

# Campus Voice

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## Hip-hop deserves more respect than it receives

Hip-hop focuses more on cultural and social concerns than people realize

Hip-hop: You may not like it, but you should respect it.

Society misinterprets the voice of many hip-hop artists today. We should respect the genre that showcases true talent and not always view it negatively.

"Hip-hop doesn't get close to the respect it deserves in society," said local hip-hop artist Eric Stubbs. "However, it's a bed made by peers that, unfortunately, all artists must share."

The genre is not fully responsible for all violence and drug abuse in lower class societies. It needs to be recognized for its ability to inform the world of societal issues.

"I believe hip-hop receives way too much respect because not too many people take a stand to erase the negativity in the majority of secular music," said Christian hip-hop artist Alex Bryant. "People sit back and complain about the negativity, but very few are doing something about it."

Erasing the negativity in hip-hop music would limit artistic freedom of expression.

If creators of the genre intended to corrupt people, hip-hop wouldn't exist today. Why? A decent person wouldn't deliberately corrupt the minds of children. Hip-hop remains because it is like any other form of free speech.

"It is so easy to dismiss hip-hop as a lost genre because of the direction the mainstream is headed," Stubbs said. "When one delves a little deeper, they will find a plethora of gifted, talented artists with insightful commentary on a number of aspects in life."

If some people see hip-hop as negative for our society, why is it so popular in mainstream media?

"Hip-hop has become synonymous with many different media outlets," Stubbs said. "ESPN frequently plays music clips from popular hip-hop songs and videos during various segments of shows like Sports Center and Pardon The Interruption, even going as far as featuring rappers as guest on some shows."



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Pardon The Interruption, or simply PTI, is a television show of columnists discussing sports through commentary, according to ESPN.

Teaching children about the music they listen to is very important.

If parents introduced their children to positive hip-hop, the issue would be resolved. Children should not listen to hip-hop containing the parental advisory label.

Just like we should not advertise adult movies to children, we should not advertise explicit music.

Adults should know not to participate in the activities rappers discuss.

"Youth without role models often look to rappers as role models," Bryant said. "When these role models are on TV with lots of money saying that they sell drugs and pimp women, and later on the news getting arrested for possession of weapons, what kind of society are we creating by looking to these people as role models?"

Stubbs differs on his opinion about the influence of hip-hop on people.

"I will never say hip-hop has a bad influence on anyone. Hip-hop has often been the scapegoat for society's problems with violence, sexism and racism," Stubbs said. "I believe that stems from one's cultural and paternal upbringing. If you raise someone to not adore material possessions, then no amount of music will change that."

People who want to listen to hip-hop music make a choice. If people participate in the activity portrayed through the lyrics, that's their decision.

"Hip-hop, when created by artists that respect the art of the music, is very positive and speaks more on social problems.

such as dealing with money issues, love and relationships and how to uplift blacks as one race rather than as an entity comprised of individuals," Stubbs said.

Singling out hip-hop for criticism is wrong. Hip-hop deserves the same amount of respect as other genres of music.

The Johnny Cash song "Folsom Prison Blues" doesn't receive nearly as much criticism as the Snoop Dogg song "Shoot 'Em Up."

Both songs glorify violence, but with different types of music. Why does the media focus more on the negativity of hip-hop music than other genres?

"Though I strongly believe that 98 percent of mainstream hip hop is negative, hip-hop has received disrespect by being singled out from all other musical genres as being the only negative music out. It is one of many," Bryant said.

Anyone who only listens to hip-hop music just because they think it is cool should reconsider and explore the history of the genre.

"Hip-hop is more than a genre. It's a lifestyle and culture that has been evolving since the early 1970s," Stubbs said. "B-boys and girls were break dancing in parks on cut up cardboard boxes, and emcees were freestyling verses in ciphers to impress their peers with their ability and wordplay."

It's unfortunate that artists like NWA, who fought to express the issues of their societies through hip-hop, still receive dis-

respect. Society criticizes these artists for expressing their style through aggression and explicit lyrics.

The intention of the music industry relates to the lyrics of rapper Ice-T, "Don't hate the playa, hate the game." Frankly, the genre promotes materialistic objects for profit.

If Lil Wayne rapped about being positive and having respect for humanity, he wouldn't make as much money as he does today. Society finds explicit lyrics entertaining or relevant to everyday life.

Listening to explicit lyrics doesn't affect the morals and values of all hip-hop listeners.

Critics take these lyrics too literally. Most hip-hop lyrics contain messages about positive and negative perspectives of our society.

"For secular music, I do not think that it has much to offer for the betterment of our society unless lots of things are changed," Bryant said. "If Christian rap were as popular as secular rap, I believe it would be able to change the world."

The First Amendment allows everyone freedom of speech. Hip-hop artists should exercise the right to say whatever they want.

"I confidently make the claim that hip-hop is more than what is seen on television and played on the radio," Stubbs said. "It is so much more that not knowing the different subgenres and faces of hip-hop is disrespectful in and of itself."

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