

SCRATCH AMBASSADORS TOUR

BERKLEE HIP HOP QUARTET IN FINLAND

October 25-30, 2009



PRESS RELEASE: Berklee Turns Tables On Music Education: Hip-hop-inspired turntable course is another Berklee first

February 17, 2004

Liz Linder

Berklee is breaking new ground in music education once again by becoming the first music college in the world to incorporate the study of turntablism into its curriculum.

This spring semester, Turntable Technique will teach students the art of playing the turntable, an art form that helped define hip-hop music and has been adopted in virtually all popular music genres.

Berklee's decision to adopt the turntable as a musical entity worthy of academic study continues the institution's historical tradition of defying the music conservatory establishment by adopting new and often controversial music forms. In the 1940s, Berklee became the first music college to offer jazz in its curriculum, and later in the 1960s was the first college to adopt the electric guitar as a principal instrument.

Turntable Technique will be taught by Professor Stephen Webber, a veteran of classical, jazz and electronic music who is considered a leading authority on turntable education, as the author of the first instructional method book to teach the turntable, *Turntable Technique: The Art of the DJ* (Berklee Press, 2000).

Berklee Press was the first publisher to introduce a line of books and records to offer instruction in the art and techniques of the DJ. *Turntable Technique: The Art of the DJ* culminates the music education that Berklee College has made famous for over 50 years and offers a formalized method of musical notation so DJs can better communicate with and learn from each other. *Turntable Technique: The Art of the DJ* is now a best-selling title available as a book and vinyl set, and in DVD and VHS formats. Berklee Press has received much recognition for their efforts from the media, DJ schools and top names in the DJ community.

"Turntablists are musicians," says Webber. "Many of them, like DJ Qbert, are virtuoso musicians, who practice hours a day and constantly strive to push their art further. I recently saw Qbert perform, and he transported the entire audience; made us forget where we were and who we were, with nothing but a turntable and a piece of vinyl."

"People take it for granted today that jazz is serious music worthy of the same disciplined study as classical music," said Webber. "But when Berklee began teaching jazz improvisation in the 1940s and rock guitar in the 1960s, most other music schools perceived those musical forms as a threat to 'serious' music. It's the same situation with hip-hop and turntablism today."

As with jazz and guitar, the decision to create a curriculum for Turntablism was not made lightly, according to Gary Burton, executive vice president of Berklee College of Music and a legendary jazz musician. For the past year, Burton has chaired a study group of faculty members that has debated and dissected turntable music to evaluate how it would hold up

to academic analysis.

Burton commented, “We knew that there was serious interest in turntablism from many of our students, but we had concerns about how this emerging mode of music making could fit into a college music curriculum. So, we studied the work of some of the established names in the field and debated the musical issues, such as the lack, to date, of an agreed upon method for notating turntable performances, and how we could teach our students these skills within our educational approach. Issue by issue, we sorted out how we could do this at Berklee and respond to our students’ interest.”

Part of what makes it possible to offer the study of the turntable at the college level is the representation of scratching in music notation. Webber’s method first appeared in his book *Turntable Technique: The Art of the DJ*, and consists of a “scratch staff” in which the movements of the record and the mixer’s controls are expressed in standard musical notation. This is the first time that anyone has adapted standard musical notation to teach the turntable.

Noted electronic musician, DJ, creator of the soundtrack to the film *Monster*, and Berklee alumnus BT commented, “I’m extraordinarily excited that turntablism is finally being recognized as an instrument unto itself. The skill of rhythmically and melodically manipulating vinyl is a more than 25-year-old tradition and it’ll be great to see people check off turntable as their primary instrument.”

“That will be a while,” says Webber. “At this point, we only have one class, as well as a vibrant club and an unofficial turntable ensemble. We want to let this grow organically.” The course has already received a tremendous student response and has a waiting list of over 50 names.

History of Turntablism

Webber notes that the architects of hip-hop were young DJs from the Bronx in the 1970s. DJs Kool Herc, Grand Master Flash and Afrika Bambaataa changed what it meant to be a DJ by aggressively pushing the limits of mixing, interacting with the virtuoso dancers known as B-Boys and B-Girls, and assembling crews of MCs who spawned the practice of rapping. Grand Wizard Theodore, a protégé of Flash, was the first to start scratching, manipulating the record back and forth under the needle for musical effect. Grand Mixer DXT was tapped by Bill Laswell to scratch on the Herbie Hancock hit “Rockit,” inspiring thousands of kids to head for their parents’ turntables.

