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## Message from the Editor

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As always, I would like to sincerely thank all members of our peer-review board for their hard work and excellent suggestions for improving each article.

All issues may contain articles and announcements in the following categories:

- **articles with a special focus on local music traditions (any region in the world);**
- **research articles** – generally, all music-related topics are being considered;
- **opinion articles** that are part of, or provide the basis for, discussions on important music topics;
- **composer portraits** that may or may not include an interview;
- **short responses** to articles published in previous issues;
- **bibliographies** on any music-related topic, which may or may not be annotated);
- **reviews** of books, printed music, CDs, and software; and
- **reports** on recent symposia, conferences, and music events.

I would like to call for submissions that fit any of these categories. Submissions by students are, as always, very welcome. All submissions are expected via e-mail with attachments in Word format or in Rich Text Format. For detailed submission guidelines visit <http://www.scmb.us>.

## Research Articles

### **Haydn and the Variation: An Analysis of Variation Form within Hob. V:8 and Hob. V:D3**

by Gregory Bowen

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Joseph Haydn, considered the first of the three “Viennese Classics” (Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven), “began his career in the traditional patronage system of the late Austrian Baroque, and ended as a ‘free’ artist within the burgeoning Romanticism of the early 19th century” (Feder and Webster 2018). Often called the “Father of the Symphony,” Haydn composed a total of 106 symphonic works. His output of chamber music was also rather sizeable, having produced 68 string quartets and 21 string trios. A large number of these pieces were composed during his tenure as vice-Kapellmeister within the Esterházy court, and, in keeping with one of his most important duties, Haydn produced many of them specifically to be performed in court, first for Prince Paul Anton and then for his older brother, Prince Nikolaus I. Among his chamber works, his “Divertimento in B-Dur No. 8 für Streichtrio Hob. V:8” is especially unique. Written in 1765, a year before he would succeed Gregor Joseph Werner as Ober-Kapellmeister (ibid.), it is the “only trio in the ‘modern’ scoring of violin, viola, and bass (cello) instead of two violins over the bass, vaguely reminiscent of the trio sonata” (Sisman 1993, 125). The formal plan and motivic organization within the first movement of Divertimento in B-Dur only further distinguishes the trio from Haydn’s other compositions.

The first movement of Hob. V:8 is written in variation form, a form Haydn rarely applied within the context of a string trio. In fact, he made use of this compositional device for the first movement of only one other trio: Hob. V:D3. (Ibid., 126.) In her 1990 article for *Acta Musicologica*, Elaine Rochelle Sisman explained that “[v]ariation form is most aptly defined by a relationship between constant and changing elements” (Sisman 1990, 152). Regarding the structure of a movement written in this form, William Earl Caplin indicated that “[t]he basic plan is simple: a main theme, constructed either as a small ternary or a small binary or a small binary, is followed by an indefinite number of varied repetitions” (Caplin 1998, 217). In his 1973 dissertation, Robert William Demaree, Jr. expanded upon the relationship between the theme and its variations (Demaree 1973, 64):

“Variation” implies the restatement of materials already presented with one or more features altered; it is assumed that in this operation, if the variation is to be understood, the relationship between the basic unit and the variant remains aurally recognizable. The composer may alter the pitch and interval order, the rhythmic values, the tonality, the texture, or any combination of these or other parameters.

Variation form, sharing tendencies with the rondo and sonata (symphony allegro) forms, is comprised of multiple, successive period figures. However, variation form differs from its formal counterparts in that all periods after the first are essentially treated as elaborative repetitions (variations) of the initial period (theme) (Sisman 1982, 445; see Table 1).

Koch's levels of musical structure.

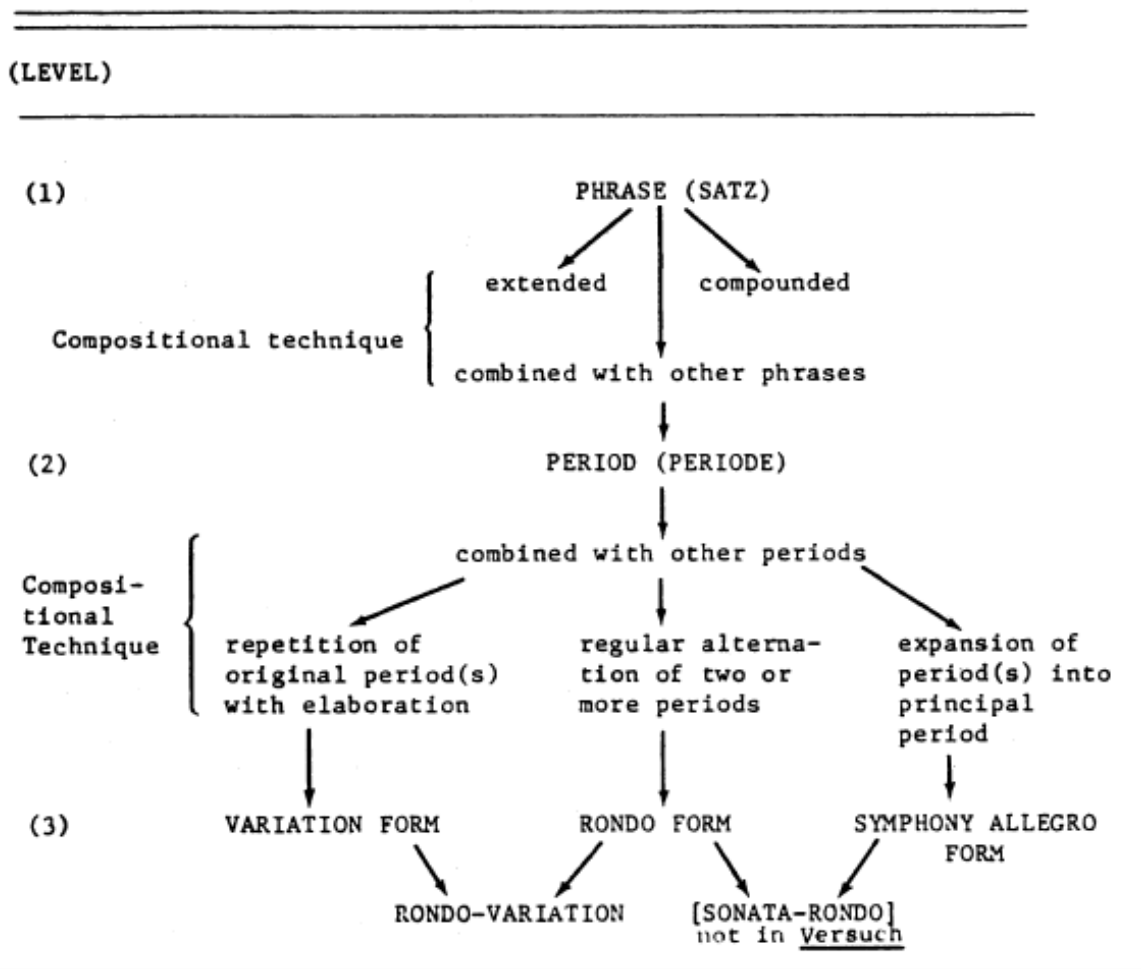



Table 1: Heinrich Cristoph Koch's Levels of Musical Structure (Sisman 1982, 445)


The first movement of the Divertimento in B-Dur, Hob. V:8, is organized and varied primarily through the use of rhythmic motives. Elaine Sisman pointed out that “the rhythmic motives dominating each variation are not clearly derived from the theme, and thus sound generic.” (Sisman 1993, 125.) The note durational values of each variation become increasingly smaller, with the exception of the third and fifth variations (see Example 1). Variation III, written in a more cantabile style, presents

the greatest departure from the structure of the theme. This, however, is the only variation that exhibits the descending stepwise motives from the original theme and its counterpoint. Variation V features extended syncopations, a unique practice for Haydn. The effect, “especially given the viola partly doubling the cello (and varying the bass line) is to turn the bass line into a cantus firmus with species counterpoint” (ibid., 126-127; see Example 2).


**Variatio I**




**Variatio II**



**Variatio IV**



**Variatio VI**



Example 1: Haydn, String Trio Hob. V:8/i, Variation I, II, IV, & VI Motives (Haydn 2016, 1-3)

55 **Variatio III**



**Variatio V**



Example 2: Haydn, String Trio Hob. V:8/i, Variation III & V Motives (Haydn 2016, 2-3)

From the sixteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries, variation form has been used in a multitude of different ways. By determining which elements are varied and which remain constant, we can classify the type of variation the composer used for the movement in

question. (Au 2003, 6.) Close examination of the first movement of *Streichtrio in B-Dur, Hob. V:8*, reveals that one major element is perfectly preserved throughout the theme and every subsequent variation: the bass line (see Example 3).

The image shows a musical score for the first movement of Haydn's *Streichtrio in B-Dur, Hob. V:8*. The score is in 2/4 time, B major, and Adagio. It features three staves: Violine (Violin), Viola, and Violoncello (Cello). The cello part is an ostinato bass line. The violin and viola parts are varied throughout the movement.

**Example 3: Haydn, Theme of Divertimento in B-Dur, Hob. V:8/i (Haydn 2016, 1)**

The homophonic texture and central harmony produced above this bass is also maintained for the duration of the movement. Only the upper two voices are varied through the use of the aforementioned rhythmic (and melodic) motives. This would suggest that we should classify this movement as an ostinato variation, in which the composer retains the bass line and, often, harmony while varying the upper voices. In this case, the cello would outline a somewhat lengthy ostinato, spanning the entire theme or variation. However, one could argue that the movement also qualifies as a melodic-outline variation, in which the composer retains the main melodic notes, harmony, and form while varying the melody and rhythm (ibid., 7; see Analysis 1). In her 2003 dissertation, Hiu-Wah Au clarified by era

the development of variation-type compositional tendencies (ibid., 8):

Whereas Renaissance and Baroque composers favor[ed] cantus firmus variations, basso ostinato variations, and constant-harmony variations, melodic-outline variations (more commonly called ornamental variations) developed into the leading type of variations of the Viennese Classical style.

Considering the fact that Haydn composed during the transitional period between the Baroque and Classical eras, this particular movement could be considered to exhibit elements from both and, therefore, justify its classification as an ostinato variation, ornamental variation, or both.

The image displays four variations of a musical theme, labeled Variatio I, Variatio II, Variatio IV, and Variatio VI. Each variation is presented in two staves, with the top staff in treble clef and the bottom staff in bass clef. Red rectangular boxes are drawn around specific notes in the top staff of each variation, indicating the main melodic notes. Variatio I and II are in 2/4 time, while Variatio IV and VI are in 3/4 time. Variatio IV includes triplet markings (indicated by a '3' over a group of notes). The variations show different rhythmic and melodic treatments of the same underlying theme.

### Analysis 1: Hob. V:8/i, Var. I, II, IV, & VI, Melodic-Outline (Main Melodic Note) Analysis

In his 1998 dissertation, Ta-Hsi Pang explained that we can also classify theme and variations movements as either sectional or continuous (Pang 1998, 1):

First, there are sectional variations in which there is always a pause or stop at the end of each variation[...] In each variation, the key and length are fixed, and only the melodic outline of the theme remains. The most brilliant variation comes in the finale and could be further prolonged by a coda[...] The second type is that of continuous variations, in which the variations, typically extremely brief, follow one another with little or no break between them. The theme is usually a short ostinato or a ground bass in one or two phrases. In each variation, the bass line remains the same with the figuration and texture changing on top.

Yet again, the first movement of Streichtrio in B-Dur, Hob. V:8, seems to exhibit qualities of both types of theme and variations. The length of the theme and each of its variations is fixed, and (excluding variations III and V) the progressively more complex rhythmic diminution from variation to variation could, in some ways, be seen to lend a sort of “brilliance” to the concluding variation. However, the key and bass line both remain noticeably consistent throughout, and each variation typically flows directly into the next, which suggests that it would likely be more appropriate to classify this movement as a continuous theme and variations.

As part of his 2006 dissertation, Bryan Jeffrey Proksch explored Haydn’s method of inserting additional material to “delay the expected arrival of



important thematic material” (Proksch 2006, 137), citing several examples in his Symphony No. 85 in B Flat Major (La Reine). Of particular interest was his discussion of how, in the theme-and-variations second movement, Haydn “delay[ed] the close of the theme and the parallel point in each variation by inserting one measure immediately before the cadential gesture” (ibid., 138; see Example 4). Haydn

seems to have employed a comparable compositional approach within the first movement of Streichtrio in B-Dur, Hob. V:8, incorporating similar single-measure figures in the theme and its variations. However, each of the measures here serves not to delay cadential figures, but to reaffirm the tonic arrival at the end of the first phrase of each thematic statement (see Analysis 2).

Romance Allegretto  
m. 1

Original statement (normal parallel period)

m. 14

Later statement: inserted measure

Compression

Example 4: Haydn, Symphony No. 85/ii, Delayed Cadence (Proksch 2006, 138)

Phrase 1

Phrase 2

Analysis 2: Haydn, Streichtrio in B-Dur, Hob. V:8/i, Reaffirmation of Tonic in Phrase 1

Close examination of the harmonic treatment above the bass line throughout the first movement of *Streichtrio in B-Dur* reveals that Haydn made rather frequent use of suspensions, accented non-chord tones, and other striking dissonances. As Adem Merter Birson explained in his 2015 dissertation, Charles Rosen’s *The Classical Style: Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven* (1972) “credits Haydn with the invention, via the string quartet, of an international musical language based largely on the dramatic use of dissonances” (Birson 2015, 20) In this book, Rosen explained how Haydn channeled these sources of musical energy into the development of a formal structure within the “classical style” (Rosen 1972, 120):

The two principle sources of musical energy are dissonance and sequence—the first because it demands resolution, the second because it implies continuation. The classical style immeasurably increased the power of dissonance, raising it from an unresolved

interval to an unresolved chord and then to an unresolved key.

Analysis of the harmonic structure of the theme from the first movement of *Hob. V:8* certainly seems to substantiate these assertions on Haydn’s use of dramatic dissonances (see Analysis 3). Haydn included, for example, quite a few suspensions (marked with green boxes) on downbeats, delaying the chord-tone arrivals of one or both of the upper voices. The orientation of these suspension figures even seems to support the formal structure throughout the period in several notable ways. For instance, the upper voices align for each cadential arrival, creating a retardation and suspension in the violin and viola respectively. Furthermore, throughout much of phrases 3 and 4, the upper voices actually pass the suspension figures back and forth, measure-by-measure. These suspensions repeatedly serve to momentarily obscure the harmonic motion from one chord to the next.

The image shows a musical score for the first movement of *Hob. V:8/i*, marked *Adagio*. It features three staves: Violine (Violin), Viola, and Violoncello (Cello). The score is annotated with various musical symbols and boxes. Green boxes highlight suspensions (S) on downbeats. Blue boxes highlight non-chord tones (N). Purple boxes highlight dissonances (D). Specific annotations include 'IAC' (Imperfect Authentic Cadence) and 'PAC' (Perfect Authentic Cadence) in boxes. Below the staves, a harmonic analysis is provided, showing chords such as Bb: I 6, ii6/5 V, I -, F: I6, I, V7 vi, IV, V, I, Bb: I6, IV, V6/V, V, I 6, ii6/5 V, I -, I vi, IV, V, I.

### Analysis 3: Hob. V:8/i, Harmonic Analysis of the Theme – Dissonances and Non-Chord Tones

Haydn also periodically generated dramatic dissonance through the use of chromatic neighboring motion. This type of motion first appears in the

viola line after the modulation to the dominant key of F Major; beginning with the F natural in measure 5, the downbeat of the following measure accents

the chromaticism of E natural and reinforces its function as the new leading tone. At the cadence point a few measures later, the violin reaffirms the earlier modulation, echoing the same chromatic neighboring motion from F natural to E natural and back again. While the chromaticism is heard far more briefly this time, the harmonic tension is intensified by the aforementioned combination of retardation and suspension figures outlined by the violin and viola respectively.

Just as Haydn composed no other string trio for violin, viola, and cello, his use of variation form to structure the first movements of such compositions was almost equally rare; only one other trio exhibits this particular form: *Divertimento in D*, Hob. V:D3 (Sisman 1993, 126). Some scholars have questioned the authorship of several movements from this trio, as well as various other compositions attributed to Haydn. For example, they've highlighted the fact that a number of these works either are labeled with Haydn's last name only, or bear no composer name at all. They have also indicated that the handwriting in quite a few of these works appeared to be that of an unspecified copyist, rather than of any known composer. Yet, their inclusion within the Henle edition of Haydn's complete works would suggest that, despite such observations, these pieces are generally considered authentic (Haydn 1996).

