1990s: Mass Commercialization, Gangsta, and Rap Fusions
Mass Commercialization

- Starts in the 1980s with big crossover hits by artists such as Run-DMC, Beastie Boys, Salt-n-Pepa and LL Cool J
- Yo! MTV Raps
- New audiences
Pop Rap

- Young MC – “Bust a Move” (1988)

**Video Clip: MC Hammer**
- “You Can’t Touch This” (1989)
  [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=otCpCn0l4Wo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=otCpCn0l4Wo)

- Tone Loc
- DJ Jazzy Jeff and the Fresh Prince

- Sanitized rap? Mainstream dilution?
Vanilla Ice

• Early 1990s pop rap star

Video Clip: Vanilla Ice – “Ice, Ice Baby” (1990)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rog8ou-ZepE

• “cultural authenticity”
• Fabricated story

• A split in rap: Mainstream pop and Gangsta
Critical Reception

• A Rock-centric viewpoint of rap:
  – Not real musicians
  – Not real music
  – What values are these?
  – How could this be read as racist?

• Mass media generally
  – Moral outrage, shock and horror
Digital Samplers

- What is a sample?
- E-mu Emulator, c. 1983

**Video Clip: Sampler Demo**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x91Xkml0Dls

- Sampler vs. Turntable
Two landmark sampling-based albums


**Ex:** Public Enemy – “Bring the Noise” (1988)

De La Soul – *Three Feet High and Rising* (1989)

**Ex:** De La Soul – “Eye Know” (1989)

Nelson George: “high intensity sound tapestries”
Copyright

- Edwards/Rogers and Sugarhill Records
- Royalties
- Multiple songwriters listed with copyright laws
- In defense of sampling:

**Video Ex: Stetsasonic – “Talkin’ All That Jazz” (1988)**
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CgmfyFm30OE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CgmfyFm30OE)

- Ethics
- By 90s, less dense
  - In some cases it’s too expensive to use multiple samples
Musical Collage

• Visual art comparison
• Collage aesthetic of hip hop

Ex: Jurassic 5 – “Swing Set”
Breaks/Breakbeats

Ex: Led Zeppelin
   – “When the Levee Breaks” (1971)
   (drums by John Bonham)

Ex: Beastie Boys
   – “Rhymin’ and Stealin’” (1986)
Complex samples


Samples:
1. Daly-Wilson Big Band – “Dirty Feet” (1975)
2. Quincy Jones – “Kitty With the Bent Frame” (1971)

Plus a new bass line and lyrics

http://www.whosampled.com/Mobb-Deep/Shook-Ones-Part-II/
Jazz-Rap Fusions

• Various combinations of rap and jazz elements
  – Can be musicians collaborating
    • Herbie Hancock, Gang Starr, Miles Davis
  – Jazz samples by a rap group
    • Gang Starr, Digable Planets, A Tribe Called Quest
  – Jazz band and rap vocalist, etc.
    • Guru’s Jazzmatazz series
  – Possible start...
Gang Starr

- Guru and DJ Premier
- Debut album 1989
- Work with jazz musicians

Ex: Gang Starr - “Jazz Thing” (1990)
- Branford Marsalis (sax) and Terence Blanchard (trumpet)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=is5xMd1nT5o
A Tribe Called Quest

- Formed 1988, Queens, NYC
- Q-Tip and Phife Dawg
- Native Tongues


- Connects various styles of music:
  - 50s hard bop
  - 60s revolutionary poetry
  - 70s soul
  - 90s rap
Jazzmatazz Series

- Guru’s collaborations with jazz musicians
- Four volumes, 1993-2007
- Live jazz band with rapping

90s Gangsta Rap

• Socially conscious (reality)
• Exploitative Gangsta (glorification)
• Commercial considerations
• Media focus
• Rappers’ backgrounds
G-Funk and Death Row Records

- Dr. Dre and Suge Knight
  *The Chronic* (1992)
- “Definitive” gangsta rap album
- Snoop (Doggy) Dogg
- Concept album
- G-Funk style

Ex: Dr. Dre feat. RBX and Snoop Dogg
  – “Let Me Ride” (1992)
Snoop Dogg (Snoop Doggy Dogg)