DJ competitions helped push the art form forward in the 80s and 90s, much like the legendary “cutting sessions” that took place in the early days of jazz. DJs who rose to prominence after success in battles include Jazzy Jeff (who teamed with Fresh Prince Will Smith), DJ Swamp, Roc Raida and Rob Swift of the X-ecutioners, and Mix Master Mike and Qbert, formerly of the Invisibl Skratch Piklz.

Webber points out that more recently, DJs have been appearing in Nu Metal bands, and with pop stars ranging from Moby to Sugar Ray. Progressive scratch DJs like DJ Logic have been playing with jazz acts from Medeski Martin and Wood, to John Scofield. Arizona’s

DJ Radar has even written, with partner Raúl Yáñez, a turntable concerto for turntablist and symphony orchestra. The term “turntablism” was coined by DJ Babu to refer to the practice of playing the turntable as a musical instrument.

Webber adds, hip-hop is more than a style of music; it’s a culture. As with any culture, there are various artistic expressions of hip-hop, the four principal expressions being:

- Visual art (graffiti)
- Dance (breaking, rocking, locking and popping, commonly known as break dancing)
- Literature (rap lyrics and slam poetry)
- Music (DJing and turntablism).

Equipment

Generous support from select vendors allow the Berklee classroom for this prototype class to be equipped with professional state-of-the-art instruments and gear. Numark contributed their TTX hybrid analog/digital turntables, cartridges, analog and digital DJ mixers, and innovative CD turntables. Vestax supplied turntables, DJ workstations, and DJ mixers that link together so that multiple turntablists may perform together.

Calzone Case Company provided protective cases for all DJ components and created custom rollaway cases that enable the mixers and turntables to be easily rolled into the classroom from an adjacent storeroom for class and practice times. Alesis supplied “air FX” units, which use infrared light to allow DJs to control effects in “real time.” Korg supplied KAOSS Pads, which allow users to intuitively incorporate sampling and effects controlling into their performance with the touch of a finger; and the KAOSS Pad entrancer, which does the same with video effects as well.

Source: <http://www.berklee.edu/opi/2004/0217.html>



The participants for the Scratch Ambassadors Finland Tour:

Stephen William Webber – Faculty
Brian Walter Ellis – Faculty
Kamal Ghammache-Mansour - scholarship student
William Wells - scholarship student

Ilkka Arola, Pop/Jazz Conservatory
Jori Levantovskij, Metropolia



Turntable Technique: The Art of the DJ

*Hip-hop music and culture has swept the globe and influenced current jazz, classical and popular artists in a way not seen since rock music took over the airwaves in the 1960s. Emmy-winning Musician-DJ-producer Stephen Webber, the author of the best-selling books **Turntable Technique: The Art of the DJ** and **DJ Skills: The Ultimate Guide to Mixing and Scratching**, will lead a team of DJs, MCs, and musicians from Berklee College of Music in presenting this popular performance/seminar, packed with live musical demonstrations and rare footage of the pioneers of Hip-hop.*

The usual structure is to combine a bit of history, live demonstrations of technique, and performance; the typical length is 1 – 2 hours, though we can go longer or shorter. As well as the turntables and live instruments, we use video and audio projected from a laptop to include footage of many pioneering Hip-hop DJs, including Grandmaster Flash, Jam Master Jay, Grandwizzard Theodore and Grandmixer DXT.

Our workshops can serve as many people as necessary, although the larger the group, the less “hands-on” participation there is likely to be. With a smaller group we can likely include a hands-on experience for most everyone. With a larger group we’ll bring up volunteers from the audience who will get to try things out. If there are some locations where it would be more appropriate to do larger groups and other places where you would like us to do smaller groups, that would be fine.

“Turntable Technique: The Art of the DJ” (1-2 hours, 8 people to 2,000 people),
Professor Stephen Webber

“Diggin’ in the Crates” (1-2 hours, 8 people to 2,000 people), Raydar, “ which will focus more on the act of “digging” for samples off of vinyl records for use in the production process.