In *Haydn and the Classical Variation*, Elaine Sisman pointed out one of two major differences between Hob. V:8 and Hob. V:D3: "The D-major piece [...] varies the bass in every variation, Haydn's earliest set to do so." (Sisman 1993, 126.) Furthermore, there are noticeably fewer variations in Hob. V:D3 than in Hob. V:8, dropping from six in the B-flat-major trio to three in the D-major trio. Yet, the decision to break from the kind of fixed bass line progression we see in the first movement of Hob. V:8 and extend the variation process to encompass all three voices within the texture likely

would have afforded Haydn with plenty of opportunities to sufficiently vary the initial thematic material without requiring as many separate, demarcated variations. It also clearly granted far greater flexibility with regards to the functional interplay between parts, as the bass line could be made equally melodically, rhythmically, and motivically active.

When considering the authenticity of the D-major trio as one of Haydn's compositions, the resemblance between the motivic elements employed within Hob. V:D3 and those Haydn used in Hob. V:8 seems far too salient to ignore. In fact, the first movement of Hob. V:D3 appears to actually blend many of the same basic rhythmic and melodic motives used in the first movement of the B-flat-major trio. This blending of motivic elements could offer another justification for the aforementioned drop in the number of variations. The theme of the D-major piece, for example, exhibits a similar mixture of scalar and arpeggiated motion to that which is prevalent in both the theme and third variation from the B-flat-major trio (see Example 5). The first variation of the D-major piece also prominently features the familiar sixteenth note rhythmic pattern from the first variation of Hob. V:8 (see Example 6).

Variation II from Hob. V:D3 offers a near-exact recreation of the syncopated rhythmic figures from the fifth variation of the B-flat-major piece (see Example 7). The third and last variation most notably features the same rapid, alternating arpeggiated figures that Haydn used in the fourth variation of Hob. V:8. Moreover, the violin line also seems to briefly reference, in measure 5, the rapid 32<sup>nd</sup>-note melismatic figures that pervade the sixth variation of the B-flat-major trio (see Example 8). Interestingly enough, there is even evidence of Haydn's compositional propensity toward dramatic dissonance within Hob. V:D3, given the frequency of suspensions and other accented non-chord tones.

Adagio Hoboken V:D3

Violino I

Violino II

Basso

The image shows a musical score for three instruments: Violino I, Violino II, and Basso. The tempo is marked 'Adagio'. The key signature is D major (two sharps) and the time signature is 2/4. The score consists of two systems of three staves each. The first system includes a first violin part with a trill (tr) and a first ending bracket, a second violin part, and a bass part. The second system includes a first violin part with a triplet (3) and a trill (tr), a second violin part with a trill (tr), and a bass part.

Example 5: Haydn, Theme from Divertimento in D, Hob. V:D3/i (Mozart 1996)

Var. I

The image shows a musical score for three instruments: Violino I, Violino II, and Basso. The tempo is marked 'Adagio'. The key signature is D major (two sharps) and the time signature is 2/4. The score consists of three systems of three staves each. The first system includes a first violin part with a trill (tr), a second violin part, and a bass part. The second system includes a first violin part with a trill (tr), a second violin part, and a bass part. The third system includes a first violin part with a trill (tr), a second violin part, and a bass part.

Example 6: Haydn, Var. I from Divertimento in D, Hob. V:D3/i (Mozart 1996)



34 Var. II

42

Example 7: Haydn, Var. II from Divertimento in D, Hob. V:D3/i (Haydn 1996)

50 Var. III

55

60

Example 8: Haydn, Var. III from Divertimento in D, Hob. V:D3/i (Haydn 1996)

Haydn was one of the most prominent compositional innovators of his time, helping to usher in the classical era and paving the way for composers like Mozart, Beethoven, and many more with his unique style of composition. Though widely considered to be the “Father of the Symphony,” Haydn was almost equally dedicated to the creation of string quartets and trio works. Streichtrio in B-Dur, Hob. V:8 and Divertimento in D, Hob. V:D3 prominently showcase his creative compositional approach, especially within the first movement of each string trio. He wrote these movements in variation form, varying their initial themes with a multitude of rhythmic and melodic motives. Closer analysis of the first movement of Hob. V:8 revealed that Haydn used progressively more complex rhythmic diminution from variation to variation, with the exception of the third and fifth variations. His consistent treatment of the bass line and key within this movement, and the fact that each variation tends to flow directly into the next, suggests that we could categorize the movement as either a continuous ostinato or continuous ornamental variation. Haydn clearly demonstrated in this movement his compositional tendency toward subverting his listeners’ expectations by incorporating additional measures or figures to disrupt formal flow and plenty of dramatic dissonances like suspensions and accented non-chord tones. We can easily see quite a few of these compositional tendencies reflected in Hob. V:D3 as well, and the integration of many of the same rhythmic and melodic motives from the B-flat-major trio in the D-major trio seem indicative of Haydn’s unique brand of variation-style composition.

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## Political Commentary and Criticism in Rap Music

by Amani Seay

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### *Introduction*

Hip-hop culture and rap music are key elements when discussing the political fabric of African-American communities. The most recent presidential elections, in retrospect, are clearly divided along racial lines. Racial influence in politics has persisted since the foundation of the Constitution. Through reflections on existing research, artists' music, and popular commentary from rap artists in the media, I will explore whether the positive sentiment towards Obama changed after his first campaign and whether rap artists became more critical of the president. As the political arena has shifted with a new presidency, this essay will show the mentions of business person Donald Trump, his rise in the political arena and how the rap community responded to his campaign. My research findings show a collective positive reaction in favor of President Barack Obama's first campaign and that artist's lyrics progressively became more critical the longer he remained in office. Also, my research found that rap music's glorification of Donald Trump when he was a civilian has since shifted into hatred as he became a politician.

### *Hip-Hop Origins*

Generally defined as a collective of experiences, hip-hop was created from urban communities. American in its foundation, hip-hop was started in New York. According to Light & Tate 2018, hip-hop "originated in the predominantly African American economically depressed South Bronx section of New York City in the late 1970s". Hip-hop is a culture or lifestyle that houses many different elements or tenets, such as language, fashion, and music. According to Shaw 2013, four core tenets fall underneath the umbrella of hip-hop: breakdancing, DJing, graffiti and rap. While this definition does not follow a sociological definition of a subculture, because of its restriction to four tenets, the writer of

the *Ebony Magazine* article agrees that hip-hop is a broad category that houses many different elements within itself. Similarly, within hip-hop and its tenets, there are many subcultures. These subcultures can be based on region, gender, educational status, age, and other demographic features. In this paper, I will focus on the musical element of hip-hop culture, known as rap.

Rap falls within the umbrella of hip-hop, and within the category of rap is a multitude of subcategories and themes. Rap music since its inception has been primarily consumed and created by African-Americans and black individuals. This unique relationship with the black community gives this genre a great amount of power and influence over culture in these communities. Its influence, however, has minimal permeation into the larger American arena because of how powerful tribalism and bigotry are in the United States. Rap music has not received an appropriate appreciation and respect from academia and the political elite.

Stereotypically rap is viewed as crass, misogynistic and violent in many cases, resulting in the intellectual and purposeful meaning and message of some of the lyrics being neglected and ignored. This critical message and cultural degradation of black art and expression have historically racist elements. It is important to acknowledge the important historical, sociological and musical contributions that rap artists have made. Without rap music's contribution, many important cultural moments would lack musical documentation and perspective from the black community.

A popular theme within American rap music is politics. Politics and artistic expression have always had a symbiotic relationship with one another. In American history, music has been used to further political campaigns, gather support for candidates and critique political beliefs, candidates, and ideology. "Hip-hop had a long political engagement; hip-hop almost starts as a political movement," says journalist and cultural critic Touré, "People from the street needs a voice—we have no voice. So we have to have something to say" (quoted in Love 2010). Music by its nature is often enjoyed by an audience that relates personally with the content or the stylis-

tic nature of the production, thereby producing a community experience that is shared by the artist and audience. The communal aspect of this music creates a dialog within the audience surrounding the content within the songs. Rap has the unique ability as a musical genre to generate extreme support or disdain for candidates. “‘Hip-hop has earned a creative license to offer a critical narrative of celebrity and political figures, and unlike other genres of popular music, hip-hop has always made it a priority,’ according to S. Craig Watkins, a professor at the University of Texas at Austin and the author of ‘Hip Hop Matters: Politics, Pop Culture, and the Struggle for the Soul of a Movement’” (McCann 2016). A key function of music is to reflect the environment and culture surrounding the artist. Music, like a news article, can inform, circulate ideas and ignite political dialog to persuade individuals to take action and become more civically engaged. Likewise, in a more negative fashion, the audience dialog generated from rap can cause skepticism and cynicism resulting in a lack of civic participation.

### ***Rappers Versus Politicians***

From the early 1980s until now, rap has featured political and social themes, such as the Vietnam War and police brutality. The song “F\*\*k Tha Police” (released in 1988) by N.W.A, a rap group that was most popular in the early 1990s, re-surfed in popularity in 2015, charting on Hot Rap Songs and Hot R&B / Hip-Hop Songs. N.W.A’s “F\*\*k Tha Police” was ranked at Nos. 20 and 25 on the lists (Caulfield 2015). Spanning several decades, rap artists from Tupac to Kanye have continually commented on political figures in their music and when talking to the press. While many politicians and parents have critiqued rappers’ personalities and lifestyles, there are uncanny parallels and similarities between rappers and politicians. Both of these roles or professions entail bravado, financial wealth, also popularity and support from a captive audience. Rappers and politicians claim to help their communities and provide a sense of leadership to those within their influence. In 2017, Chance the Rapper was given the “Humanitarian Award” by BET for his significant financial contributions to educational institutions in his hometown of Chicago and schools

across the nation (Gibbs 2017). Similarly, elected politicians can vote and influence legislation to increase the educational budget or control funding for educational purposes. As rappers are beholden to their fans, but more importantly their labels, politicians are accountable to their constituents with a focus on their donors. In the many ways that rappers and politicians can be positive influences on their communities, a dangerous exposure to a toxic culture of power corrupts many in both the entertainment and political arenas.

The difference between politicians and rappers is that politicians have a greater responsibility to take care of their community. Choosing to take part in the democratic process, they vowed to be public servants and to put the needs of others before themselves. Rappers are never required to make that commitment. Politicians have control over rap artists when they are within the politician's community. This creates a unique power struggle: while an artist may have an extreme amount of power through social influence, they lack the institutional power that elected officials have access to because of their office. The creation of this struggle is not only political, but racial. The strategic creation of the United States’ political system was founded on strangling agency and control, away from racial minorities and financially insufficient communities. It is clear through observation and analysis of the artists in the Billboard Hot Rap Songs Chart that 95% of the artists are black; unfortunately, there is little national survey research to back this claim. This dynamic relationship often results in confrontation between rappers and politicians, where both parties are supposedly fighting for the same issues, but using different methods and avenues. The politician supports the traditional bureaucratic road, and rappers take a more unique path that disregards this political process.

### ***Barack Obama’s Relationship with Rap***

Barack Obama is an American politician who served as the 44th President of the United States from 2009 to 2017. The first African American to assume the presidency, he was previously the junior United States Senator from Illinois from 2005 to



2008. He served in the Illinois State Senate from 1997 until 2004.

According to *The Obama Phenomenon* (Henry, Allen, & Chrisman 2011), a book detailing the first black president's election, Obama's relationship with hip-hop is more personal than for other politicians. Obama's unique relationship is not only a result of his ethnicity, but also a result of a significant time spent living in Chicago, which has strong ties to several influential hip-hop artists: "Obama has many supporters in the hip-hop community, such as Will.I.Am, Ludacris, and Jay-Z" (Love 2010). More than for any other election, the presidential 2008 election involved the hip-hop community. According to Billboard, Barack Obama is the most name-dropped president in music with 309 mentions in songs of every genre (Maher 2018). The hip-hop community's engagement in the 2008 election seems to be quite ironic, considering hip-hop's contentious relationship with the state along with various government officials' criticism of hip-hop music (especially gangsta rap) (Henry, Allen, & Chrisman 2011). Having a more intimate relationship with hip-hop did not erase the overshadowing factor that Obama was a tool of the state and government. This factor continued to create a duality and conflict that required the candidate to continually critique and sometimes condemn action of rap artists: "Obama has voiced his concern around the many negative messages in hip-hop, mentioning the misogyny, materialism, use of the term 'nigga,' and the violence as socially and cultural detrimental" (Ossei-Owusu 2011, 226). Despite any negative verbal criticism by Obama, rap artists were proud to have a presidential candidate that respected and appreciated them.

Through searching for songs ranked on the Top 50 Billboard Songs charts, I narrowed my focus to conduct an in-depth lyrical analysis on five songs containing political references mentioning Barack Obama. A particular area of focus was songs produced during or around the time of his first presidential campaign, with an interesting trend amongst songs that reference Barack Obama's political career. I focused on his first campaign to allow a more accurate comparison to Donald Trump. In turn, many rap songs encourage the efforts made by

the Obama campaign in 2008. In 2009, Young Jeezy released "My President", featuring Nas, which charted to number 30 on the Digital Sales Chart shortly after the 2008 elections, confirming Barack Obama as the United States President. "My President" was recorded the day Barack Obama was announced as the Democratic presidential nominee. In this song, Young Jeezy chants the chorus over an upbeat track, singing "My president is black, my Lambo's blue / And I be god damn if my rims ain't too", flaunting his pride for Barack Obama and Young Jeezy's personal wealth simultaneously. These lyrics are played over a hip-hop beat that is infused with horns, giving the song triumphant and celebratory sounds that make the listener feel confident and happy when listening. In one of the last verses Nas raps:

Yeah! History, black history  
No president ever did shit for me  
Had to hit the streets try to flip some keys  
So a nigga wont go broke  
Then they put us in jail now a nigga cant go vote  
So I spend dough on these hoes strippin'  
She ain't a politician, honey's a pole-tician  
My president is black, Rolls golden charms  
22-inch rims like Hulk Hogan's arms  
When thousands of people is riled up to see you  
That can arouse ya ego  
you got mouths to feed so  
Gotta stay true to who you are and where you came from  
'Cause at the top will be the same place you hang from  
No matter how big you can ever be  
For whatever fee or publicity, never lose your integrity  
For years there's been some prize horses in this stable  
Just two albums in, I'm the realest nigga on this label  
Mr. Black President, yo, Obama for real  
They gotta put your face on the 5000 dollar bill.  
(Jeezy 2008.)

In the first line, Nas is celebrating this historical significance of a black presidential candidate and how this was an important moment to be remembered. This is also a reference to the verse in Nas' track "The World is Yours," where he calls for representation rapping: "I'm out for presidents to represent me (Say what?) / I'm out for presidents to represent me (Say what?) / I'm out for dead presidents to represent me." Continuing into the second and third line, Nas comments on how pre-Obama he

felt that no previous president had helped him or his community, which resulted in him having to help himself by participating in illegitimate commerce, selling drugs. Nas observed people being influenced to participate in illegal activity because of their financial background, only to then become incarcerated, which prevents them from voting: “No president ever did shit for me / Had to hit the streets try to flip some keys / So a nigga wont go broke / Then they put us in jail, now a nigga cant go vote.” This entire verse then continues into a pointed critique of how the lower class is disenfranchised in relation to participating in the political voting process. In the line “She ain’t a politician, honey’s a pole-tician” Nas uses “politician” as a double entendre, making a symbolic reference to strippers who perform pole dancing. In the last remaining lines of his verse, Nas begins to direct his lyrics at Barack Obama, relating to the candidate, warning him to beware of the fame “When thousands of people is riled up to see you / That can arouse ya ego ... Gotta stay true to who you are and where you came from / ‘Cause at the top will be the same place you hang from / No matter how big you can ever be / For whatever fee or publicity, never lose your integrity.” In the last line, Nas summarizes his statement celebrating Obama’s accomplishment, recommending that Obama should be featured on the \$5,000 bill. Later on, this song was remixed by several artists, including Jay-Z, who championed Obama saying:

My President is black, in fact he's half-white  
So even in a racist mind he's half right  
If you have racist mind you'll be a'ight  
My president is black, but his house is all white  
Rosa Parks sat so Martin Luther could walk  
Martin Luther walked so Barack Obama could run  
Barack Obama ran so all the children could fly.  
(Jay-Z 2009.)