- Dr. Dre’s protege
- *Doggystyle* (1993)
- Hugely anticipated Dre follow-up
- Vocal style
- Shift to West Coast

Ex: Snoop Dogg

- “Who Am I (What’s My Name?)” (1993)
Tupac Shakur (2Pac)

- Rap icon, considered one of the greatest MCs
- 1991 solo debut
- Criminal activity, jail time
- Death Row Records, 1995


- Murdered 1996
- East Coast-West Coast beef
  Dis tracks became territorial
East Coast Gangsta/90s NYC Scene

• Wu-Tang Clan
• Nas
• Bad Boy Entertainment
  – Puff Daddy
  – Notorious B.I.G.
• Jay Z
• Big L
Wu-Tang Clan

- 9 members originally
- Collective
- Marketing plan
- Aesthetic

Ex: Wu-Tang Clan

- “Da Mystery of Chessboxin’ (1993)
Notorious B.I.G. (Biggie; Biggie Smalls)

- *Ready to Die* (1994)
  Ex: Notorious B.I.G. – “Warning”
- Flow
- Gangster stories

- Framed as advice
East Coast-West Coast Rivalry

• At the centre: 2Pac and Notorious B.I.G.
• Also Nas, Mobb Deep, The Dogg Pound
• Producers: Suge Knight and Sean “Puffy” Combs
• Record sales, publicity

• Sept ’96, 2Pac murdered
• March ’97, Biggie murdered
Big L

- 2 albums
  - one released posthumously
- Flow, influence
- Died at 24

Battle Rap

**First wave:** friendly, no direct insults

**Ex:** The Sugarhill Gang Meets the Furious Five – “Showdown” (1981)

**Second wave:** clear connection to the Dozens

- Changes style of battle rapping
- Also example of early party rap to second phase of rap
- Leads into Response rap and dis tracks
  - Roxanne Wars

**Film Clip: 8 Mile (2002)**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jA8PzgaPXGo

– Eminem bio-pic
Eminem

- Built his reputation in the freestyle battle scene in Detroit and elsewhere
  - Independent release
  - Major label, Dr. Dre
- Rhyme patterns and word pairings:
- i.e.: “Britney Spears” & “switch me chairs”
Eminem’s 3 Personas

1. **Slim Shady**
   - Cartoonish, sinister, outrageous
   - Ex: Eminem – “Just Don’t Give a Fuck” (1999)

2. **Eminem**
   - MC, battle rapper
     [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=akbd-aC0nEA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=akbd-aC0nEA)

3. **Marshall Mathers**
   - Introspective, personal lyrics, confessional
Alter Egos

Marshall Mathers III → Eminem → Slim Shady
Ex: Eminem – “Rap God” (2013)

• Speed rapping
• Rhyme schemes
• Rhythms and flow
• Boasting
Beatboxing

• Drum or other instrumental sounds created vocally
• Pre-rap origins:

  • **Hambone**: body percussion
  • **Video Clip: Hambone – Steve McCraven**
    • [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v8r5wxpa3hg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v8r5wxpa3hg)

  • **Scat singing**
  • **Video Clip: Ella Fitzgerald scats**
    • [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2xoSFyqW7JI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2xoSFyqW7JI)
Beatboxing

• Fat Boys’ Darren “The Human Beat Box” Robinson
  Ex: Doug E. Fresh & Slick Rick – “La Di Da Di” (1985)

• Rahzel:
  Ex: Rahzel – “If Your Mother Only Knew” (1999)
Underground Rap

• Umbrella term: independently produced rap
• No one underground sound or style
• 21st century technologies
• CHUO, CKCU: underground rap shows
Dead Prez

- Underground, Afrocentric, Conscious

Ex: Dead Prez – “Be Healthy” (2000)
Kendrick Lamar

- Commercial and critical success
- Flow, voices
- Afrocentricity, mental health
- Album cover (next)

To Pimp A Butterfly (2015)
A Hip Hop Aesthetic

• Hip hop has a variety of sounds, visuals and feelings
• These extend beyond art that we would consider to be a part of hip hop culture
  – This is the broader influence, a hip hop aesthetic
• Film, commercials, visual art, dance, theatre, fashion...
• And of course, music

Ex: Beck – “Where It’s At” (1996)
Ex: Moby – “Find My Baby” (2001)