“Becoming a Band Leader: A Practical Approach” - Kamal Ghammache-Mansour and William Wells

Hip-Hop Music an Outlet for Self-Expression

By Carolee Walker

23 September 2009

African-American and Latino teens with turntables and time on their hands in the 1970s invented hip-hop — a musical style born in the United States and now the center of a huge music and fashion industry around the world.

Hip-hop began 30 years ago in the Bronx, a borough of New York City and a neighborhood that seemed to exemplify the bleakness of poor urban places.

Using turntables to spin old, worn records, kids in the South Bronx began to talk over music, creating an entirely new music genre and dance form. This “talking over,” or MCing (rapping) and DJing (audio mixing and scratching), became the essence of rap music, break dance and graffiti art, according to Marvette Perez, curator at the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of American History in Washington, which launched its collecting initiative “Hip-Hop Won’t Stop: The Beat, The Rhymes, The Life” in 2006.

“Out of this forgotten, bleak place, an incredible tradition was born,” Perez said.

“It’s important for young people to know that their stories matter,” said Jade Foster, an English and humanities teacher at Ballou Senior High School in Washington, which hosted a summer program in 2009 encouraging students to express themselves through hip-hop. “It’s important for young people to know that their stories are relevant to their lives and their histories.”

From the beginning, style has been a big element of hip-hop, Perez said. “Hip-hop

tells the story of music, but also of urban America and its style.”

“With the significant contributions from the hip-hop community, we will be able to place hip-hop in the continuum of American history and present a comprehensive exhibition,” Brent D. Glass, director of the museum, said.

The museum’s multiyear project traces hip-hop from its origins in the late 1970s, as an expression of urban black and Latino youth culture, to its status today as a multibillion-dollar industry worldwide. Perez said they have received collections from hip-hop artists including Grandmaster Flash, Afrika Bambaataa, Kool Herc, Ice T, Fab 5 Freddy, Crazy Legs and MC Lyte.

“Hip-hop is the most important contribution to the American cultural landscape since blues and jazz,” said hip-hop artist and promoter, filmmaker and producer Fab 5 Freddy, born Fred Brathwaite. “It is dominant in every youth culture in every country.” According to statistics gathered in 2009 by Russell Simmons and Accel Partners, today’s global hip-hop community comprises 24 million people between the ages of 19 and 34, including a range of nationalities, ethnic groups and religions.

Hip-hop bands, including The Roots, performing here at an Independence Day festival, top the music charts and reach diverse audiences.

Hip-Hop Cuts Across Racial Lines

“One thing that is applicable to every generation of teenagers is urgency,” music producer and film director Mark Shimmel said. Everything about hip-hop — the sound, the lyrics, the style, the language — conveys that sense of urgency.

The sociological and cultural impact of rock

'n' roll pales in comparison to what hip-hop has been able to accomplish, Shimmel said. "Hip-hop is the singular most important melding of black and white cultures that has ever existed in the United States."

Urban music, like Motown, "worked for white audiences," he said, but you did not see blacks and whites together at live concerts.

Hip-hop changed that because it was about fashion and language from the beginning, and — most importantly — captured a sense of urgency that teenagers in the suburbs and in the cities could relate to, he said. "When hip-hop artists wrote about the world they saw in the inner city, black and white teens recognized that the isolation of suburbia was not much different."

Fab 5 Freddy, host of the television show Yo! MTV Raps in the 1980s, said hip-hop is successful because the music is "infectious" and because it allows people to express themselves in a positive, dynamic and consciousness-raising way. "Hip-hop is for everybody with an open ear," he said.

In 1985, when Run-D.M.C.'s King of Rock became the first hip-hop record to "go platinum," an award given by the Recording Industry Association of America for the sale of 1 million records, it was apparent that hip-hop had crossed over from African-American and Latino urban music into white culture, Shimmel said. In 2005, OutKast's Grammy Award for Album of the Year was a first for a hip-hop album.

Shimmel said hip-hop today has not strayed far from its South Bronx roots. "Every musical form evolves," Shimmel said. "Hip-hop started in New York, and it was interpreted differently in Los Angeles, and then the South added another element. It has evolved, but it hasn't changed."