Jay-z’s verse of the remix was released on January 20, 2009, the day when President Obama was inaugurated; it was called the “DC Mix”. The first line of this song points out that Barack Obama is biracial and how this presents a dilemma for racist individuals. Jay-Z then makes several historical references to civil rights leaders showing the progression of black America and its potential. By men-

tioning Obama alongside these individuals, Jay-Z communicated the historical significance of the election. This also made Obama a symbol of civil rights progression and how much positive change had taken place. In this song, the artist samples and uses Obama’s actual voice saying “yes we can” and “change the world”. Both of these phrases were frequently used in Obama’s political campaign and a uniting message to his audience. Several other songs, including songs by Jay-Z, mentioned Obama. In “Jockin’ Jay-Z”, which ranked at number 18 on the Hot Rap chart, Jay-z wrote: “I rock with Obama, but I ain’t no politician”. This entire song is a bragging about being on top and having it all, even in the middle of a recession it was a celebration of wealth and prosperity. The reference made to Obama showed the politician’s cool factor, because he was endorsed by Jay-Z, even though the rapper was not a part of the political elite. In 2010, rapper Kanye and President Obama had a negative exchange due to some off-the-record comments made by the president. As a result, Kanye mentions Obama in his song “Power”, which charted the Billboard Hot 100 at position 22: “They say I was the abomination of Obama’s nation / Well that’s a pretty bad way to start the conversation / At the end of the day, god damn it I’m killing this shit”. From these songs, we do not see a shift to outright hatred of Obama, but rather a greater willingness to critique some of his negative aspects through the music. Rap lyrics became a more honest dialog about the politician, rather than an embellished relationship.

In conclusion, out of the five rap songs about Barack Obama that were ranked on Billboard top-50 lists during his first candidacy and political campaign, I found 60% to be positive and 30% to be neutral. While the negative comments (10%) were indirect, the neutral lyrics start appearing after being elected to the office around 2010. There are other, negative rap songs about Barack Obama, but they never ranked on any Billboard top-50 lists. One example is the song “Nocturnal Rainbows” by rapper Hopsin. This song ranked at 76 on the Billboard charts, featuring lyrics being extremely critical of Barack Obama:

Obama's president, so? What's he represent?  
Just because the nigga's half black  
don't mean he's Heaven-sent  
You're clueless to evidence and all the minds  
he's messin' with  
His charm and smile hasn't got my ass up out this debt for shit  
Frontin' like he's truly Jesus  
And all you fools believe it.  
(Hopsin 2010.)

But, overall Barack Obama was a symbol of hope to the hip-hop community, and because of his historical and symbolic nature people were less critical of him. Also, because of his close relationship with the hip-hop community, people were more likely to give him the benefit of the doubt.

### ***Donald Trump and Rap***

Through searching for rap songs ranked on the Top 50 Billboard Songs charts, I narrowed my focus to conduct an in-depth lyrical analysis on three songs containing references of Donald Trump before his candidacy and an additional two songs making political references, for a total of five songs. Before his political campaign, when he was still considered 'just' a businessman and billionaire, rap songs esteemed his lifestyle. After he became a politician, the rap community opposed Donald Trump's actions. In 2000, the song "Country Grammar (Hot Shit)" by Nelly topped the R&B / Hip-Hop Songs chart at number 5. The lyrics in this song show aspirations to be like Donald Trump and have money: "From broke to having brokers: my price-range is Rover Now / I'm knocking like Jehovah; let me in now, let me in now / Bill Gates, Donald Trump, let me in now / Spin now, I got money to lend my friends now" (Nelly 2000). The beginning, "From broke to having brokers..." shows the progression of Nelly going from a low-income household to generating his own personal wealth. In this section, he brags about being able to afford and manage brokers. Nelly then progresses to comparing himself to high profile wealthy men such as Bill Gates and Donald Trump. Nelly's lyrics highlight these men as status symbols of money, fame, and being in the elite class. This aspiration and glorification of Donald Trump occurred during his time as a businessman.

Name-dropping is the practice of referring frequently to famous or fashionable people, as though they were intimate friends, in order to impress others. Name-dropping Donald Trump and other celebrities in rap songs is a trend that has continued over a decade. "So Appalled" is a song by American hip hop recording artist Kanye West from his fifth studio album, *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy* (2010). "So Appalled" charted on the Billboard Bubbling Under R&B / Hip-Hop Singles chart at number 18. In this song, West uses a metaphor to compare his ability to "ball" off-court to that of billionaire Donald Trump's wealth and business acumen: "I'm so appalled, Spalding ball / Balding Donald Trump taking dollars from y'all" (West 2010). While this is not a direct praise of Donald Trump, it is acknowledging and validating his money as a positive factor. In 2011, a rap song by Mac Miller titled "Donald Trump" reached the 18th spot on the Billboard charts. This song featured lyrics praising Donald Trump "Take over the world when I'm on my Donald Trump shit / Look at all this money, ain't that some shit", glorifying his wealth and power (Miller 2015).

Rae Sremmurd is an American hip hop duo, originating from Tupelo, Mississippi, and formed by two brothers, Slim Jxmmi and Swae Lee. Rae Sremmurd released a song called "Up like Trump" in December of 2014, a couple of months before Trump announced his candidacy. Featuring lyrics that applaud Donald Trump and his persona, "Up like Donald Trump, chain swings like nunchucks", this song charted on the Hot R&B / Hip-Hop Songs list at number 42 for a couple of weeks (2015). Overall, a lyrical analysis shows the consistent commemoration and adoration of the lifestyle, glamor and pompous of Donald Trump. When Trump was a civilian, he was admired. The image or assumption that people always hated or criticized Trump is a false narrative. Rap music reflects that the black community did not always feel negatively towards Donald Trump. Contrary to popular belief, many black people may have wanted to be like him.

After announcing his presidential candidacy in June 2015, Donald Trump began the transition from civilian to a politician. When stepping into a more public space, political candidates give permis-

sion for others to comment on their actions, decisions, and beliefs. The public and press will analyze and scrutinize the actions of candidates to determine if the person is worthy or capable to handle the responsibility of the office. Rap songs are one of the ways to judge or poll the black community's sentiments regarding popular political candidates.

According to *XXL Magazine's* website, rappers have changed their tune when it comes to mentioning Trump in their songs:

It wasn't so long ago that rappers were enamored with Trump, or at least what he stood for. His wealth alone was enough to attract the admiration of rappers, who gloated about apartments at Trump Tower they'd only slept in once. To be affiliated with Trump or his properties was to include oneself in the elite class of citizens with enough money to do so. His politics had not yet come to the surface in the 1990s and 2000s, but once he started denouncing Latinos and Muslims, rappers began jumping ship at record speed. (Xxlstaff 2016.)

Deena Zaru (2016) found that between 1989 and 2016, Trump was mentioned at least 318 times in rap lyrics. Between 2015 and 2016, 83 songs have mentioned Trump; most of the mentions have been negative. According to an article on rap lyrics, analysis of all rap songs listed on Genius.com, including but not limited to the top-50 Billboard charting songs they found that negative mentions of Donald Trump were rare compared to previous years: "Before 2015, Trump had received only eight negative references in total; over the last year and a half, however, that number has quadrupled, to 34" (McCann 2016). After Donald Trump began proclaiming his campaign issues, rap artists had strong negative reactions. Jayceon Terrell Taylor, better known by his stage name "The Game" (or simply "Game"), is an American rapper in the West Coast hip-hop scene. The Game, featuring Skrillex, released a song titled "El Chapo" (2015), which was featured on R&B / Hip-Hop Digital Song Sales Billboard chart. These lyrics portray an analogy of Donald Trump's death: "This is doomsday, I can have Guadalupe / Come through and knock Donald Trump out his toupee / Now look at his brains all on the sidewalk / And tuck the .38 and jump on my skywalker" (Game 2015). This aggressive imagery

came after Trump had made several offensive comments and stances against minority communities. Other artists have similar imagery. Keenon Jackson, better known by his stage name YG, is an American rapper and actor from Compton, California. In YG's song with the title acronym "FDT", which stands for "Fuck Donald Trump", YG raps about how he does not like Donald Trump, with the chorus chanting "Fuck Donald Trump": "I like white folks, but I don't like you (Donald Trump) / All the niggas in the hood wanna fight you / Surprised El Chapo ain't tried to snipe you / Surprised the Nation of Islam ain't tried to find you" (YG 2016).

The Donald Trump narrative in rap songs has transitioned from extreme adoration and imitation to expletive-filled rhymes that often feature violent acts happening to him. These descriptions of Trump were reflections of his own actions, shifting from being a prideful businessman into a toxic politician.

### **Conclusion**

It has become a more frequent occurrence of rap artist to engage in political dialog, but many still ask where rap is going in the future. How much of an influence does rap have on politics and vice versa? Common, a rapper from Chicago, attempts to answer this question, stating a positive outlook on the future of hip-hop culture: "I think hip-hop artists will have no choice but to talk about different things and more positive things, and try to bring a brighter side to that [hip-hop] because, even before Barack, I think people had been tired of hearing the same thing." (quoted in McLaughlin 2008.)

In conclusion, it is yet to be seen how rap will continue to evolve, as the political landscape continues to change. My qualitative lyrical research of the most influential rap songs mentioning both presidential candidates provides an understanding of why rappers and the hip-hop community changed how they felt and responded to the candidates. This qualitative research is an addition to support the quantitative data previously accumulated by LyricalFind.com, Cnn.com, Billboard.com, and theFivethirtyeight.com, which gathered all lyrical data with mentions of Barack Obama and Donald

Trump in songs of every genre. I can conclude that while both candidates started out with extremely positive reactions to their popularity, a shift occurs when they enter and stay in the political arena. Because of the artists' influence, being on the top 50 Billboard charts, one can infer that these artists represent a popular sentiment amongst the larger hip-hop community.

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## How Kevin Abstract's Lyricism Subverts Homonegativity in Rap Music

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### **Introduction**

Problematic in the musical genre of rap is its stigma against African-American homosexual men. This stigma is indicative of the genre's homonegativity and homophobia, both of which negatively impact the LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Queer) community. Homonegativity, while similar to homophobia, more accurately encompasses a specific prejudice towards homosexuality, as opposed to the fear of it. Although the genre has recently been more inclusive of LGBTQ individuals, it has still lacked any significant African-American male artists who identify with the LGBTQ community. However, with the growing popularity of rapper Kevin Abstract, the status quo of rap may forever be changed. Kevin Abstract (born Clifford Ian Simpson; July 16, 1996) is an African-American male who openly identifies as homosexual. Over the course of 2016 and 2017, Abstract has included overt homopositive themes on many of his artistic projects. Through the analysis of Abstract's lyrics on his most recent projects, the following hypothesis is proposed: Kevin Abstract's inclusion of overt homosexual themes in his lyrics provide rap with a powerfully progressive voice for the LGBTQ community as well as a positive role model for African-American homosexual men. Abstract's lyrics may also have the potential to diminish mental health issues associated with LGBTQ individuals and their self-esteem.

Kevin Abstract, born in Corpus Christi, Texas, is a rapper, singer-songwriter, and director. He has recorded two full-length studio albums: *MTV1987*, released in 2014, and *American Boyfriend: A Suburban Love Story*, released in 2016. Abstract is most notably the creative director and co-founder of the self-titled boyband Brockhampton (stylized as BROCKHAMPTON). Brockhampton, formed in 2015, has collectively released four full-length projects. In the latter half of 2017, Brock-

hampton released three studio albums, entitled *Saturation*, *Saturation II*, and *Saturation III*. Abstract has lyrics in a majority of songs on the *Saturation* trilogy, many of which include homopositive subject matters. Brockhampton's exploration of hardcore rap largely contributes to the significance of these lyrics. Brockhampton works as a cohesive unit to embrace the themes of all its lyricists, including Abstract. With the help of Brockhampton's many members, Abstract is able to express his sexuality without the threat of exclusion. Brockhampton's *Saturation* trilogy will be the focus for analyzing Abstract's lyrics.

### **Contextualization of Homonegativity**

In order to analyze Abstract's lyrics, the history of homonegativity and homophobia in rap must be first taken into account. The terms homonegativity and homophobia may be used interchangeably, as they can both be used to address the same issue of stigmatization towards homosexuals in the genre. Homonegative themes in rap can be traced as far back as the mid-to-late 1980s, especially with the emergence of gangsta and hardcore rap (Norfleet 2015, 364). These themes, expressed in the lyrics of numerous artists in the genre, while not always directly reflecting their community and culture, are nonetheless heavily influenced by it. Looking at the sources of homophobia and negativity in the African-American community can, in turn, explain their musical context. Homonegativity, in this community specifically, is evident prior to, during, and even after the height of gangsta and hardcore rap. Negative attitudes towards homosexuals have developed within African-American communities as the result of a few major factors. These factors include (1) the experience of prosecution based on race by the African-American population, (2) adhering to traditional social norms present in the larger American society, and (3) prominent religious institutions that have developed in the community.

Most influential is the emasculation of African-American men in America by those in power. In fear of losing any power over the African-American population, white men have extensively prosecuted African-American men's masculinity

(Chiu 2005, 25). This was done throughout slavery by tearing families apart, diminishing male leadership, and later in Minstrel shows by portraying African-American men as submissive (Thompson 2014, 135-136 and 170-173). In addition, the use of violence and physical control back then, and by police today, should not be overlooked. As a result of being emasculated, men in the African-American community have made an effort to regain their masculine identities, apparent in the “authentic”, tough, and grandiose themes of hardcore rap (Norfleet 2015, 364). This is an attempt by African-American rap artists to accommodate the comprehensive trauma experienced by their community (Leary 1999). Moreover, many men in the African-American community have consequently adopted “America’s traditional fear and hatred of homosexuality” (Chiu 2005, 25). This fear is especially apparent in hardcore rap, in which artists do not only go to great lengths to affirm their masculinity, but also demonize or disassociate themselves with homosexuals (ibid., 25). African-Americans have also, in response to being separated and invalidated, worked at maintaining a strong commitment to group cohesion.

African-Americans are severely disadvantaged, both economically and educationally (American Psychological Association 2018). In addition to the institutional racism experienced by African-Americans, they are commonly misrepresented in media as criminal and underachieving. In order to overcome such a disadvantage, African-Americans must be careful not to further separate themselves from the norms and values held by the larger American society, including adhering to traditional heterosexual norms. If African-Americans are to deviate from these norms, their already limited opportunity is further diminished. In a society that is also discriminatory towards the LGBTQ community, an African-American homosexual man would be at a double disadvantage. From these issues comes an expectation from the African-American community that its members work together, in hopes that the entire community benefits. Religious institutions are an effective means of creating this group cohesion.

A wide majority of African-Americans prescribe to Protestant Christianity (Sahgal & Smith

2009). With the integration of the Christian religion into the African-American community, and the maintenance of an American status quo, adherence to traditional heterosexual norms become commonplace. Traditional Christian doctrine holds that family is composed of a man and woman “whose sexual union is focused on procreation,” making homosexual relationships taboo (Piumatti 2017, 1962). Accordingly, more African-Americans believe that homosexuality should be discouraged, rather than accepted (Sahgal & Smith 2009). Adherence to this doctrine further promotes group cohesion among the African-American community. Therefore, breaking such norms, inherent in openly identifying as homosexual, may be viewed by the community as egregiously dissociative. Further deviation from what are viewed as beneficial norms can also be considered an inhibition of opportunity for the entire community. The consequence of African-American men making their homosexuality known in an unaccepting environment can, therefore, lead to prejudice, isolation from cohorts, and especially internalized homonegativity among homosexual individuals (Smallwood, Spencer, Ingram, Thrasher, & Thompson-Robinson 2016). Internalized homonegativity, defined as the adoption of negative attitudes towards one’s own homosexual identity, can diminish self-esteem, produce mental disorders, and lead to suicide (Smallwood, et al. 2016).

The negative attitudes towards homosexuals in the African-American community translate directly to lyrical themes in rap music. They are especially prevalent in gangsta and hardcore rap. From the derogatory use of the term “faggot” to the use of the phrase “no homo”, homonegativity in rap is pervasive (Garcia 2018). Most troubling are lyrics that promote violence and death to homosexual individuals:

Though I can freak, fly, flow, fuck up a faggot  
Don’t understand their ways, I ain’t down with the gays  
 (“Punks Jump Up To Get Beat Down” by Brand Nubian,  
1993)

Pin the hollow point tip on this gay rights activist  
 (“Fly Away” by Goodie MOB, 1998)

It’s rumors of gay emcees,  
just don’t come around with me with it



You still rockin' hickies, don't let me find out he did it  
("Nag Champa [Afrodisiac For the World]" by Common,  
2000)

My words are like a dagger with a jagged edge  
That'll stab you in the head, whether you're a fag or lez  
Or a homosex, hermaph or a trans-a-vest  
Pants or dress, hate fags? The answer's yes  
("Criminal" by Eminem, 2000)

You niggas suck like Tony Romo, no homo  
("Back on My Grizzy" by Lil Wayne, 2007)

I cannot vibe with queers  
("Boss Life" by YFN Lucci ft. Offset, 2018)

Homonegativity in rap most notably promotes, to the genre's audience, prejudiced attitudes towards homosexuals. In addition to the use of homonegative lyrics, African-American homosexual men are largely excluded from the rap genre. Although there are male artists in the genre open about their homosexuality, they do not include obvious homopositive themes in their music, and many are white. The discrimination of homosexuals in rap, along with their lack of representation in the genre, can have a substantial impact on the LGBTQ community. Internalized homonegativity and isolation from heterosexual peers are only a few of the problems that homonegativity in rap may induce.

