Hip Hop in Canada
• First Wave: 1980-1984: not recorded

• Reggae/Jamaican music
• Quebec: French rap
• South Asian Bhangra

• Associations with violence and criminality

• “Representing”
  – Neighbourhood, City, etc.
Michie Mee

• 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian rapper on record, 1985
• 1<sup>st</sup> CA rapper to sign with a major US label, 1988

Maestro Fresh-Wes

- *Symphony in Effect* (1989)
- Platinum sales in CA
  1st black Canadian to do this

**Video Ex: Maestro Fresh-Wes**

- “Let Your Backbone Slide” (1989)
  [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8eQt3KFNeh4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8eQt3KFNeh4)
- 1st domestic rap success

**Ex: Maestro Fresh-Wes feat. George Banton**

- “Nothin’ At All” (1991)
- Racism in Canada
Dream Warriors

• An important force in early 90s jazz-influenced hip hop
• Overall look and sound fits in with the aesthetic of the Native Tongues collective, NYC

Video Ex: Dream Warriors
– "My Definition of a Boombastic Jazz Style" (1991)
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LoE5yHMrP0A

• Lack of industry support for Canadian hip hop in 80s and 90s
Rascalz

- *Cash Crop* (1997)
- 1998 Juno refusal
- Protesting lack of support for black music in Canada


- Vancouver and Toronto united
- Helps establish CA rap internationally
- Juno performance
Music Awards

• Junos, since 1971
• Very little support for “Black” music genres and artists
• Virtual exclusion of non-white people
• Alternatives:
  • Canadian Black Music Awards (1979-1983)
  • Canadian Reggae Music Awards (CRMA) (1985-2000s)
War Party

- Cree rap group, Alberta
- 1st First Nations group to have a video on Much Music


https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nvCleNb1vB4
Kardinal Offishall

• Jamaican influence
• Work with international stars like Akon and Rihanna

Ex: Kardinal Offishall – “BaKardi Slang” (2001)
• Caribbean-influenced Toronto slang vs. American (New York) slang
More recent Jam Can music:

Kardinal Offishall

- Born in Toronto, born parents are Jamaican
- Hip hop star, work with Akon
- Known for his dancehall/reggae influenced hip hop

Ex: Kardinal Offishall – “BaKardi Slang” (2001)

Caribbean-influenced Toronto slang vs. American (New York) slang

Lyrics
K’naan (1978- )

- Somali-born, TO rapper
- Conscious rap
- Youssou N’Dour connection

Ex: K’naan – “What’s Hardcore” (2005)
Classified

- Nova Scotia
- Rapper since 1995
- Producer
- 15+ albums
- Tours

Ex: Classified – “Oh... Canada” (2010)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fF62J3vxPdQ
A Tribe Called Red

- Ottawa-based
- Babylon Nightclub
  - Monthly “Electric Powwow”
- Rubbaboo:
  - EDM, Dubstep and Native music
- Powwow-step

Ex: A Tribe Called Red
  - “Electric PowWow Drum” (2012)