

Black Music

The negative and the positive

By Kelly Williams

Will Smith, DMX, Missy “Misdemeanor” Elliot, Jay Z, and Lauryn Hill.

All of these names represent the forms of Black music known as Rap and R&B. Over the years, the controversy surrounding Black music and its artists have caused many R&B and rap listeners to re-evaluate their music preference. The harsh and degrading lyrics written by artists are now beginning to take a toll on fans. Many parents no longer allow profane music in their households and stores are now beginning to ban albums that have obscene covers and lyrics. While some begin to boycott records, others still enjoy the raw lyrics.

However, not all songs and raps contain negative lyrics. Quite a few artists have adopted lyrics that reflect a positive image. Performers Will Smith and Lauryn Hill are both prime examples of positive artists that communicate positive messages through their songs. With record sales at a peak, both Smith and Hill refuse to resort to a negative image. According to Smith, “My music is for everyone.

I don’t have to curse or degrade women to get my point across.”

In contrast to the positive influences, there are negative aspects of Black music. DMX, Jay Z, Lil’ Kim and fellow artists have all condoned drugs, violence, illegal acts, profanity, and sexual intercourse in their music. They exploit the opposite sex throughout the albums also, often referring to them as “hoes, bitches, niggas,” etc. What makes these artists feel compelled to rap about negative things? According to Bill Stephney, president of Step Sun Entertainment, “Most rappers don’t say anything worth hearing. They just talk about drug deals and guns, all this criminal stuff, and gross materialism. And you know what? The public loves it. These are the rappers that are selling the most records—period.”

For every negative rapper there is always a positive one. For every profane expression, there are always words of wisdom. Black music has two sides—the positive and the negative—and the consumer definitely has the freedom of choice. ☀

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improve race relations by bringing together all of the students. By providing an inviting atmosphere for other races and ethnicities, then we can help to make a campus with fewer racial prejudices and separations.

By no means am I an expert on the difficulties involved when it comes to recruiting students to an organization, especially if it is an organization that they would not ordinarily join. I also understand that every person is not interested in learning about and advancing the struggle of Black Students. However, I am positive that there are at least a dozen people that would like to become members of the BSM who are not. Instead of one committee that is linked to the other organizations on campus, there should be a group effort throughout the entire BSM. By having more people involved in the interaction process, more students will be reached and informed of the real intentions of the BSM.

As an involved member of the BSM, it severely bothers me when students, even other Black students, think the organization that I devote numerous hours to weekly is just an organization for Black students to complain about how they are wrongly treated. As a positive organization, it should be our duty to correct the false images of the BSM and to present an organization of which the entire university can be proud. ☀

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