### ***LGBTQ Marginalization***

As a minority group in America, the LGBTQ community has suffered immensely. The social climate of America has been, and continues to be, largely dominated by heterosexual norms. These norms, perpetuated by state and local governments, allow for the discrimination and prosecution of any person identifying as anything other than heterosexual (Miller 2017). Prejudice against the LGBTQ community is apparent in the U.S. federal government as well. Mike Pence, Vice President of the United States, openly supports anti-LGBTQ organizations and promotes an anti-LGBTQ agenda (Drabold 2016). Pence, in this respect, is merely a symptom of the lasting animosity towards the LGBTQ community. Although acceptance of the LGBTQ community in the U.S. over the past few years has been at an all-time high, the community's past tribulations continue to impact many LGBTQ individuals.

As a consequence of their discrimination, members of the LGBTQ community are adversely affected in multiple ways. Such consequences are materialized in (1) a lack of positive representation in media, (2) exasperated mental health issues, and (3) a higher mortality rate for LGBTQ individuals. Firstly, the media is important for its role in the "political and social empowerment" of minority communities (Messing & Bernáth 2017). Unfortunately, mainstream media continues to either stereotypically portray LGBTQ individuals or exclude them entirely (McInroy & Craig 2017). Stereotypical portrayals of the LGBTQ community are harmful in that they espouse negative associations with the community in heterosexual audiences (Gomillion & Giuliano 2011). Exclusion from the media, as well as one-dimensional representations, can also negatively "impact identity validation," while "potentially increasing isolation and alienation" (McInroy & Craig 2017, 43). Representation subsequently has an influence on LGBTQ individual's ability to identify with role models in the media. Positive role models for the LGBTQ community, while making up for this lack of representation, can reduce societal prejudice and discrimination, as well as "enhance individuals' self-esteem" and psychological health (Gomillion & Giuliano 2011, 336 and 350).

Self-esteem is significant for the LGBTQ community because of the community's abundance of mental health issues. These issues are perpetuated by homonegativity in communities, such as the African-American community, heterosexual norms established by religious institutions, as well as the lack of representation in media. Consequently, identifying as LGBT can predict increased mental health disorders (Sattler, Zeyen, & Christiansen 2017). These mental health disorders present in LGBTQ individuals are a product of their victimization, rejection sensitivity, and internalized negativity (ibid.). Low self-esteem or negative self-identity does nothing but exacerbate such disorders. Furthermore, death as a result of suicide and homicide / violence is "substantially elevated among sexual minorities in high prejudice communities" (Hatzenbuehler, Bellatorre, Lee, Finch, Muennig, & Fiscella 2013, 33). LGBTQ individuals are subject to these tragic consequences, with the U.S. and specif-



ically the African-American community being prejudiced against homosexuality. Homonegative rap, if anything, contributes to these negative outcomes for the LGBTQ community. Important to note is that these factors and issues are more complex than aforementioned; however, a broad understanding of their overall context is sufficient for their application to Kevin Abstract's lyrics.

### *Lyrical Analysis*

At the forefront of his sophomore solo album *American Boyfriend: A Suburban Love Story* (2016) is Kevin Abstract's struggle to embrace a homosexual identity in the face of adversity and unacceptance. Abstract's difficulties are effectively summarized in the song "Papercut". Among the messages he depicts are his inability to identify with heterosexual media, the acceptance of his sexual identity, and ultimately dealing with the social consequences of wanting to be openly homosexual. At the end of Abstract's first verse, he alludes to the concealment of his sexuality from his family:

Can't tell my mother I'm gay  
The hardest part of my day is wishing I was fucking straight.

This is difficult for Abstract, whose mother prescribes to the traditional Mormon belief that men should not be sexually or romantically involved with other men.

Growing up with the pressure to conform to his mother's religious standards is a prime example of internalized homonegativity within Abstract. Internalized homonegativity, common to many African-American homosexual men, results in "suicidal ideation, depression, anxiety, and decreased sexual satisfaction" (Smallwood, et al. 2016, 46). Abstract effectively wishes to escape these mental burdens, unfortunate repercussions of his "abnormal" sexuality. This is further materialized when Abstract voices a desire to change his sexual orientation. He is torn between society's heterosexual expectation of him as an African-American man and his own enthusiasm for the same sex. In only these two lines, Abstract voices a struggle shared by many in the LGBTQ community, a struggle distinctly pervasive among African-American men. Thus, from the vocalization of his own experience, Abstract repre-

sents the aversion faced by LGBTQ community members to conform to traditional gender roles and heterosexual norms.

Fortunately, Abstract is thereafter able to convey the overcoming of adversity with his lyricism on the *Saturation* trilogy. While the major themes on *American Boyfriend: A Suburban Love Story* reflect detriments associated with the adoption of a homosexual identity, the themes on Brockhampton's *Saturation* trilogy are profoundly confident and celebratory of homosexuality. These positive themes are, nevertheless, carefully inclusive of issues dealt with by the LGBTQ community. Abstract moves away from the depressing subject matter surrounding internalized homonegativity, and he instead incorporates into his lyrics themes that positively embrace homosexuality.

Homosexual men are commonly stereotyped as being effeminate. Stereotypes associated with being weak and dependent, in comparison to heterosexuals, are damaging to women that are completely capable of being strong and independent, and specifically to homosexual men who do not all exhibit the same characteristics (Lipp 2017). Homosexual stereotyping is likely to induce anti-homosexual attitudes among those who hold to gender-oriented traditions. Abstract's lyrics defy stereotypes across the entirety of the *Saturation* trilogy. Abstract does just this, with his verse on the song "STAR":

Standing on my two legs  
Fuck what that nigga done said

Abstract clearly states that he is fully capable of supporting himself, regardless of whether or not he identifies as homosexual and subsequently dismisses any verbal attack he might receive related to his sexuality. Much stronger examples of Abstract defying stereotypes are found in numerous other lyrics, many of which do not involve obvious homosexual themes:

Keep a gold chain on my neck  
Fly as jet, boy, better treat me with respect  
("GOLD", 2017)

Yippy yay, yippy yay, hit me on my cellu' phone  
Yippy yay, yippy yay, I'll be right back with the dope  
("FAKE", 2017)

Ridin on the roof with a dollar sign  
Attached to my head...  
("RENTAL", 2017)

Hi, I live a wonderful life  
Should've died twice, wonder who on my side  
("JELLO", 2017)

Ain't no stoppin' me tonight  
I'ma get all the things I like.  
("BOOGIE", 2017)

Ghetto in here flash it, ooh, them boys stay nasty  
Floating like Aladdin, them the ones you talking to  
("ZIPPER", 2017)

In these lyrics, Abstract communicates an ability to assume a masculine identity, regardless of who he is sexually attracted to. The lyrics are coherent with the opulent, braggadocious, tough themes present in rap & hip-hop, and outstandingly in hardcore rap. Abstract removes any notion that sexual orientation is the entirety of his character, while also proving that homosexuality can be associated with prosperity, strength, and masculinity. In defying stereotypes, Abstract provides the LGBTQ community with a uniquely progressive voice.

At the start of his verse on "STAR", Abstract first refers to Heath Ledger's role in the film *Brokeback Mountain* (2005):

Heath Ledger with some dreads  
I just gave my nigga head

Ledger plays a stereotypical Cowboy who, over the course of the film, develops a sexual and emotional relationship with another man. This reference is suggestive of Ledger's character Ennis Del Mar, who struggles to balance his new-found homosexual feelings against maintaining a masculine identity. This is coupled with the character's expectation by his culture that he conforms to traditionally heterosexual roles, including marrying a woman and raising a family. After referencing Ledger, Abstract flaunts his own sexuality. When taking into consideration Abstract's themes of confidence and boastfulness, it can be deduced from these lyrics an affirmation that his homosexuality does not determine his masculinity. In *Brokeback Mountain*, Ledger's character believes the opposite, evident in attempts

to regain his perceived loss of masculinity throughout the film. Heath Ledger, after starring in *Brokeback Mountain*, however, espoused the role and did not let the vulnerability he showed in it detract from his disposition. Abstract strives to prove the same character in himself through this reference to Ledger. While Abstract embraces homosexuality as a large part of his identity, he does not allow it to define him.

Abstract's homopositive themes are made more effective when assessed alongside the lyrics of other Brockhampton members. Lyrics from Brockhampton's other members are inclusive of traditional heterosexual rap themes, ranging from the objectification of women to excessive violence. However, Brockhampton's lyrics as a whole are more often representative of the bands overarching themes of self-acceptance and the struggle of conforming to societal pressures:

I love to watch 'em squirm, I love when bitches bleed  
If she's sucking on the barrel, you can't hear her scream  
So kiss the fucking carpet, this aggravated larson  
("HEAT", 2017)

Cash don't last, my friends will ride with me  
("GUMMY", 2017)

Hella drugs and ammo, kicking doors my mo...  
("2PAC", 2017)

We turn weird shit into a commodity  
("FAKE", 2017)

Today, I'ma be whoever I wanna be  
It's a boy fantasy, it's a girl fantasy  
This is our fantasy, baby boy, boy, boy  
("TRIP", 2017)

I gotta get better at being me  
(Being who I am)  
("MILK", 2017)

I was playing rock paper scissors with imaginary friends  
Imagine having no friends  
("LIQUID", 2017)

I'm black and smart and sexy, universally appealing  
("QUEER", 2017)

My niggas takin' over  
BROCKHAMPTON, call your momma  
("BOOGIE", 2017)

While Brockhampton's aggressive lyrics do not positively contribute to their audience, they instead inadvertently reinforce Abstract's position as a profound rapper. Ameer Vann's lyrics, for example, though they may be insensitive, provide a stark contrast to Abstract. This contrast is important in solidifying Abstract's ability to rap about homosexuality in gangsta or hardcore rap. Vann's lyrics also contribute greatly to Brockhampton's exploration of hardcore rap, which is categorized by the band's aggressive, gang-related themes, and some of their music's darker, heavier tones. Abstract's inclusion of these musical and thematic elements further reinforce his defiance of stereotypes and promotion of homosexuality. Abstract is also lyrically supported by such members as Bearface, who incorporates homosexual themes into his lyricism, as opposed to heterosexuality or violence:

You know, you know, you know, oh-oh  
You know that you should be boy  
("SUMMER", 2017)

Brockhampton's support allows Abstract to explore deeper issues stemming from the social stigma of homosexuality.

On the song "JUNKY", Abstract concludes what is probably one of his most vulnerable verses in the Brockhampton discography with a powerful statement on the social climate surrounding homosexuality:

Where I come from, niggas get called 'faggot' and killed  
So I'ma get head from a nigga right here  
And they can come cut my hand off and, and my legs off and  
And I'ma still be a boss till my head gone, yeah  
("JUNKY", 2017)

The term "Faggot" is used very sparingly in Abstract's lyrics, particularly with its derogatory context in mind. This is precisely how Abstract uses the term when referencing his time spent in Texas, a state with a history of discrimination against the LGBTQ community. Abstract could also have the African-American community in mind, a community that is recognizably homonegative. While there are communities in America moving towards an increasingly progressive stance on homosexuality, a negative attitude towards homosexuality remains

rooted in American traditions and is apparent in politics and religion. The issue is troubling on a broader scale as well, as countries like Russia are still prosecuting and even murdering men, based solely on their sexual orientation.

Despite his assertion that there is very much a hostile environment for homosexuals in his community, Abstract in his usual manner provokingly flaunts his homosexuality. Abstract then addresses the repercussions he may face for doing so. What makes these specific lyrics so powerful is Abstract's recognition of these repercussions and his blatant disregard for them. Being proud of his sexuality, he is not afraid to stand up against those who are ignorant, bigoted, and/or prejudiced. Everything that allows Abstract to physically express his sexuality could be torn away from him, but until his head is gone, he will continue to demonstrate commitment to his identity. Abstract strongly conveys this position when he says that even after suffering such violent ramifications, he will remain more respected than those who condemn his homosexual identity. Only when Abstract loses his "head" will he no longer be able to voice his resistance to homonegativity. The removal of Abstract's head could also be an allusion to the lobotomies and electroshock therapy that homosexuals were subjected to in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century (Mixner 2010). If Abstract had been living during that time, his sexual identity would have literally been stripped away from him. These consequences Abstract details in his lyrics are not, however, exclusive to literal interpretation.

In expressing his sexual orientation so openly, Abstract more realistically expects to receive a vocal response from both audiences and critics of his music, an expectation not foreign to other verses of his. Abstract's lyrics are thus symbolic of him being picked apart piece by piece because of his homosexuality. The hyperbole Abstract uses of his head being removed is allusive of him only needing his voice, in conjunction with his lyrical outlet, to assume control of his identity. No matter how anyone criticizes him, he will always have the power to either fight back or hold his ground through his music. Abstract's tonal shift may also be indicative of his attitude towards facing adversity. While Abstract begins his verse with intensity and confi-

dence, he concludes it almost scornfully and dismissive. This shift communicates to his audience that (1) negative attitudes towards homosexuality being normalized is not acceptable, and (2) aggression or violence in response to homophobia is not the solution. Abstract's casual response to being subjugated reflects how he views those that disregard the inhumanity experienced by the LGBTQ community. Abstract discloses his sexual identity proudly in spite of great adversity. In these lyrics, his solution to homonegativity in rap, as well as in culture, is to establish a voice and platform for those who lack representation.

Earlier on his "JUNKY" verse, Abstract straightforwardly addresses this issue of LGBTQ representation:

"Why you always rap about bein gay?"  
'Cause not enough niggas rap and be gay  
(“JUNKY”, 2017)

Abstract's first line mocks those who question the homosexual content of his lyrics. In doing so, Abstract demonstrates the awareness that his lyrics are truly an oddity in the rap genre. This is further addressed in Abstract's response to the question, exemplified in the proceeding line. In his response that rap is not representative enough of the homosexual community, Abstract concurrently justifies his own homosexual identity as an African-American rapper, with his meticulous use of the word "nigga." While the use of "nigga" could be taken to mean a male rapper of any ethnicity, Abstract is most likely referencing African-American rappers. When taken into context with the themes present in Abstract's solo albums, this is made increasingly apparent. Abstract deliberately differentiates between the African-American and LGBTQ community in his lyrics.

They love gays, but they hate niggas  
(“Miserable America”, 2016)

This is important for Abstract, who is a double minority. He is conscious of struggles in both communities, and of how a double minority status compounds such struggles as well. As a result, Abstract is inclusive of this status in his lyrics. In other lyrics,

Abstract is much more obvious in labeling his sexual identity.

In what is one of his most deliberately self-descriptive lyrics, Abstract fully embraces his identity as a homosexual male in the song "STUPID". Abstract does this using the term "faggot", simultaneously allowing him to take power away from the word:

I'm a faggot, I say it, I scream that shit like I mean it  
(“STUPID”, 2017)

On the surface of these lyrics, Abstract simply calls attention to his self-identity. Unlike in previous lyrics in which Abstract merely alludes to his sexuality, here he communicates it directly. In using "faggot" to do this, Abstract effectively signifies his overcoming of any negative association with homosexuality, and the struggle of embracing his identity in a community that has not accepted him. By using the term "faggot" himself, Abstract is superseding the derogatory context it is commonly used in. Abstract redefines "faggot" to be representative of many of the qualities he expresses on the *Saturation* trilogy: confidence, success, masculinity, and toughness, among other qualities that do not share a negative connotation.

### ***Kevin Abstract's Artistic Image***

Outside of his lyrics, Abstract has more recently embraced the term "faggot" in Brockhampton's 2018 performance at the Coachella music festival. The performing members of the group wore matching outfits, all of which included a bulletproof vest. On each member's vest was a label corresponding with a defining characteristic of theirs. Abstract appropriately brandished "faggot" across his vest. Similar to his lyrics, this is an attempt by Abstract to take power away from the term. Abstract's embrace of the term is made more powerful through the symbolism of donning a bulletproof vest. The vest signifies Abstract's impenetrability to the criticism of his sexuality. Adopting "faggot" as his own allows Abstract to defend himself against the term's derogatory nature. Instead of letting the term denigrate his identity, Abstract uses it himself to embrace homosexuality, including the discrimination that comes with it. Abstract's message is reinforced

by his fellow Brockhampton members, who similarly brandish commonly used obscenities, such as the term “nigger”.

