

Say it ain't so:

Have we seen the death of rhythm and blues?

By Rob Moore
Staff Reporter

The Motown sound symbolized one of the most important eras in the music industry.

The rhythm and blues music of the 50's, 60's, 70's, and 80's was some of the greatest music ever recorded. Ben E. King,

The Supremes, The Four Tops, and The Jackson 5 will be an influence on R&B music for years to come.

Lost respect

In the 90's, it seems as if the music has taken a turn for the worse. Rhythm & Blues is losing its respect as an art form!

As with many other forms of black expression it has been ex-

ploited and commercialized by big business to suit the changing disposition of middle-class white America.

True talent has been replaced by a beautiful face with a studio synthesized voice.

It's becoming very difficult to distinguish the real artists from engineered fakes.

Sarah Vaughn would turn over in her grave if she ever saw an Adina Howard video.

In 1991 KRS-ONE said, "The essence of black music in general is sex and violence in that order."

It seems that if a R&B record does not incorporate some aspect of sex, then it is no good. Songs like R. Kelly's "Sex Me", Adina Howard's "Freak Like Me", Xscape's "Do You Want To", and TLC's "Creep" all include some

reference to sexual activity.

True, such topics were taboo in songs of our parents' day, but the song that blazed a path for the raunchy R&B songs was done by a girl group out of Passaic, New Jersey.

The Sheralles' made a song called "Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow."

Although this song was done tastefully and with true vocal artists, the subject matter suggested premarital sex without actually using graphic descriptions of the actual act.

This song shows how the music of the past exhibits longevity. The Sheralles song would probably be a Top 20 song even in today's market.

Real music

All of R&B is not totally commercial. Songs such as "Killing Me Softly" by The Fugees and any one of many songs on the "Waiting to Exhale" soundtrack shows that real music has not died.

The problem lies in the fact that music has become too much of a business.

People are singing for the money, fame, and glory instead of the pure love of singing.

Artists are not even artists anymore, they have become business people.

When you hear about business moves such as Andre Harrell's exit from Motown to MCA as opposed to the music coming from Motown, the problem becomes very obvious.

The hip-hop culture, has

branched over and almost engulfed the R&B industry. You can't turn on the radio and listen to a new R&B song without hearing a rapper guest performing or a hip hop based influenced beat.

It's disheartening to fans of classic R&B to see that the torch that was passed to the next generation was dropped and reignited.

In the future I hope to see more pure singing groups focus on more than their sexual activity.

Hope for the future

Artists like Mariah Carey and Whitney Houston have shown that there is still hope, and artists like Chante' Savage and Faith Evans prove the future looks bright.

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EMI
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CTI
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Seduction
Warner Bro.
9. **Randy Crawford**
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Bluemoon
10. **Fourplay**
Elixir
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Compiled with the aid of the
April 1 list of WNCU 90.7 fm
music rotation list.