

Important to Know the Meaning of Marley's Music

As college students, one of our favorite ways to relax and enjoy ourselves is listening to music. Our musical taste are as diverse as our personalities and backgrounds.

However, one musical form which seems to be bringing these differences together is reggae. On college campuses throughout the United States, both black and white students seem to share a common interest in this form of musical expression which has been around for decade and pioneered by the late Jamaican-born Rastafarian Bob Marley.

Last week, a friend of mine, in the midst of her studying popped in a Marley classic into her cassette deck.

While she and everyone else are entitled to listen to what they want, I could not help but see the irony. Here is a white girl, who by no means is an activist for black Americans, listening to a man who devoted his life to condemning the social institutions that deter Blacks from progressing; the very institutions that her ancestors help to establish.

In his songs, Marley views these institutions as the reason why blacks

have had to engage in an endless struggle for social equality and justice.

And while many of us say we enjoy reggae and readily name Marley as our favorite reggae artist, how many of us ever listen to his message? How many of us see Marley as someone who helped to bring the black struggle to the forefront of the world's attention?

I am afraid not many.

While my friend listened, it became clear to me that she too, did not listen. This was more offensive. Here she was with the opportunity to learn about what "my people" have gone through and continue to go through, and by no means was she taking advantage of the opportunity.

Sure, she buys Marley tapes and CDs but does she really get the gist of what he is saying? Does she really hear the words and the futile cries in his songs?

As I began to sing the lyrics to one of Marley's songs the answer to my questions became clear. I could not ignore the astonishment on my friend's face as she compared what I was singing to what Marley was singing. The words were the same.

Her reaction told me that for the first time, she was listening to the words and not just the melody. For the first time, Marley's message was no longer hidden by his accent or the musical instruments in the background.

As blacks, we too are guilty.

We see reggae as being "hyped," different, relaxing and something which we can dance too. This stereotype must change. Reggae, like rap, is not just another musical category. It is in fact a protest. And those who sing and fully engage in this protest are deviants of American culture and its social institutions.

As black Americans, we must regain control of the music and the message. It is no longer enough to say, "yeah, I like Bob Marley." Along with this statement, we must be ready and able to explain why. A new-found insight and respect for the "protest" must be internalized so that Marley's and other reggae artists' message does not lose its purpose in society.

Jacqueline Charles

DTH: 0 For 2 In Recent Coverage

Editor's Note: The Media Issues committee is a sub-committee of Carolina Association of Black Journalists (CABJ). The purpose of the committee is to probe the media for accurate and fair coverage of minority issues. The committee promises to look for and examine both good and bad aspects of Triangle-area newspaper coverage.

The Daily Tar Heel has shown either insensitivity or a lack of essential knowledge concerning minority affairs in its coverage of two recent incidents.

First, in a Sept. 26 article titled, "Fraternities boast higher-than-average GPAs," the *DTH* did not acknowledge that predominantly black fraternities exist. The article mentioned the GPAs of 17 majority white fraternities. Although it did state that all fraternities were not represented, it is rather hard to believe that there were no statistics available on a single black fraternity.

The information in the article came from a report compiled by the student affairs office, which did not include black fraternities, University Editor Steve Politi said.

Demonstrating the *DTH*'s apathy toward the issue, Politi said, "I didn't think to look into it."

But a lack of knowledge about the black community also appears to play a role in this instance of inadequate coverage. *DTH* Editor Jennifer Wing, in a conversation with a media issues committee representative, said she did not notice the oversight. Ignorance is no excuse.

To make this article more thorough, the *DTH* should have put forth the effort to contact or research at least one black fraternity to acquire the information.

In the second instance, we found unbalanced coverage of a football player as compared to that of a UNC wrestler and ex-student. All were accused of violent acts toward women.

Football player Tommy Thigpen was charged with two counts of assault on a UNC field hockey player. Wrestler Carmen Catullo and former student Christopher Burns were accused of second-degree rape.

The first two articles about Thigpen showed his picture while the article about Catullo and Burns did not. While each story was placed on the front page and above the fold, the absence of a picture with the rape story de-emphasized the act of Cartullo and Burns. The picture placed more attention on the Thigpen story and left a lasting impression in the reader's mind.

In light of last Monday's issue, we are pleased to finally see fair coverage of both Thigpen, and Catullo and Burns. The fact that pictures appeared with both stories certainly gives equal attention.

It is ironic that these stories received this coverage after committee members spoke with *DTH* editors. If conversations between the two caused the change, then we encourage more communication.

In looking at both the fraternity and assault stories, we see that communication can bring about change. Minorities need to continue discussions about these types of issues with the *DTH* and other publications. More importantly, the *DTH* needs to increase its awareness of minority concerns and educate its staff about others besides themselves. We see this as a way for the campus's largest paper to become more representative.

Media Issues Committee writers were: Stacey Belnavis, Keisha Brown, and Tiffany Draughn.