Abstract, with the help of Brockhampton, works progressive themes into the creative design of his band as well. The song “QUEER” is an adequate example of this. While the title of the track would suggest homosexual subject matters in the lyrics, especially from Abstract, there is purposely none. The lyrics instead are distinctly heterosexual, or indicative of stereotypical themes found in other rap artists music:

Gimme thirty seconds and I'll make off with a billion

...  
Pretty women always pullin' at my waistband  
Used to get arrested, all I get is checks now  
 (“QUEER”, 2017)

Equivalent to Abstract's redefining of the term “faggot,” using “queer” as a title for this particular song gives an alternate perspective to the term. Although “queer” has been positively adopted by the LGBTQ community, Brockhampton makes an effort to further disassociate the term with its derogative history by giving it a non-homosexual connotation and applying it to the band's unique quirkiness instead. In addition, Brockhampton breaks the heteronormativity of rap in their music videos. In both the music videos for “STAR” and “JUNKY”, members of Brockhampton are seen wearing dresses. In the music video for the song “FACE”, members are choreographed laying down with each other, their shirts off. This serves as a symbol of inclusion for Brockhampton, as their members all range from straight, to bisexual, to homosexual. This is ultimately the overarching theme for Kevin Abstract and Brockhampton as whole; the embracement of one's identity in the face of adversity and the inclusion of homosexuality and taboo subjects into pop culture.

### Conclusion

Through the analysis of Kevin Abstract's lyrics, it is apparent that he has made a concerted effort to subvert homonegativity in rap music. By incorporating homopositive themes into his lyrics and voicing his own difficulties with self-acceptance, Abstract puts

himself in a position to be a positive role model for African-American homosexual men who share his experience. This specifically may have a positive impact on those individuals' self-identity, in addition to alleviating the symptoms of internalized homonegativity. Abstract also plays the part of positively representing the LGBTQ community in rap. In doing so, Abstract may aid the positive development of self-identity for LGBTQ youth, or any member of the LGBTQ community who struggles with low self-esteem. Lastly, by defying stereotypes, Abstract gives LGBTQ individuals a more diverse and full personality. In a culmination of the above factors, Abstract also promotes a positive representation of homosexuals for a heterosexual audience. In conclusion, Kevin Abstract's homopositive lyrics provide rap with a powerfully progressive voice for the LGBTQ community, which effectively subverts homonegativity in the genre.

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## **Ball Culture in New York City from 1986 to 1988 and its Roots in African Movement**

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### ***Abstract***

The ball culture of song and dance peaked in the late 1980s in New York City and culminated in extravagant balls or competitions, in which the Queer People of Color community would unite to celebrate, compete and unite in the dance style of voguing. This research explores the dance movement style of vogue through its roots in Early African Dance via an analysis of video recordings from the late 1980s and a thorough analysis of the specific styles of the drag families Labeija, Ninja, Xtravaganza, and Pendavis (Livingston, et al. 1992 and Edgar 2011) and comparing vogue to written accounts of the early amalgamations of African-American dance of the early 1700s. Research already exists in the first-hand accounts and analysis of these styles of dance individually. My contribution is a cross-analytical framework to draw comparisons between Early African American Dance and Vogue Dance. The majority of Vogue dance is not overtly sexual, but often times those on the outside of the queer community view the dance style as sexual because of the buttocks-bouncing and sultry movement used in the style, much like how African-American dance in the colonial period was used to sexualize women of color. This altered narrative promoted the continuance of oppression of these marginalized groups. This paper provides background on both styles of dance and flow into an analytical comparison of the similarities in style and the roots aspects of vogue that originated in early African American Dance.

### ***Vogue Dance: The Definition***

“Vogue is a highly stylized modern house dance originating in the late 1980s that evolved out of Harlem’s Ballroom Scene of the 1960s.” (Regnault and Baker 2011, 1)

### ***The Inception***

Vogue dance came at a very pivotal point in queer history. For many years, the gay liberation front,

much like the hippie movement of the 1960s was focused on liberation in general for the community. This meant liberation in equal rights, but also in equal acceptance of a diversity of sexualities. (GLF Manifesto.) While this did increase visibility, the Gay Liberation Front was a major cause to the coming epidemic of AIDS that would affect the Queer community through the 1980s and beyond. While the queer community before, during, and after the 1980s preached values of self-love and unapologetic, unique identity, during the AIDS crisis, queer people often had to hide their identity or else they would face discrimination like being fired from their jobs or being kicked out of the place of inhabitation. Even worse, a queer identity also put individuals at a high risk for hate crime victimization that could include anything from defamation of property to murder and assault. (Herek and Capitanio 1992.)

All this to say, the 1980s was not an easy time to be a queer person. If individuals were not infected with this deadly disease, these individuals would face life-altering consequences because of their identity for the rest of their lives. For gay people in a time of disaster, many gave up and fell into solitude and despair, but many chose to fight back the only way some knew how: by looking fabulous and dancing with their community.

### ***The Ball Scene of the Early 1960s***

A Ball is a show of sorts that originates in the Ballroom culture developed in Harlem’s Queer scene in the early 1960s. This underground and counter culture movement is characterized by gatherings, Balls, where the queer community, mainly people of color, transgender people and individuals from a low socio-economic class, would come together to compete for trophies and community recognition. This competition would include drag performances, passing for a separate gender or class, struts, and dance battles. (Regnault and Baker 2011, 45.)

During the 1960s, many queer people tried without success to gather peacefully in their own communities at places like bars and other community hangouts, but this was often disrupted by the police. At this time, police would come and raid bars



and arrest LGBTQ people for doing nothing other than hanging out on a Saturday night. (Thomas 2011.) This was one major contributing factor to the prevalence of Ball Culture that would eventually culminate in the creation of vogue dance.

The other main contributor to the prevalence of Ball Culture in the queer community was the continued ostracism, discrimination and oppression that queer people, especially queer people of color, faced at the hands of a white-male-dominated world. One of the main aspects of Ball culture is the many aspects of drag performance that has nothing to do with crossing the gender spectrum, but rather is focused on impersonating a job or persona one may never have, like that of a military officer, a college student, or a fashion model. (Livingston, et al. 1992.) The Ball then became of a place of fantasy and performance combined into one, as queer people came together to push the boundaries of fashion, drag and art.

### *Vogue Dance*

#### *The "Alleged" Creator*

Vogue itself and the name that was coined thereafter came from one of the original queens of the ballroom scene, Paris Dupree (Regnault and Baker, 87). A house in drag culture was a family of sorts, with mothers, fathers, daughters and the likes. A house would be founded by a Drag performer who had been exemplary in her performance or showmanship, so that she would become an original of sorts and thus bring others into her family by teaching them how to perform or just helping them get their names out.

As for Dupree, she founded one of the first houses of drag culture. In the fable of the creation of Vogue, Dupree apparently was looking at a copy of the titular magazine and was copying the poses of the super models in the issue. While she was doing this, some black gay men started to throw some shade at her. To throw shade in queer culture is the equivalent of dissing someone or calling them out in front of their peers. Throwing shade can be playful, but often times ends up coming across like a back-handed compliment. To retaliate, these queer men responded by copying her dance moves, and it became a battle of poses and dancing. Due to the hard

hits of the pop music of the time, her poses came with very specific hits. (Ragnault and Baker, 76.)

While Dupree was the first queen to bring Vogue to the ballroom scene as an actual category that people competed in, Vogue Dancing has roots in African American Culture that go back to the early 1700s, which we will explore later in this paper. Dupree can really be crowned as the queen that brought this type of dance to the forefront of the Ball Scene.

#### *The Poses*

The first aspect of vogue dance that needs to be broken down is that of the intense and repetitious poses that are very easily spotted in the style. The pose aspect of vogue is incorporated through all the other parts of this dance. The most prevalent aspect of Vogue dance is Madonna's vogue hands and short staccato poses from her music video. While this is an integral part of the posing in vogue, the poses go from the floor to the face and back around the whole body. The pose comes from a look of waiting for your photo to be taken or as to let the audience take in an individual's look and body in space. Poses can be sourced in their ideal back to ancient Egypt hieroglyphs. They also imitate ancient Roman and Greek statues in their stature and elongated body positions. (Reed & Simpson 1989, 20.)

#### *Catwalk*

Catwalk is the foundation of the dance, because, even while frozen in a pose as described above, the essence of catwalk is still present. The basic catwalk is a small and sassy step that can travel or stay under one's self. While the dancer steps, they stay on their toes and twist their hips in the direction of the foot they step to. The catwalk can even be done on the ground during the floor work aspect of vogue. This part of vogue in a similar manner to the poses comes from copying super models literally strutting on the catwalk. As this move is meant to advance, it can be the most formidable in a dance setting situation for the vogue.



### *Duckwalk*

The duckwalk is a famous move from vogue that resembles a Russian foot step. In the duckwalk, the dancer drops all the way down to a low squat. While down, the dancers bounce and can kick their legs, throw their arms, and continue to catwalk. This aspect of vogue is likely the most challenging of any vogue move because of the amount of leg strength it takes to hold oneself up while so close to the ground. It is because of this athleticism that the duckwalk is one of the most impressive tricks a vogue dancer can perform.

### *Spins*

Most dancers spin in some form in their specific style, but what is special about the spins in vogue dance is the rapidity that the spins are executed. Usually when dancers turn, they spot or hold their focus on one specific point, as to keep from becoming dizzy. When vogue dancers spin, they often just throw their head around, along with their chest and torso, in what looks like an out-of-control manner. This “crazy” spin tactic is actually another integral part of the athleticism of vogue dance, because the great vogue dancers still have control as they spin and often times will use a spin to get into another trick or a catwalk.

### *Hands*

The hands are a major part of posing, as vogue is characterized by odd hand shapes to frame the body and the face. The hands in these poses are often held like a blade, creating a singular surface as to benefit the generally angular nature of the rest of the vogue style. The other main way in which hands affect vogue is the flipping and turning of the hands as one dips, or catwalks around. In this use of hands, the hands become almost a whirlwind as they twist and turn around the body. During the duckwalk, the hand will often either toss off or toss on in a repetitive manner from the body or to the body.

### *Dips*

In this part of the vogue dance, we experience the infamous “death drop”. Dips are any move that takes the dancer to the floor. The usual dip consists

of the dancers coming to their knees and kicking up their other leg. While this can be done very gently, in modern vogue, the “death drop” has become very prevalent. The death drop is a dip that is preceded by a high kick that leads to dancers falling to the floor in what looks like a manner of them fainting or “dying”. The dip will often be a great transition move out of a duck walk or into more floorwork, as the dancer often cannot just pop back up in a moment.

### *Floorwork*

In floor work, the dancers in the vogue style metaphorically destroy the floor. Floorwork incorporates all other aspects of vogue and amplifies it as the dancers throw themselves across the floor and *slays*. To “slay” in gay culture is a term that is used to describe someone who is doing an incredible job at their art form or just as a term of endearment or encouragement. Floorwork also incorporates hands, as the dancers can use the hands to frame their body from the floor. Spins are often used in floor work to show the dancer’s technique and ferocity in their spins. This can be achieved at much greater lengths while on the floor.

### *The Major Queens*

The style of vogue has been greatly influenced by a handful of monumental drag queens who have changed the Ball scene.

First, LaBeija: The real mother of the house, she brings in young folk and helps to raise them in the streets. LaBeija is the most influential of any of them and has been around for over 40 years. She brought a new kind of sass and strut to the vogue and moved the style in a distinct way towards more model-like movement.

Next, Ninja: Known as the godfather of vogue. Willy Ninja was one of the most unique in his take on the vogue style. Ninja’s choreography would often push the limits of speed and precision in vogue dance. His house continues to hit hard to this day. They hit their poses to the beat of the music fast and were one of the first houses to add acrobatics and tricks to the vogue style. Ninja is also hugely influential in his combination of modern hip hop techniques into vogue.

Finally, Xtravaganza: the most fem, or feminine presenting of any historical drag house that still survives today. The house of Xtravaganza created more of a feminine appeal to voguing and integrated much of the style of the Madonna or more pop culture vogue. (Livingston, et al. 1992.)

### ***Madonna and Vogue***

Madonna was majorly important to the vogue movement, as she took the vogue dance movement and brought it to the public eye. With her music video and her live performances, she became a well-known figure in a gay culture by copying the vogue movement and making it a part of her brand. When she took the vogue movement, she took what was a dance that was performed in underground ball performances and made the majority of the American public start imitating Madonna in their dance class. This is integrally tied to the growing cultural acceptance of the queer community. Again, in the late 1980s and 1990s the LGBTQ community was suffering great death and disease because of the AIDS epidemic, and to have an aspect of their culture raised up and celebrated was an important step in the right direction for the acceptance that the queer community revels in today.

### ***Historical Importance***

Vogue was a significant tool for people of color in the queer community. This dance style helped to lift people out of the mindset of poverty and despair. (Schaefer 2015, 7.) The power in vogue came from the glamour associated with the dance style. This fabulousness was so important, because queer people of color continually were put in positions in which they were told they couldn't excel in what they aimed to achieve and accomplish, whether it be verbal slurs, discrimination or institutional oppression.

Today vogue still exists as a popular form of dance, especially in the queer world, but even beyond. Since Madonna brought the dance to the light of the public, everyone has some knowledge of the dance, even if that knowledge is just an image of the angled hands and a Madonna in her prime. Just the same as the vogue dance itself has become prevalent and popular, so too has queer culture as a

whole. With shows like *Queer Eye* taking one of the number one spots on Netflix and the cult following turned VH1 primetime show of Ru Paul's *Drag Race*, queer culture for better or worse is in the public. (Edgar 2011.)

In a way, this normalizes queer culture in the popular and accepted American culture as to the fact that people who identify as LGBTQ can be seen not as 'other' for the identity, but instead as a welcome part of our community as a whole. This can also be said for vogue dance, since it has become integrally incorporated into modern hip hop dance with its stylized hits and pompous movement. This also aligns with the fact that even queer spaces like gay bars have been invaded by straight people, as they come out for the good company and welcoming community of LGBTQ people. This is vital.

Important in the sense that vogue changed the world for the better and helped empower and unite the queer people of color's community for the better. The beautiful, unique, unnamed and unrecognized humans that could "strut their stuff" and show off their unique movement are also the unspoken queer advocates that have brought the LGBTQ movement to its fruition today with the legalization of marriage equality and the progressive laws that continue to be made in the US to protect people of the queer community.

### ***Ring Shout: The Definition***

"The ring shout as practiced by slaves was a religious activity, with Christianity augmenting the African elements. Participants moved in a circle, providing rhythm by clapping hands and patting feet." (Online Music Encyclopedia)

### ***The Inception***

The ring shout began as an amalgamation of sorts at the beginning of the slave trade in North America. With the slaves being brought into America, all having come from different parts of Africa, they all had their own culture they "brought to the table", as the first hints of African American culture as we know it today was forming. A combination of this amalgamation of cultures and the fact that institutional oppression impeded the study of early African American culture for so long meant that this dance as a form of art and cultural expression had no clear origin. It is believed that a possible origin

could be the African Americans copying the tawaf, the mass procession around the Kaaba that is an essential part of the Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca. Even the word and concept of shout came from the Islamic word 'shawt', which meant a single run. (Amin 2018, 51.)

The first written records of this dance, which weren't the inception, but more so the first-time white people noticed this cultural dance, was around the 1840s. They described the dance as banging their feet on the floor and making drumming with their bodies in a circle. The white observer attributed this to the conversion of the slaves to Christianity. (Thompson 2014, 115.)

### ***The Transatlantic Passage***

The Ring Shout sprouted out of early African American culture, which itself came from the transatlantic slave trade, in which West Africans were enslaved and brought across the Atlantic to be sold in North America. During this time of immense hardship, the Africans from many different cultures faced sickness, mental and physical abuse, and even death. To cope with this hellish reality, these men and women used song and dance to raise their spirits and in a subtle way and inspire a sense of rebellious spirit in their fellows. Even though all of these enslaved people came from different cultures, when they were forced to sing and dance, there was also a forced amalgamation of culture. (Thompson 2014, 63.) This combined song and dance was the beginning of African American culture as we know it today and would thus lead to the Ring Shout and many other cultural phenomena prevalent in our general American culture today.

### ***The Ring Shout Breakdown***

#### ***Rhythmic Clapping***

The clapping in the ring shout was the basis of the rest of the dance. Usually when a ring shout would start, it would begin with a musician playing the banjo or some other hand-crafted instrument. If there was no instrumentalist, the ring shout would be led by a head percussionist doing a louder lead melody percussion bass pattern with a handmade drum or bongo. After the leader begins, the rest of the participants began stomping and clapping in

time. Often, they would use a musical element called syncopation to compliment the bass beat on the normal counts. Clapping and stomping are additionally the main means of travel or movement across the floor in this dance. As the dancers clap and stomp about, they also transport themselves to new positions and special relationships.

#### ***The Shuffle Step***

This step is executed by hopping up and down and hitting the ground twice with the top of one's foot before hopping again on the same foot. This will continue for three repetitions before switching feet and continuing the motion on the other side. While doing this step, the vocals of the dancers would often turn into a yip of sorts that would resound as they hopped each time. This step is most likely one of the most joyful of the vocabulary of movement in this style of dance. This move still exists in the modern-day style of tap, which also has deep roots in African American culture.

#### ***The Cross Step***

This step is very similar to the shuffle step, but it often will bring the dancers together. When they start the cross step together, they will all face the same direction and unify their movement. This step is different from the rest of the style, because for the rest of the ring shout the dancers are often moving in complimentary patterns or using different moves of percussive patterns. This step was the origin for what would eventually become the basis of many American Tap Dance steps. (Amin 2018.)