Today hip-hop music, poetry and art prepare

teens for every avenue in life, teacher Foster said. Hip-hop helps develop speech and build confidence, she said.

Looking Past Anti-Social Elements to Global Impact

Perez said some hip-hop music is notable for its disrespect of women, and the museum does not plan to dismiss this aspect of hip-hop. The so-called "gangsta" rap in the 1990s, with lyrics promoting drug use, violence and tagging, a form of graffiti used to mark gang territories, is a component of the hip-hop culture that cannot be ignored, Perez said, but "on the whole, the majority of hip-hop is creative and positive."

Hip-hop's influence both musically and culturally is global, Perez said. "The technique resonates throughout the United States and the world."

Article available online at www.america.gov



What's New? The Effect of Hip-Hop Culture on Everyday English

This article appeared in the August 2007 edition of eJournal USA.

By Emmett G. Price III

11 August 2007

*Expressions coined by urban youth have made their way into mainstream English via the so-called hip-hop generation. Emmett G. Price III, PhD, is an assistant professor of Music and African American Studies at Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts. He is the author of *Hip Hop Culture* (ABC-CLIO, 2006) and editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Popular Music Studies*. He is also executive editor of the forthcoming three-volume *Encyclopedia of African American Music* (Greenwood Press, 2008).*

Language is the product of society. As a society changes, so does its language. One of the greatest signs of a changing language is the rapid expansion of its lexicons. Over the past 30 years, American dictionaries have grown at unprecedented levels. Words attesting to the rich contribution of global cultures to American culture, words created for scientific use, words recognizing technological advances, and, of course, words representing contemporary culture have expanded the English language. Yet, it is this last category that has altered the English language more rapidly than any other influence.

These changes are sparked by words created by youth and young adults who feel empowered to codify and label their own realities with new expressions: words that represent the new ponderings, new searches, new desires, and new ideas (even if the ideas really are not so new). In *The Hip Hop Generation*, Bakari Kitwana establishes the

birth years of 1965-1984 as the criterion for admission into the hip-hop generation. It is obvious that Kitwana's closing year of 1984 is not wide enough, as we have witnessed the emergence of multiple hip-hop generations, each birthing new additions and approaches to the English language.

Hip-Hop Culture

During the 1960s and 1970s — as the streets of New York City erupted in violence, social decay, and economic demise — young, multiethnic, inner-city kids devised their own solution to the traumatic challenges that they continually faced. Unifying the preexisting elements of rapping, graffiti, dancing, and deejaying (a method of using sound equipment and records to create totally new sounds and combinations from those originally recorded — scratching, rapid repeats of segments, remixes, etc.), these diverse youth created an alternative to the hopelessness found in their neighborhoods.

During the mid-1970s, this local phenomenon was ignored by mainstream America; yet by the 1980s, not only did hip-hop culture have a national presence, it was sought globally. Movies such as *Wild Style*, *Style Wars*, and, later, *Beat Street* and *Breakin'* allowed international audiences to experience the many facets of hip-hop culture, including the unique approach to speaking and writing English. By the 1990s, print and broadcast media and even video games were dominated by the presence and effect of hip-hop culture. Corporations such as Burger King, Coca-Cola, America Online (AOL), Nike, and Reebok launched advertising and marketing campaigns featuring hip-hop culture, responding to the popular/hip image of these elements and, at the same time, helping integrate them into the broader culture. Amidst the dancing, fashion, and numerous musical elements, what quickly struck the ears of many were

the new rules for speaking, reading, and writing English.

Hip-Hop Language

Popular culture in the United States has had a unique effect on everyday English for many generations. African-American music, in many ways, has played a demonstrative role in this evolution. From the days prior to the emergence of the spirituals and the blues, African-American music has informed its listeners (early on, mostly black) of the current events and liberation strategies, using alternative language understood only by those within the cultural network.

Through the years, many of the words and phrases became integrated and used by outside communities who had figured out the context and definitions of these words. This process of cultural adaptation happened in many of the ethnic communities and enclaves within America, yet it was African-American music, containing much of this language, that informed much of American mainstream culture.

