Polish popular culture. Her dissertation explores the relationship between Polish hip-hop, the nation's poetic tradition, and the performance of genre and national authenticity. Her writing on Polish culture has appeared in *Cosmopolitan Review*, *Culture.pl*, and *Mercurian: A Theatrical Translation Review*.

**Fabian Berthelot** began his studies in musicology in France and received his bachelor and master's degree in musicology research at the university Paul-Valéry, Montpellier. He studied extensively concrete music and composers such as Luc Ferrari and Steve Reich. Passionate about popular music and especially with rap music and contemporary french music, his thesis is about hip-hop music, music that combines musical borrowings and a multicultural and popular background. Fabian is PhD student at the Université de Montréal studying the subject of incorporating classical music samples into French hip-hop and rap music.

**James Bungert** is Assistant Professor of Music at Rocky Mountain College in Billings, MT, where he teaches music theory, music history, history of rock, world music, history of hip hop, and leads the student rock band. His work has appeared in *Music Theory Spectrum* and *Music Theory Online*, and most recently, his article "I got a bone to pick: Formal Ambivalence and Double Consciousness in Kendrick Lamar's 'King Kunta'" was published in *Music Theory Online* as part of an analytical forum discussing *To Pimp a Butterfly*.

**John Dankwa** is an adjunct professor of Music at Wesleyan University in Middletown. He teaches undergraduate courses in West African music and culture. Dankwa is a multi-instrumentalist with specializations in several West African musical instruments including drums, xylophones, trumpets, harps, and flutes. His research interests focus on affects in African instrumental music performance, the communicative function of African xylophones and drums, Hiplife music, and the representation of African music in the globalized world.

**Jason Dunn** is a producer and student in Elon University's Music Production and Recording Arts program. His passion for Hip Hop began in middle school as he discovered a deep appreciation for lyricism and beats. He has since traced Hip Hop's roots through creating, performing, and analyzing Hip Hop, Funk, Soul and Jazz music. In the future, he plans to continue the tradition of Hip Hop in creating and performing music that pushes to the future while borrowing from the past.

**Samuel Dwinell** teaches at Indiana University Bloomington, where he holds a Postdoctoral Research Fellowship in the Musicology Department. His research focuses on British art music, as well as different aspects of black-diasporic cultural history, including opera, hip-hop, and visual culture. His Ph.D. dissertation, “Blackness in British Opera,” won the Donald J. Grout Memorial Dissertation Prize at Cornell University in 2017.

**Murray Forman** is Professor of Media & Screen Studies at Northeastern University. His books include *The ‘Hood Comes First: Race, Space and Place in Rap and Hip-Hop* (2002), *One Night on TV is Worth Weeks at the Paramount: Popular music on Early Television* (2012), and (with co-editor Mark Anthony Neal) *That’s the Joint!: The Hip-Hop Studies Reader* (1<sup>st</sup> edition 2004; 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2012). He was an inaugural recipient of the Nasir Jones Hip-Hop Fellowship at the Hip-Hop Archive and Research Institute, Harvard University (2014-2015).

**Stephen Gomez-Peck** is a graduate of Indiana University’s Master’s program in music theory and is currently a PhD student in music theory at the City University of New York’s Graduate Center. He listens to and studies hip-hop, jazz, and the music of Percy Grainger, and is particularly interested in intersections between bebop and hip-hop. Stephen gives private lessons in trumpet and music theory/aural skills in New York City and outside of music, loves running, camping, and being outdoors generally speaking.

**Grant Knox** is currently pursuing a Master of Music in Musicology at the University of Arizona in Tucson, Arizona. After receiving his bachelor’s in music education from Murray State University in Murray, KY, Grant looked forward to pursuing musicology with the hopes of shaping the way broader audiences understand and appreciate music. This has led to his interest in hip-hop studies which accompany his interest in the contributions of African-Americans to musical diplomacy during the Cold War and various other 20th century American music topics.

**Robert Komaniecki** is a PhD candidate in music theory at Indiana University. Before coming to IU, Robert received his BA in Music and MA in Music Theory from the University of Minnesota. He is currently a full-time instructor of music theory and aural skills at Appalachian University in North Carolina while writing his dissertation, titled “Analyzing the Parameters of Flow in Rap Music.” Robert’s research on rap music and music theory pedagogy has been published in *Music Theory Online* and *The Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy*.

**Mikal Amin Lee** is a veteran of the international hip-hop music and education community. Mikal Amin (aka Hired Gun) has built a reputation as a world renowned hip hop emcee/practitioner educator and administrator. A former cultural ambassador

with the State Department's American Music Abroad program and Artistic Director for the "Our Better Angels" project, currently he is the producer and co-curator of the Brooklyn Academy of Music's Hip Hop/Spoken word mainstage performance "WORD. SOUND. POWER." The founder of Fresh Roots Music, and co-founder of Re:Education/Say Word Entertainment, Mikal has headlined thousands of shows, and festivals and implemented master classes and workshops, about hip-hop culture and the art of emceeing.

**Claire McLeish** is a doctoral candidate in the Musicology program at McGill University. Her dissertation research examines digital sampling and golden age hip-hop. McLeish works as a course lecturer, teaching "Popular Music After 1945" at McGill. She is currently the holder of a SSHRC Joseph-Armand Bombardier Graduate Scholarship.

**James McNally** is a cultural historian of popular music and is currently a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Bristol. His PhD - which he is now adapting into his first book, *Future Shock London* - is the first full history of hip-hop's arrival in the British capital during the early 1980s. Taking account of the social, political and cultural flux of London in this key transitional moment in the city's history, it argues hip-hop's arrival created a quiet revolution in British popular music and teenage life. Throughout the 2000s, James was Staff Writer for the British rap monthly *Hip-Hop Connection* and in 2009 co-curated the first major museum retrospective of hip-hop in the UK: *Homegrown: The Story of UK Hip-Hop*.

**James "Ike" Minton** is a composer, keyboardist, and oboist. Currently a D.M.A. student in composition at the University of California Santa Cruz, he has also studied at Southern Illinois University and the University of Hawai'i Mānoa. As a composer, his main interest is composing for instruments from the Western European musical tradition combined with instruments and cultural traditions across the world. He also enjoys studying improvisation; the relationship of mathematic ratios in musical structures, forms, and rhythm; and teaching his introductory rap and hip hop course.

**Kevin Whitman** is a student in the Musicology PhD program at Case Western Reserve University, with research areas in hip-hop, funk, and audiovisual media. His Master's thesis, "Reconstructing the Mothership: Meaning and History in the Music of P-Funk," was completed in 2017 at the University of Oregon. He has worked in the archives of the National Museum of African American History and Culture, and in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame's education department. His recent work encompasses new media and digital aesthetics, visual signification in hip-hop music videos, and the intersections of sight, sound, and attention in visual art.

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# HIP HOP COLLECTIONS

AT THE

## Archives of African American Music & Culture

[aaamc.indiana.edu/Collections/Hip-Hop-Collections](http://aaamc.indiana.edu/Collections/Hip-Hop-Collections)

**Murray Forman Magazine Collection**

**Michael Nixon Magazine & Marketing Collection**

**Roni Sarig Southern Rap Interviews**

**Brian Lassiter Hip Hop Collection**

**Hip Hop Countdown (1990s) Radio Series**

**"Jocko" Henderson Educational Rap Collection**

**DMC-USA DJ Competition Videos**

**CDs, LPs, Photos & More**