#### ***Hand Placement***

The dress that the slaves were confined to in this type of movement also greatly affected the style of the dance, specifically for women. While the Ring Shout is very free for the time of cakewalks and the likes, the women still wore very large, heavy skirts. Because of this, often the women dancers would be required to use their hands to hold up their dresses and therefore could not use them for complimentary shapes or balance, as some might in other dance styles.

### *Syncopation*

In this style, the use of syncopation is very prevalent in the dancers' steps. Syncopation is the "deliberate upsetting of the meter or pulse of a composition by means of a temporary shifting of the accent to a weak beat or an off-beat. In other words, it is when a musician plays on rhythmic and metrical expectations such as giving a silence where a stressed note is expected or stressing a normally weak beat." (Funk & Wagnalls 2017.) Usually in the Ring Shout, the syncopation is added on top of the drum beats of the lead percussionist and created a harmonious beat pattern of dancers and percussionist.

### *The Circles*

The dancers also often move in circles in two different ways. For one, they move in a circle as a group, usually in the repeated choruses. In this group circle, they will often do a shuffle step as they travel around. The other circles incorporated into this dance style is that of the self-circle. In this version of the circle, the dancers will circle around themselves and switch directions to circle back around the other way. This part of the style of the Ring Shout often times brings together the spiritual aspect of the Ring Shout and relates it back to the roots in religious ceremonies for African Americans.

### *Call and Response*

The last and maybe most prevalent aspect of the Ring Shout is that of the call and response, which later on became a part of the southern spiritual tradition. This call and response shows up as either the lead percussionist calling out a line of the melody and the participants responding with the same line, or through dance. When call and response is used in dance, one dancer will do a specific step and the rest of the dancers will copy the step in time to the music.

### *Historical Importance*

The Ring Shout was one of the first dance styles to become prominent in African American culture, and as one of the first, it also became an innovation in social change through arts. The Ring Shout was of-

ten done in secret, when slaves would sneak away into the woods to worship on their own outside of the confines of their master's restrictions.

For many slave communities, they used song and dance as a form of communication that an uprising was beginning, and thus their masters often outlawed the slaves from using song and dance. On the other side, some slavers would use song and dance to further push down the soul and spirit of the African American. They would force their slaves to sing and dance for their entertainment or while working as to keep them on task and busy.

Because of these restrictions, the Ring Shout had become a safe haven of expression and rebellion for the African American community. This dance style created a new trend of African Americans using their art like song and dance to create opportunity and social change through ingenuity of creation.

### *The Differences in Style*

#### *The Workman vs. The Model*

The main difference between the two styles is that of how the dancers interact with one another while dancing. As Vogue came from copying models, the dancers often use this style as a method of owning their space and often can come off as intimidating. In gay culture, queer people will often refer to each other as queen in a sense of uplifting others in their community. A queen would also imply a certain aspect of looking down on others around them.

For the Ring Shout, the dancers much more interact with each other in a casual, friendly way. The ring shout is a much more in the ground, having fun and letting-loose-type-of-dance style and therefore when dancing the Ring Shout, the African Americans would lift each other up through spreading joy and worship within their community, rather than through trying to outdo the person next to you like dancers in the vogue style might do.

#### *The Casual vs. The Dressed to a T*

Again, in the vogue style it was much more common for the dancers to show up in a very specific costume for their performance and therefore every aspect of presentation from the dress to the makeup to the hair is done in a specific and put-together

style so that the vogue dancers could win a trophy at the ball competition.

In the Ring Shout, many of the dancers would be coming from their slave work by breaking rules and sneaking out so they had no time to dress up and celebrate. They were also coming from a place of economic oppression. As slaves, all they got from their masters was what was absolutely necessary to survive and therefore they were left with a small arsenal of clothing to dress up in for celebrations and performances.

#### *Creating the Music vs. Embodying the Music*

The final difference between the two styles is where the music would come from. For vogue dancers, they became the physical embodiment of the music, but they had absolutely no part in creating the music. While the music would come from DJs in their community, the dancers would just take that pop music or house remix and make their performance from the recorded track.

For the Ring Shout, recorded music had not yet been invented; therefore the music had to come from the people. Electricity was also not available to the enslaved people and therefore their music had to be created acoustically. To be heard by all those in the vicinity, the amplification then had to come from the dancers' participating in the creation of the percussive beat.

#### *The Similarities in Style*

##### *Dance as a Means of Freedom*

For both of these styles, the people dancing them were oppressed by a system that made every aspect of their life a trial they had to stand without a lawyer. For queer people they were often denied equal opportunity, housing, parental rights, employment, and even kicked out of their family for their sexual orientation or gender identity. For slaves in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, they were denied every aspect of being human, including having agency over themselves, their bodies, their money, and their own free will.

Thus, both of these dance styles were created separately, but from the inception, both had a direct means of fighting their oppressor through uninhibited self-expression. For vogue dance, this

showed up as having a ball and lifting each other up through the competition. For the Ring Shout, this showed up as a stealing away from their oppressor to have their one moment of free worship and uninhibited connection through community. It is impossible to separate these dance style innovations from the social change that followed these dance styles being created, because the art was a means of communication and progression.

##### *Dance as an Accepted Otherness*

Another similarity is that of the dance very specifically being created as a divergence from the popular dance style of the day.

For the Ring Shout, the popular dance was the modern cakewalk of the day, which also came from African American culture. The main difference for them was once the white people appropriated their dance, they had already moved onto their own new version of dance as to keep a separate identity from their white oppressor. Rather than dance in the style of pomp and fanciness that the white people at the time would, they moved in their grounded celebratory manner which would also later be adopted by their white oppressors.

For the vogue dance style this was very similar in that the 1980s was a time of intense and showy jazz, but the queer community moved away from this style to make themselves the queens of their own stories. This showed up as moving with sharp angles and lots of sass. This sass and sharp movement made for a fierce presentation that eventually would come to Madonna and other mainstream artists taking vogue and making it their own.

#### *Conclusion*

These styles have been and still reign important artistic movements for these marginalized communities, and without the uninhibited innovation made in these dances, people from these communities would be nowhere close to where they are today in regard to social change. Dance will continue to be a mode of social change and innovation for oppressed communities moving forward and will definitely pull from styles like the vogue and the Ring Shout in the continuance of history we are experiencing today.

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## **Jazz and Prelude: A Synthesis of Styles in Gershwin's *Three Preludes for Piano***

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### **Chapter 1. Background and Purpose**

#### ***Gershwin and His Preludes***

American composer George Gershwin came of age during the early 1900s, a time in music characterized by experiments with tonality by European composers and the entrance of jazz into the popular realm in the United States. Already known on Broadway and Tin Pan Alley as a competent young show pianist and a hit song writer alongside his brother Ira, Gershwin made his concert hall debut in February of 1924 with *Rhapsody in Blue* for piano and orchestra, a work that seamlessly blended elements of Western art music with tendencies of jazz and popular music and proved to skeptical audiences that jazz had a place in the concert hall; a place previously reserved only for the greats and lofty modernist composers. (Schneider, et al. 2001.)

Dedicated to the craft of composition, Gershwin set out to write a collection of twenty-four preludes in the vein of Bach and Chopin in the early months of 1925 (Wyatt 1989, 72). Although this complete set of preludes, tentatively entitled *The Melting Pot*, was never fully realized, Gershwin premiered five new works for solo piano labeled as preludes in a recital at The Roosevelt Hotel in New York in December of 1926 (ibid., 81). Of the five performed at the 1926 recital, only three were ultimately published in the Spring of 1927, making them the only concert works for solo piano to be published before the composer's untimely death in 1937.

In a 1989 article published in *American Music*, Robert Wyatt reveals that there are seven pieces Gershwin composed in the mid-1920s that can be considered a part of his preludes. Alicia Zizzo, who is considered the authority on the piano works of Gershwin, published an edition in 1996, *The Complete Gershwin Preludes for Piano*, which brings the total number of preludes to eight with the inclu-

sion of a fragment found in a notebook by Gershwin (Zizzo 1995). For the purpose of this research, however, I will focus only on the three original preludes published in 1927 by the World Music Company.

#### ***Purpose and Method***

I was initially intrigued by these preludes because of their lesser-known stature amongst the composer's repertoire. Although a sizeable amount of research has been done on the history of these works, they remain vastly underperformed and unknown when compared to other compositions by Gershwin. The preludes represent a time when the composer was venturing into concert music and proving his worth as a composer of, what could be considered by some, more legitimate music beyond the theater and Tin Pan Alley. Because the preludes are solo pieces, the instrumentation allows for the composer to showcase his style in a succinct manner.

Through a comprehensive analysis of the *Three Preludes for Piano*, I will ascertain how Gershwin approached traditional genres in order to determine the essence of his compositional style. I have chosen to analyze these pieces in a way that is loosely based on the guidelines proposed by Jan LaRue by breaking down the music into the categories of Sound, Harmony, Melody, Rhythm, and Growth and observing how the composer treats these musical elements in large and smaller dimensions. Additionally, this research will examine the techniques of the composer in order to illuminate which features are in line with the prelude genre in specific and which are derived from Gershwin's influence from jazz and related styles.

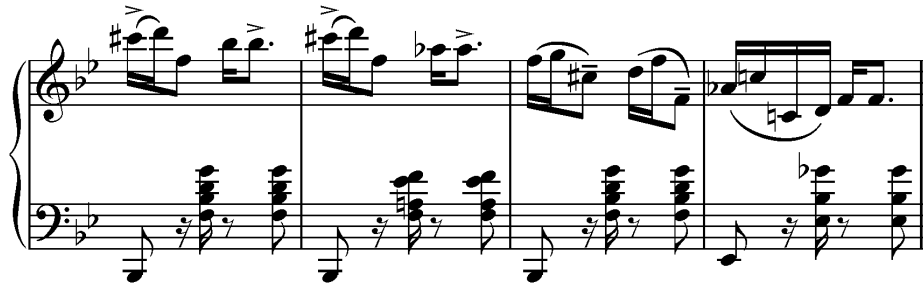
### **Chapter 2. Musical Elements**

#### ***Sound: Large Dimension***

Given the nature of the prelude as a piece for solo piano, it is not surprising that there is virtually no timbral contrast in *Three Preludes*. Gershwin's writing calls for no unusual requirements for the performer that would affect the timbre of the instrument, and the preludes occupy a total range that is large but idiomatic to the piano: F1 – C7. The

three preludes are made up of a linear fabric that is predominately melody plus accompaniment. The left hand generally provides a rhythmic and harmonic foundation, often through the use of chordal

or arpeggiated ostinato-like figures, while the right provides the melodic substance. This overall texture first appears in m. 7 of Prelude I with the first full statement of the ‘a’ motif (see Example 1).



Example 1: Melody Plus Accompaniment in Prelude I, Measures 7-10

**Sound: Middle to Small Dimensions**

Although the melody-plus-accompaniment fabric remains, Gershwin makes effective use of texture change in the B section of Prelude II, when the melody appears in the bass and the right hand assumes the role of accompanist with steady quarter-

note dyads (see Example 2). The effectiveness of this change in texture is further enhanced by its coordination with a modulation to a new key in a joint effort between texture and harmony that contributes to the shape of the piece by illuminating the contrasting nature of the B section.



Example 2: Texture Change in the B section of Prelude II, Measures 31-34

The preludes utilize a dynamic range of *pp* through *ff*, a relatively average degree of contrast that is generally explored by way of gradual changes through the use of crescendos and decrescendos. Gershwin upsets the fairly static dynamic flow in mm. 16-21 of Prelude I with a passage that exhibits

both a high degree and frequency of contrast in a short amount of time (see Example 3). Coupled with active changes in surface rhythm and harmony, these six measures contribute greatly to the movement and growth of the piece.





Example 3: Dynamic Contrast in Prelude I, Measures 16-21

**Harmony: Large Dimension**

Gershwin’s approach to harmony in *Three Preludes* may be considered neo-tonal, with the tonic being clearly reinforced by assertion. In each of the preludes, the tonal center is forcefully emphasized through ostinato patterns that are introduced in the opening four to six measures and remain throughout with slight variations. Although it is not the main harmonic device used in these pieces, clear instances

of dominant to tonic harmony can be observed throughout the preludes.

Although the three preludes in this set were composed separately amongst a group of seven (or eight), the fact that they were originally chosen for publication together, and even performed as a set by the composer himself (Gershwin 1928), makes it a viable endeavor to observe the tonal relationships between them (see Example 4).



Example 4: Beginning and Ending Tonalities

As shown in the example above<sup>1</sup>, the tonal center of B-flat in Prelude I moves by an enharmonic minor third to C-sharp in Prelude II, creating a mediant relationship enharmonically between the two movements. While Prelude II is notated with the apparent key signature of

C-sharp minor, there is a state of major / minor ambiguity that arises from the constant fluctuation between the major and minor mediant scale degree, an inherent feature of the blues harmonic structure on which this prelude is based. With this taken into account, the presence of E sharp (F natural) may be considered a common tone between the tonal centers of B-flat and C-sharp, further strengthening the relationship between the two key centers. Prelude II concludes with a C-sharp dominant chord with an

<sup>1</sup> This is adapted from a similar example and observations in a thesis by Siew Yuan Ong (Ong 2005, 81).

added ninth. The inclusion of the ninth, D-sharp (E-flat), on the final chord of the piece creates a common tone relationship with the beginning of Prelude III, which is in E-flat minor. These tonal relationships will be discussed further under Growth.

#### *Middle to Small Dimensions*

Gershwin makes frequent use of consonant seventh chords as well as chords with other upper extensions, a trait that can be attributed to his inspiration from blues and jazz (Neimoyer 2014, 113). His usage of extended chords is more often coloristic, rather than tensional; the simple triad is decorated with sixths, sevenths, ninths and thirteenths that do not always resolve in a functional manner. This is shown in measure 10 of Prelude I, when the melody cadences on F-natural over an E-flat minor chord in the bass (see Example 5). Although the harmony in this measure could be analyzed as an A-flat dominant chord with the fifth in the bass and the melody cadencing on the sixth or thirteenth, it is unlikely that this was the intention, despite the presence of both A-flat and C-natural on beat one in the melody. Throughout the preludes, Gershwin clearly places the root of the chord in the lowest voice, unless it is functioning as a pedal tone. This passage instead reveals the linear nature of the melodies in these pieces, which cannot always be justified from a vertical harmonic standpoint. Furthermore, the usage of plagal harmony and modal borrowing in other instances point towards an intended harmony of E flat minor with an added ninth. This predilection for subdominant-based harmony is illustrated even fur-

ther in Prelude II by a modulation from the home-key of C-sharp minor to F-sharp major in the B section of the piece.



**Example 5: Prelude I, Measure 10**

Another harmonic device that Gershwin employs in his preludes is chromatic parallelism, or “planing” as it is referred to in jazz. This parallel chord movement is demonstrated clearly in measures 20 and 29 of Prelude I and in the introduction to Prelude III, wherein the exact intervallic structure of the chord is transposed above the desired root (see Example 6). In Prelude I, dominant chords with added thirteenths move in a sequence of ascending minor thirds that propel the music into a new key area. In Prelude III, an E-flat minor chord with an added sixth moves up a half step to E, then back to the tonic, before ascending up the minor scale to the dominant, where the pattern is broken and a fermata sets up the entrance of the melody. In both of these cases, chromatic parallelism creates tension that drives the music forward, contributing to movement in the pieces.

Prelude I, m. 20

Prelude I, m. 29

Prelude III, intro

Bb<sup>13</sup> D<sup>b13</sup> E<sup>13</sup> G<sup>13</sup> C<sup>13</sup> Eb<sup>13</sup> G<sup>b13</sup> A<sup>13</sup>

Ebm<sup>6</sup> Em<sup>6</sup> Ebm<sup>6</sup> Fm<sup>6</sup> G<sup>b6</sup> Abm<sup>6</sup> Bb<sup>7(b9)</sup>

### Example 6: Chromatic Parallelism in Preludes I and III

#### **Melody: Large Dimensions**

Because each prelude has its own character and approach to melodic material, delving very much into large dimension considerations for the *Three Preludes* as a whole would seem forced, far more so than observing tonal relationships among the set. If we look at Gershwin's general approach to melody in the set of preludes we can, however, arrive at a few general observations.

The faster ones, Preludes I and III, generally make use of more angular lines that are more instrumental in nature when compared to the more evenly contoured and lyrical lines of the slower second prelude. Secondly, the first melodic statement in each prelude always returns, clearly demarcating an overall ternary form for each piece.