The language of hip-hop culture is an extension of past and recent vernacular. Words like “hot” (1920s), “swing” (1930s), “hip” (1940s), “cool” (1950s), “soul” (1960s), “chill” (1970s), and “smooth” (1980s) have been redefined and usurped into hip-hop language. Hip-hop language is the next generation’s answer to the age-old question — What’s new?

The Impact of Hip-Hop Culture

The greatest impact of hip-hop culture is perhaps its ability to bring people of all different beliefs, cultures, races, and ethnicities together as a medium for young (and now middle-aged) people to express themselves in a self-determined manner, both individually and collectively. Hip-hop culture has influenced not only American

English, but numerous languages around the world. Multicultural nations have vibrant hip-hop communities who have had to figure out what to do with these new words and phrases. From German Hip-Hop to Australian Hip-Hop to Pinoy Rap (Philippines) to Azeri Rap (Azerbaijan) to Rap Nigerien (Niger), hip-hop has had its effect on the languages of these nations and cultures.

Whether it is the addition of the phrase “bling-bling” to the *Oxford English Dictionary* in 2003 or the inclusion of the term “crunk” in the 2007 volume of the *Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary*, hip-hop culture is changing the nature, the sound, and the rules of the English language. Words such as “hood” (short for neighborhood), “crib” (which translates as place of residence), and “whip” (meaning car) have become commonplace within everyday conversation. Phrases such as “what’s up” (hello), “peace out” (good-bye), and the extremely popular “chill out” (relax) are frequently used in television shows, movies, and even commercials for Fortune 500 corporations. American English is a living organism, and with vibrant mechanisms such as hip-hop culture and the rapid growth of technology, who’s to say what we will be saying or writing in the next 30 years. Whether the United States is a “Hip-Hop Nation,” as declared on the cover of the February 5, 1999, issue of *Time* magazine, or not, it is clearly evident that English has been greatly influenced by hip-hop culture.

Article available online at www.america.gov

Hip Hop Books Available at the American Resource Center

From Totems to Hip-Hop

Edited by Ishmael Reed

Thunder's Mouth Press: Distributed by Publishers Group West, cop. 2003.

ARC 811.5408 From

Gettin' Our Groove on: Rhetoric, Language, and Literacy for the Hip Hop Generation

Campbell, Kermit Ernest

Wayne State University Press, cop. 2005.

ARC 427.0899 Campbell

Hip Hop Dance: Meanings and Messages

Huntington, Carla Stalling

McFarland & Co, cop. 2007.

ARC 793.3 Stalling

Hip Hop Matters: Politics, Pop Culture, and the Struggle for the Soul of a Movement

Watkins, S. Craig

Beacon Press, cop. 2005.

ARC 782.4216 Watkins

It's Bigger than Hip-Hop: The Rise of the Post-Hip-Hop Generation

Asante, Molefi K.

St. Martin's, 2008.

ARC 305.235 Asante

Shamanism, Racism and Hip Hop Culture

Perkinson, James W.

Palgrave Macmillan; Basingstoke, 2005.

ARC 305.8009 Perkinson

To the Break of Dawn: A Freestyle on the Hip Hop Aesthetic

Cobb, William Jelani

New York University Press, cop. 2007.

ARC 782.4216 Cobb



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SCRATCH

AMBASSADORS TOUR

Berklee Hip Hop Quartet - Suomen kiertue

HELSINKI 25.10.

Klo 19, Harjun nuorisotalo
(Aleksis Kivenkatu 1-3)

OULU 27.10.

Klo 18, Oulun seudun AMK:n konserttisali
(Kotkantie 1)

TAMPERE 29.10.

Klo 17, Kaarilan koulu
(Vallerinkatu 1)

TURKU 30.10.

Klo 22, Nuorten taide- ja toimintatalo, Vimma
(Aurakatu 16)

Yhteistyökumppanit:
Berklee College of Music (Boston MA)
Numark
Harjun nuorisotalo
Oulun seudun ammattikorkeakoulu
Oulun Suomi-Amerikka Yhdistys
Tampereen Nuorisotoimi
Nuorten taide- ja toimintatalo Vimma, Turku

Järjestäjä:

Yhdysvaltain Suurlähetystö yhteistyössä Pop & Jazz Konservatorion ja
Helsingin Ammattikorkeakoulu Metropolian kanssa



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AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU

Numark
KAARILAN KOULU