#### **Melody: Middle to Small Dimensions**

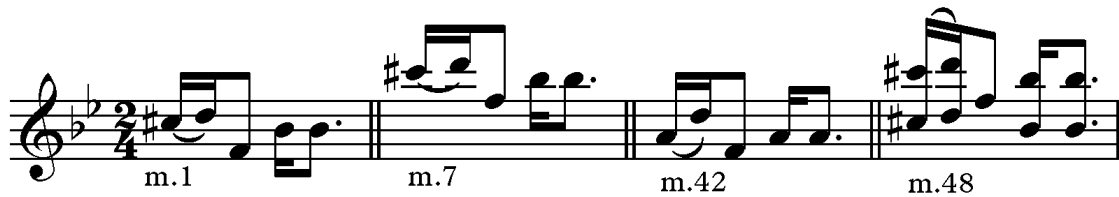
A tendency of Gershwin's approach to structuring phrases and sentences in the preludes is to follow

one melodic statement with a statement of contrasting contour. In Prelude I, mm. 11-13 illustrate an overall falling contour that is followed by a contrasting phrase (after a brief pause in the melody) beginning at measure 16, which exhibits a rising contour (see Example 7). This repeated contour rhythm and other similar instances contribute to the sense of movement in the preludes.

Each prelude is composed of a few different melodic motifs that are repeated with variations throughout. This is best demonstrated in the first prelude, which opens with a rubato presentation of the first motif that is made up of a step up, followed by a leap down and a skip back up. This motif appears up an octave in m. 7 for the first full melodic statement, and this basic melodic shape returns in m. 42 with a new intervallic construction. The original motif comes back at m. 50, where it is presented in octaves. An example of each iteration of this melodic fragment is shown in Example 8.



Example 7: Contrasting contours in Prelude I



Example 8: Use of Melodic Motif in Prelude I

### **Rhythm: Large Dimensions**

The pulse in all three preludes is governed by the previously mentioned ostinato figures typically found in the left-hand part, the accompaniment to the melody. The preludes that are quicker in tempo, Preludes I and III, utilize a much more syncopated accompaniment than the slower second prelude. Preludes I and III use patterns that are based on sixteenth and eighth-note subdivisions, whereas in Prelude II, the pulse is maintained by a strolling quarter-note ostinato that is reminiscent of a walking bass line in jazz. It is of note that, based on the original recording of Gershwin himself in 1928, eighth-notes are played with a mostly straight feeling, not swung as they appear in jazz.

### **Rhythm: Middle to Small Dimensions**

Gershwin approaches all three of the preludes with a similar rhythmic development scheme. In the A sections of each prelude, phrases are clearly separated by tied notes or rests at the end of the phrase. The middle sections of the preludes see an overall increase in rhythmic activity with less space be-

tween musical ideas. This is especially evident in Prelude III, wherein the rhythmic intensity is maintained through the end of the piece.

A notable rhythmic characteristic at the phrase level is the ending of phrases on upbeats, a technique often used in jazz. More often than not, Gershwin avoids ending a phrase on a strong beat, preferring instead to cadence on the “and” of beat two or four.

### **Growth: Large Dimension**

When examining growth in *Three Preludes* as a whole, the tonal relationships discussed earlier in this chapter are certainly worth further mention. The tonal centers for each of the preludes are B-flat, C-sharp, and E-flat, and if the distinct key signature change in the B section of Prelude II is taken into account, F-sharp may be added to that list. When spelled enharmonically as B-flat, D-flat, G-flat, and E-flat, these pitch areas make up the notes of the E-flat minor seventh chord, which coincides with the key signature of Prelude III. With this in mind, the overarching harmonic sequence of the set can be

viewed as a progression from the dominant, B-flat, to the tonic, E-flat, with stops on the minor seventh and third along the way (Ong 2005, 82).

When viewed from a similarly large perspective as the harmonic progression, an overall formal design can be determined for the set of preludes. The set begins with a fast piece based on a syncopated accompaniment, before moving into the slow middle prelude and finally returning to the fast, syncopated action in Prelude III, denoting an overall form of A-B-A' that mirrors the basic formal design found within each individual prelude.

### ***Growth: Middle to Small Dimensions***

Growth in the three preludes in the middle to small dimensions comes from aspects of the other categories that have previously been discussed. The most important source of growth in the middle dimensions is the increased rhythmic activity found within the middle of each prelude, especially in the faster ones. These increases in local activity work in conjunction with harmonic development to provide a sense of growth in each of these short pieces.

Texture changes also notably contribute to growth in the smaller dimensions. In addition to the voice swap in the B section of Prelude II, Gershwin makes effective use of texture change beginning in m. 29 of the third prelude (see Example 9). In this passage, the simple melody plus accompaniment fabric is interrupted by a thicker chordal texture with syncopated counter-melody. The change in texture is further enhanced by a walking eighth-note line in what could be considered the tenor voice and a rare appearance of half notes in the lowest voice, which provide a sustained harmonic foundation for the active upper voices.



**Example 9: Texture Change in Prelude III, m. 29**

In relation to texture change, Gershwin's treatment of motivic material provides growth within each of the preludes. As previously shown in an example from Prelude I under Melody, when the 'a' motif is restated in each of the three pieces, it appears reinforced by doubling at the octave. This principle is expanded upon in Prelude II with the insertion of a contrapuntal line between the octave melody that moves in contrary motion with the ostinato figure in the bass.

### **Chapter 3. Jazz and Prelude**

In an essay on the historical background of Gershwin's preludes, scholar Robert Wyatt observes that Gershwin arrived at his unique compositional style by "fusing the elements of classical music, the jazz he heard in Harlem, and the popular music of Tin Pan Alley..." (Wyatt 1989, 70), a statement that rings true for the composer's approach to the preludes. As the breakdown of compositional elements in Chapter 2 demonstrates, Gershwin combines characteristics from jazz and its ancillary styles as well as those associated with concert music, especially the piano prelude genre since Chopin. For the purpose of this study, the elements found in *Three Preludes for Piano* have been grouped into the general categories of "Jazz Elements" and "Prelude Elements" as shown in the table below:

<b>Jazz Elements</b>	<b>Prelude Elements</b>
Consonant extended chords / color tones	Tonal relationships within the set
Ending of phrases on upbeats	Use of several motifs
Use of plagal harmony	Particular patterns / technical figures
Major/minor ambiguity	Virtuosity
Use of blues progression ( <i>Prelude II</i> )	Brevity; short, small-scale works
Melody and accompaniment texture	Idiomatic writing
Ternary form; contrasting B section	Uniform mood/character within each piece
<b>Ragtime elements:</b>	<b>Other concert music elements:</b>
Virtuosic “breaks” between ideas	Use of ostinato
Syncopated root-chord figures in bass	Asymmetrical forms; uneven sections lengths
Mostly based on straight eighth notes and sixteenth notes	Straight eighth notes

To clarify, the elements listed above do not necessarily correlate with each other horizontally across the table, except in the case of commonality, which highlights the overlap between the two categories. As this table demonstrates, Gershwin’s preludes draw from many different elements across both sides of the spectrum, arriving at a unique hybrid of jazz and prelude.

#### ***Elements from Jazz***

The influence of jazz is most clearly seen in the harmonic properties of the preludes. The use of unresolved extended chords and melodic content that emphasizes color tones exemplifies Gershwin’s fascination with the style. Plagal harmony and modal borrowing also contribute greatly to the jazz-inspired nature of the preludes. *Prelude II* best demonstrates these properties and exhibits the jazz tradition of building compositions on the blues progression and form. Rhythmically, the preludes do incorporate some elements of jazz, but have more in common with ragtime, a precursor to the jazz style, which utilized straight eighth notes, rather than swing. The use of 2/4 meter in preludes I and III, coupled with the syncopated root-then-chord figures in the bass relate to the rhythmic conventions of ragtime, popularized by Scott Joplin, among others, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (Berlin 2001).

#### ***Elements from the Prelude***

Chopin’s set of 24 preludes composed in the mid-1800s gave new life to the prelude as a genre and set the standard for the prelude as a non-prefatory, typically short character piece, often composed in sets exploring musical figures in different key centers (Ledbetter & Ferguson 2001). Gershwin’s treatment of the prelude is in line with these conventions of the genre. Each prelude is a short, stand-alone piece of roughly 60 measures that focuses on a few motifs and rhythmic variations that give the piece its own identity. Recovered notes from the composer indicate an intended title of “Blue Lullaby” for *Prelude II*, which accurately describes the calm, blues-derived mood of the piece and evinces Gershwin’s intention of creating short pieces with a distinct character (Zizzo 1995). This also reflects the programmatic titles of the preludes of Debussy, whom Gershwin admired (Pollack 2007, 28).

#### **Chapter 4. Conclusion**

Based on the breakdown of compositional elements found in Chapter 2, it is clear that Gershwin handles each of the areas successfully in his concert music. Despite the brief nature of these pieces and their solo instrumentation, these short piano preludes demonstrate the composer’s effective treatment of



the individual and interconnected workings of Sound, Harmony, Melody, Rhythm, and Growth, both in the large and smaller dimensions. Furthermore, these works effortlessly combine the motivic and virtuosic concerns of the small-scale prelude genre with the harmonic flavor and syncopated nature of jazz in a way that succinctly showcases Gershwin's ability to assimilate all facets of his musical influences.

Moving forward with this research, an in-depth comparison of Gershwin's approach to his concert works versus popular songs and show tunes could be beneficial. This would yield a further understanding of his overall compositional style by measuring his treatment of musical elements in different contexts.

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## **Drake, Lil Wayne, and The Weeknd: Misogynistic Reflection or Influence**

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### ***Introduction***

The works of Drake, Lil Wayne, and The Weeknd are made up substantially by lyrics that are sexually graphic, misogynistic, and derogative. Their striking popularity combined with the current climate regarding women, sex, and sexual assault brings to question how accurately these artists are describing our culture and to what extent their lyrics are teaching our society to think about women and sex. Through critical analysis of the lyrical content of these artists' work, psychological research on the effects of music on human behavior, and a survey conducted with students at Texas State University, it is clear that music does affect the way we think and act; the works of these artists are reflecting views and happenings of our popular culture, and the sexually derogative lyrics do have an effect on the way their listeners think and act in regard to women and sensitivity towards sex, and sometimes even sexual assault.

### ***Lyrical Content Analysis***

Content analyses have shown that 70-90% of popular music is made up of songs containing sexual themes (Arnett 2002) and are becoming increasingly more explicit in content. Analyses have shown that rather than focusing on more romantic innuendos, popular music is focused on casual sex and sexual acts (Bennett 2002). This increasing trend of sexually explicit lyrical content became evident when analyzing the works of popular artists Drake, Lil Wayne, and The Weeknd. These artists rap lyrics that are misogynistic, degrading, and sexually explicit, which will be exemplified by the following excerpts and their analysis.

#### ***Drake***

“Chances are, if she was acting up  
Then I fucked her once and never fucked again  
She could have a Grammy  
I still treat her ass like a nominee

Just need to know what that pussy like  
so one time it's fine with me  
(2 Chainz 2012.)

If looking at these lyrics solely as a reflection or depiction of our culture, then it is necessary to analyze exactly what is being described. In these lyrics, the artist is insinuating that he will have sex with a woman so long as she is acting as he deems appropriate. However, once he feels that she is “acting up”, a very vague descriptor leaving the listeners unsure of what is or isn't desired from him, he will not “fuck” her again. He then goes to say that these women he is having relations with are merely physical objects, defined solely by their sexual capabilities, rather than by dignity or character. Drake blatantly says that he will treat her as someone to “fuck” once, as disposable, and never again. He says this, because he sees no dignity in the women that he is describing, saying that “she could have a Grammy, I still treat her ass like a nominee”. No matter what, in this overly sexually graphic scenario, her dignity plays no part in the way that he views or treats her.

So, what do these statements say about women? The message is very clear: women are sexual objects; women cannot gain respect, dignity, or equality, even through major accomplishments, such as winning a Grammy; women are meant to be used for pleasure, but then disposed of. Women are not being supported, promoted, or pictured in a positive light in these lyrics. These words are derogatory. If this is merely a reflection of how society views women, then society doesn't view women as having value or purpose outside of the sexual realm.

It is clear that Drake sees sex as physical exchange for personal pleasure / gain, an act meant to be had with a human that can be removed easily after the scenario. One can also infer from these lyrics that he views sexual partners as easily disposable, something to try, even only one time to get what he wants.

#### ***Lil Wayne***

In “Miss Me” by Drake, Lil Wayne is featured, rapping: “man I swear my bitches do it ‘til they suck the brown off” (Drake 2010). These lyrics are ex-

tremely graphic and sexually explicit, revealing that there are few boundaries and limitations present in popular music. While these words are just a small excerpt of the song as a whole, they reveal much about how Lil Wayne views women and sex.

These lyrics insinuate that Lil Wayne has ownership of his sexual partners, as he refers to them as “my bitches”. The women Lil Wayne raps about are objects used for his sexual gratification. In his lyrics, women are to be used, dominated, and owned by the multitude. Lil Wayne’s message about women is negative, misogynistic, and worrisome if his message is truly a reflection of our society.

Lil Wayne’s lyrics also portray sexual acts in an extremely explicit and warped manner. He describes oral sex as if it is an act that he is owed by his “bitches”.

### ***The Weeknd***

In the song “Initiation”, The Weeknd raps:

I got a test for you  
You say you want my heart,  
well baby you can have it all  
There’s just something I need from you,  
is to meet my boys, I got a lot of boys  
And we can make you right  
And if you get too high,  
baby come over here and ride it out, ride it out.  
(The Weeknd, 2011.)

These lyrics are perhaps the most concerning being analyzed in this section. The Weeknd reveals an extreme manipulation of a woman who desires a relationship with him. In pursuit of a relationship, he describes that he wants her to “meet” his boys. In these lyrics, he is not so subtly revealing that he is using a sexual ultimatum with the female subject of this song. The Weeknd is expressing that in order to have his heart, the woman must be passed around in a sexual manner to his boys. The Weeknd follows this by saying that he has “a lot of boys”. To aid her through this degrading and manipulative task, he knows that she will need drugs to perform or mentally get through his “boys”. The Weeknd is describing that he wants to train her, perhaps sexually, by having her practice with his “boys” before she can have his heart, as he raps “and we can make you

right. And if you get too high, come over here and ride it out.” This level of misogyny and manipulative use of women is highly concerning if popular music is viewed as a reflection of our society.

These lyrics, like the lyrics by the other artists, speak a message that further objectifies women as something to be used and passed around. The woman in this song has no value and can only earn The Weeknd’s “heart” through sexual acts. The woman is degraded to being no more than a sexual object to be used and trained in this song.

This song also has a dark message about sex. This song insinuates that sex is an act to use and train women for men. This song also describes sex in a way that demands drug usage in order to enjoy or get through.

Overall, as a reflection of popular culture, these lyrics paint a picture of a society that is full of misogyny and the practice of using women for personal sexual gratification and control. These lyrics reveal a society that supports and desires music that is extremely sexually explicit and degrades women.

### ***Lyrics Reflecting Culture***

In understanding and discussing popular culture and popular music, it has been said that “the existence of the one is an audio manifestation of the other” (Cooper and Haney 1997, xi). Many claim that music reflects society and popular culture, that music is directly influenced by what is going on in the social climate during the time that music is created. There are countless arguments discussing the ways in which popular music is affected by society, culture, and the economy. This trend is visible when looking at which music genres and themes were popular during different times in history. The economic or conflict conditions of the time, such as a recession, war, or economic stability, heavily influence what people want in music and what music then becomes popular. In analyzing lyrical content during different time periods, Pettijohn and Sacco (2009) found that popular Billboard songs during threatening social and economic periods contained lyrics with more words per sentence and a focus on the future. Songs during instability also tend to present greater focus on intergroup themes and the future of social process than popular Billboard songs during times

that were more stable (Pettijohn & Sacco 2009, 157).

“Our perceptions of environmental security influence our social preferences and what we find most desirable during different social and economic conditions. Uncertain and threatening times cause people to consider their safety and security, leading them to adjust their preferences and make decisions that are more adaptive. More meaningful, mature themes and items should be preferred during these difficult situations to help mitigate the threat and uncertainty. When times are more certain and less threatening, themes and items related to meaning and maturity should be less necessary; therefore themes and items related to fun, celebration and expression of carefree attitudes should be preferred. This general pattern of preferences may help explain the popularity of music and artists across changing social and economic conditions.” (Pettijohn and Sacco, 158.)

If understanding the popularity of certain artists and their music calls for an understanding of the culture that is shaping the music, then the question must be asked, what sort of culture has shaped the misogynistic and disturbing works of Drake, Lil Wayne, and The Weeknd?

### ***Lyrics Effect on Listeners***

While popular music can be a reflection of society, music also heavily influences society and the individuals’ contributing to popular culture. To say that music is solely a reflection of, and not an influencing factor of, popular culture is bold and inaccurate. In studies, sexually charged music content has revealed to have an effect on the sexual behavior of listeners. Regarding adolescents, “therefore, given the high level of music consumption by this demographic, it is little surprise that youth indicate pop music as a major source of pressure in sexual engagement at an early age” (Carpentier, et al. 2007, 3).

Not only does music pressure sexual engagement, music can serve as the prime influence on future judgements and decisions regarding sexual behavior, as sexual media culture correlates with the intention to become sexually active.

“Specific to perception formation, priming research has demonstrated that a concept that is activated, or primed, through exposure to a word, sentence, or

news story will become the most salient criterion used in making later judgments. In other words, the prime will influence the importance of the various criteria used in forming perceptions of others.” (Carpentier, et al. 2007, 3.)

Just as a news story becomes the most salient criteria used in making judgement, the words and sentences found in music also play a large role in making sexual judgements after being primed by popular music. “These examples suggest that music may also create priming effects that influence perceptions of individuals not directly related to the music itself.” (Carpentier, 2007, 4.)

### ***Lyrics as Leading or Following***

“Studies clearly show that music lyrics (as well as other media trends) do not exist in a vacuum. Rather, they operate in tandem with social or cultural trends. What remains unclear in many cases is whether it is the culture or the media that leads the trendsetting.” (Langdon 2012, 14.)

In researching music as a reflection of culture and also analyzing the possible effect of music on listeners, it can be difficult to determine which element leads changes and developments and which element follows. “Popular music lyrics follow cultural trends, and lyrics chronicle new societal developments. A master theme in culture is individualism.” (Dukes, et al. 2003, 643.) In analyzing the works of Drake, Lil Wayne, and The Weeknd, it is clear the lyrics are following cultural trends. The way that these artists discuss and glorify these trends and issues are extremely influential in chronicling social development.

The lyrics, discussed earlier, by Drake, Lil Wayne, and The Weeknd are following cultural trends, as they are reflecting elements (discussed in “Lyrics Reflecting Culture”) of our culture and how women and sex are viewed. These lyrics reflect a popular media culture that is promoting sex or sexual acts more than romance. These lyrics reflect a culture of casual sex.

While it is clear that these artists are, in some ways, portraying popular culture, they are also “chronicling” new social developments by using their platform to condone negative reflections of how society views women and sex. This music not

only reflects popular culture, but it influences the lives, ideologies, and behaviors of listeners. This is clearly evident in studying the ways in which media primes its consumers (Carpentier, et al. 2007 3).

### ***Connection to Sexual Behavior and/or Aggression***

Evidence suggests that music does affect listeners, and scholars also suggest that popular music reflects and influences culture; artists such as Drake, Lil Wayne, and The Weeknd are reflecting and condoning negative and misogynistic ideas about women and sex. With each of these elements being considered in analyzing these artists' works, the question must be asked: how much can these artists influence how listeners are behaviorally affected and how women are treated?

One study measured the initiation of intercourse and sexual activity levels among adolescents over a two-year period. The results and conclusion indicate that sexually graphic media content, as in music, does have substantial effect on sexual behavior. The researchers conducted multivariate regression analyses, which indicated

“youth who listened to more degrading sexual content at T2 were more likely to subsequently initiate intercourse and to progress to more advanced levels of noncoital sexual activity, even after controlling for 18 respondent characteristics that might otherwise explain these relationships.” (Martino, et al. 2006, 430.)

The authors conducted similar research with nondegrading music content and found that, “exposure to nondegrading sexual content was unrelated to changes in participants' sexual behavior” (ibid.). This research led them to the conclusion that listening to music with degrading sexual lyrics is “related to advances in a range of sexual activities among adolescents, whereas this does not seem to be true of other sexual lyrics” (ibid.). The researchers found their results to be

“consistent with sexual-script theory and suggests that cultural messages about expected sexual behavior among males and females may underlie the effect. Reducing the amount of degrading sexual content in popular music or reducing young people's exposure to music with this type of content could help delay the onset of sexual behavior” (ibid.).

In efforts to reduce male sexual aggression, Fischer and Greitemeyer attempted to identify sources of media or information that affect men's cognitive associations concerning women. They found that misogynistic music was, in fact, a large information source playing a part in the development of male cognitive associations regarding women.

As the percentage of sexually explicit lyrical content increases, the amount of time spent listening to music is also increasing in both public and private areas of life. With the belief that sexual explicitness and misogyny in music can potentially play part in the development of male cognitive associations toward women, this trend is concerning. This concern led Fischer & Greitemeyer (2006) to conduct research using human test subjects who thought they were part of a marketing trial. In this experiment, the researchers were examining how misogynous music affects male aggression towards women:

“Because misogynous music is such a widespread, frequently consumed, and successful phenomenon in the music business, the present research investigates the impact of this music genre on men's aggression-related responses to women. More specifically, we examine whether misogynous music increases male aggression toward women.” (Fischer & Greitemeyer 2006, 1166.)

With the prediction that misogynous song lyrics increase aggressive responses from men toward women, Fischer & Greitemeyer wanted to expand on previous research on music and aggression by collecting evidence regarding the extent of the effect that lyrics can have on increased aggression of males towards women. They conducted research to show that “misogynous song lyrics not only affect aggression-related cognitions and emotions but also actual aggressive behavior” (ibid., 1167). In this experiment, which was presented as an unrelated marketing exercise, male participants who had listened to the misogynous lyrics reacted more aggressively toward the female participant than to the male participant. Women were also tested in this experiment, and after listening to music with man-hating lyrics, there were no signs of differential ef-

fect of song lyrics on aggression towards female or male participants from the women who had listened to the man-hating lyrics. The outcome of this experiment is interesting when compared with the survey given to students at Texas State University, in which women were much more likely to answer that misogynistic and sexually explicit music content could potentially impact the way that men perceive women and even men's behavior toward women. Whereas the men who participated in the survey were more inclined to answer that, while sexually explicit lyrics can impact how society views women, sexually explicit music does not impact physical behavior towards women. The majority of males who participated in the survey at Texas State University answered that sexually explicit music does not affect male behavior towards women. It is important to analyze how

“exposure to media violence such as misogynous or men-hating music acts as a priming stimulus that can evoke various associations consisting of aggressive thoughts, expectations, beliefs, and emotions related to violence, thereby finally even providing the starting point for aggressive actions” (Fischer & Greitemeyer 2006, 1165-1168).

### Conclusion

While many argue that popular music is but a reflection of an already popular culture, my research has led to the conclusion that the works of Drake, Lil Wayne, and The Weeknd are not merely reflections of contemporary popular culture. Because music does affect future decisions and behavior through priming (Carpentier, et al. 2007, 3) as well as cognitive associations regarding women (Fischer & Greitemeyer 2006, 1165-1168), these artists' works promote and influence the way that society views and treats women. With such degrading, overly sexual, and misogynistic themes and lyrics, the effect this music has on listeners and society is not positive. The music created by these artists is not promoting or supporting women and serves as a factor in a society that continually glorifies casual sex and degrades women in the process of presenting sex in media. It is important to analyze how

“exposure to media violence such as misogynous or men-hating music acts as a priming stimulus that can evoke various associations consisting of aggressive thoughts, expectations, beliefs, and emotions related to violence, thereby finally even providing the starting point for aggressive actions” (Fischer & Greitemeyer 2006, 1166).

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## Book Review

### Michael Linsin's Guide for Classroom Management Targeted Toward Specialists

by Maggie Grill

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Linsin, Michael. *Classroom Management for Art, Music, and PE Teachers*. San Diego, CA: JME Publishing, 2014. ISBN: 9780615993263. <http://www.smartclassroommanagement.com>

Michael Linsin is an expert on classroom management, maintaining a wildly successful blog, and speaking from his 27 years of experience teaching in K-12 classrooms, including some time as a physical education specialist. He has authored four books, *The Happy Teacher Habits: 11 Habits of the Happiest, Most Effective Teachers on Earth*, *The Classroom Management Secret and 45 other Keys to a Well-Behaved Class*, and *Dream Class: How to Transform Any Group of Students Into the Class You've Always Wanted*. He has also written three open access works available on his website: *The Smart Classroom Management Plan for Elementary Teachers: Everything You Need to Have the Well-Behaved Class You Want*, *The Smart Classroom Management Plan for High School Teachers: A Simple Way to Improve Behavior and Motivate Students*, and *The Smart Principal's Recess Behavior Plan: A Simple Way to Eliminate Unsafe and Unruly Behavior from the Playground*.

*Classroom Management for Art, Music, and PE Teachers* is targeted at special-area teachers who desire a guide outlining how to maintain better behavior in their classrooms. Linsin recognizes the unique environment of the special-area classroom, as he personally made the transition from general classroom teacher to physical education specialist. He cites the challenges and benefits of being a specialist, and while much of the content in the book echoes his guidance for all teachers, he does cater it to the unique perspective of the specialist teacher and focuses only on the strategies that would be helpful for a teacher who does not see the same group each day.

Linsin's book is organized in six parts, including "Leverage and Influence", "Routines and Procedures", "Listening and Following Directions", "Rules and Consequences", "Bad Days and Tough Classes", and "Final Words". The book as a whole is a quick read, making it well suited for a teacher to consume during the busy school year. Each chapter is brief, reminiscent of his blog posts for those familiar with them. A teacher could fully absorb the information in any chapter in under three minutes. Some of the strategies offered in the book may be surprising for many educators, and therefore it may be necessary to read each chapter and allow some time for personal reflection on how the suggestions might fit into the reader's own circumstances. Reading the book in one sitting, while easily accomplished, would likely not provide the needed time to absorb and reflect on the classroom environment Linsin suggests creating.

Michael Linsin has a distinctive tone, which is simultaneously direct and uplifting. His succinct writing style offers only the information necessary to paint a picture of the strategy being suggested, provides step-by-step instructions on how to implement it, offers roadblocks a teacher might encounter, along with ways to overcome them, and provides an inspirational description of how the strategy will transform either the classroom climate, a student's experience, or both. His tone provides an opportunity for reflection, empowering the teacher to transform his or her classroom, but without passing condemnation on how the teacher might have conducted her/his lessons in the past.

Highlights of Linsin's book, which may not be found elsewhere, are his extremely detailed, yet simple instructions on how to implement his strategies, and his philosophy of following through with consequences. In the book, he offers a step-by-step guide on effectively and thoroughly teaching classroom procedures. He warns against certain teacher habits. He provides guidelines for offering non-harmful praise to students and building rapport with them. He includes a suggested set of rules and con-

sequences and also advice on how to adapt it to one's own circumstances.

Linsin's book achieves its goal of informing and inspiring teachers of all experience levels. It is not bogged down with lengthy explanations or an abundance of examples, but provides a straightforward approach to transforming one's teaching. If the reader desires more, Linsin's blog at <http://www.smartclassroommanagement.com> offers not only a weekly blog post, much in keeping with the tone and length of the chapters in this book, but also a hefty archive of previous posts. Many of the

posts approach the same topic from different angles and would satisfy any teacher who desires more lengthy coverage of Linsin's strategies. The book is trim and succinct, and is accessible to all teachers. It would be great for use in a book study with a cohort of special-area teachers, and chapters from it would serve as excellent discussion starters for professional development sessions. His memorable strategies would be helpful to the first-year teacher, and his fresh outlook could offer inspiration for the seasoned teacher looking to problem-solve issues in their classroom environment.

## Urban Music Education: A Practical Guide for Teachers

by Lindsey Johnson

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Fitzpatrick-Harnish, Kate. 2015. *Urban Music Education: A Practical Guide for Teachers*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. ISBN 978-0199778577. \$21.95. <http://global.oup.com/academic/product/urban-music-education-9780199778577>

*Urban Music Education: A Practical Guide for Teachers* is exactly what it claims to be in its title. This book describes the varied challenges faced by teachers who work in urban schools and underserved communities. It contains basic research on the challenges faced by students and teachers within underserved communities and contains first-person accounts written by teachers in urban schools in a variety of different communities. It is written in uncomplicated, engaging language, making it an unimposing selection for a new or pre-service teacher.

In Chapter 1, “Urban Music Teaching: A Counternarrative”, Fitzpatrick-Harnish discusses the problematic and outdated narratives regarding teaching in urban environments that describe the urban education experience in overwhelmingly negative terms. Fitzpatrick-Harnish strongly disagrees with the idea that urban schools are negative places to teach and advocates for replacing negative stereotypes with positive narratives when discussing the unique challenges of urban education. Also included in this chapter are a discussion of the current emphasis on standardized testing in the United States and the profound negative impact this has had on music programs in schools that serve urban communities. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of the many possible definitions of “urban”, with the author favoring a definition that includes schools with similar challenges, rather than one based strictly on geographic area or population density.

Chapter 2, “Understanding Our Students”, is a primer on the challenges faced by many children in urban communities. The author gives a basic, in-

troductory-level explanation of topics, such as the opportunity gap that exists between low socioeconomic status children and their high socioeconomic status peers, the potential cultural differences between a student’s home and the school setting, challenges resulting from race or ethnicity within the context of the history of the United States, and teaching students who are English Language Learners. While none of these topics are addressed with depth, each topic addressed is vital to the understanding of the complex and varied needs of students. If a teacher is new to the profession, or simply new to teaching in an urban school, this chapter provides an invaluable starting point for the teacher’s professional growth. This chapter provides a highly useful list of topics that the educator can research at length and in more depth at a future date.

In Chapter 3, “Contextually Specific Music Teaching”, Fitzpatrick-Harnish explains the necessity of learning about the unique cultures present within each school community. She advocates for teaching with “Culturally Relevant Pedagogy” (p. 43-47), meaning that the teacher should strive to connect with their students through choosing culturally significant curriculum, empowering students to “... speak openly, ask questions, and conduct respectful dialogue with one another and with us about relevant issues” (p. 46). Fitzpatrick-Harnish believes that the most effective urban teacher is one who makes the effort to build a personal relationship with each student.

Chapter 4, “Making Music”, discusses strategies for the successful teaching of music within the urban school community. The author cautions teachers against choosing music simply because they love it and encourages teachers to consider the unique needs of their students when choosing repertoire for teaching. Fitzpatrick-Harnish recommends that teachers take the time to get to know the music that their students and school communities listen to and participate in outside of the school, and to use that knowledge to inform repertoire choices during the planning process. These are sound, pedagogical-based suggestions.

Chapter 5, “Rejecting the ‘One Size Fits All’ Model: Setting Your Own Definition of Music Pro-

gram Success”, opens with a discussion of goal-setting within the urban school music program. Fitzpatrick-Harnish believes that success within a music program can have different definitions that are dependent on the unique needs of each student population. The author advocates for tailoring each music program to meet the needs of the students that it serves. However, she cautions teachers to be sensitive to the desires of school administrators, parents, and the students when making decisions that impact the program as a whole. In addition, Fitzpatrick-Harnish recommends that teachers should plan with consideration to the resources of the school community, to include both tangible resources, such as money and materials, and intangible resources, such as time and community support. Fitzpatrick-Harnish believes that once these factors have been considered, it is essential to establish a culture of excellence within the music program by performing well at all levels of musical proficiency. Finally, Fitzpatrick-Harnish closes the chapter with a discussion of achieving student motivation for success by choosing appropriately challenging material that is neither too difficult nor too easy.

Chapter 6, “Common Issues of Interest for Urban Music Educators”, discusses issues within the urban school and within the school system as a whole. These topics include financial and material resources, administrative support, scheduling, and school reforms. A large portion of this chapter is dedicated to anecdotal essays by the panel of music educators that the author has featured throughout the book. While many of the topics addressed in this chapter can be applied to teaching in any school, they are of great importance to the educator who is working in an urban school.

In Chapter 7, “Finding Support and Inspiration”, Fitzpatrick-Harnish discusses the importance of avoiding teacher burnout through self-care. She discusses the great frustrations and equally great

rewards that teachers in urban schools can experience and acknowledges that these widely varying highs and lows can be very difficult for a teacher new to urban schools to cope with. The author counsels teachers to find a balance between their work and personal lives and to seek out support from professional mentors who are experienced urban music educators.

Throughout the book are sections dedicated to personal anecdotes from a group of teachers from a wide range of music education specialties. These anecdotes are sometimes inserted into the chapters as appendices, and sometimes woven into the content material of a chapter. These personal anecdotes provide relatable, real-world examples that help to make this book easy to understand.

This book is an excellent source of information for the music teacher who is new to working in urban schools. The content is presented in a clear, easily understood way. The suggestions provided by Fitzpatrick-Harnish are practical and contain material that is immediately useful in addition to material that would be helpful in the long-term. Much of the information contained in *Urban Music Education* is presented on an introductory level. As a result, while this book would be highly useful to a pre-service teacher or a teacher who is new to urban music education, it is not recommended as a text for the experienced urban music teacher.

In summation, this book accurately describes the challenges and joys of working as an urban music teacher. As a music educator with 15 years of experience teaching in urban schools at both the primary and secondary levels, I found that *Urban Music Education* closely matched my own personal experiences in the classroom. I recommend it as a resource for teachers new to urban music education and as a text for reading and discussion in undergraduate music education courses.