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# Yes Yes Y'all: The Experience Music Project Oral History Of Hip-hop's First Decade



## Synopsis

Hip-hop today is ubiquitous, dominating not only the music industry but also popular culture around the world. Like rock and roll before it, it has permanently transformed music, art, dance and fashion while capturing millions of listeners - and this vast cultural revolution was all started by a bunch of street kids in the ravaged Bronx of the 1970s. Documenting hip-hop's remarkable genesis, this book tells its stories in voices that bristle with vitality, character, humour and menace, tracing the music from DJ Kool Herc's first parties in 1973 through the release of "Rapper's Delight" in 1979 and the rise of the new school in the mid 1980s. Fricke and Ahearn weave an electric narrative from the accounts of over 50 of hip-hop's founders and stars, old school and new, including Afrika Bambaataa, Grandmaster Flash, DJ Kool Herc, Melle Mel, Grand Wizard Theodore, Grandmaster Caz, Rahiem, Fab 5 Freddy, Tony Tone and DMC. A wealth of previously unseen photographs, flyers and posters illustrate the text. This work is a chorus of voices, a tale of artistry in the face of extraordinary adversity, and the definitive history of a revolution created with nothing more than a microphone, a turntable and a dance floor.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Based on the "Hip-Hop Nation" exhibit at Seattle's Experience Music Project and the project's ongoing Oral History Program, this history of the beginnings of hip-hop in 1970s New York City is a lavishly illustrated and lovingly compiled homage to the many artists who contributed to the birth of what soon became and remains today, more than 25 years later a worldwide cultural institution.

Editors Fricke and Ahearn (director of the hip-hop film *Wild Style*) weave the insights and attitudes of nearly 100 of the key players into a multihued and multiracial tapestry that illustrates what the excitement of that era and its music was all about. Since the hip-hop style was first developed in the Bronx borough of New York City as a dance-floor alternative to the then-prominent "disco" sound, the oral narrative is dominated by the voices of well-known DJs: Kool Herc, Afrika Bambaataa and Grandmaster Flash. But much of the success of the book is derived from its exploration of the roots of other related hip-hop trends: how the massive new styles of graffiti were both a response to urban violence as well as a way to provoke the interest of downtown New York avant-garde artists; how the competitive world of break dancing was rooted in the rapidly changing and fading gang culture of the Bronx; and how many women were far more active and influential in all types of hip-hop styles than was obvious or recognized at the time. This is an excellent documentation of how early hip-hop expressed "a balance between pain and the celebration of music and movements." Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"The authors, once and for all, define where hip-hop, literally, was born." -- Chicago Social April, 2003 --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Well can I say that "the book is a must have for any true Hip Hop head who wants to know their roots", even if I am the co-author? Yes Yes Y'all sometime we must obtain our books by any means necessary. Feel me?

If you don't own this book, and are curious AT ALL about hip hop, buy this book. It pairs very well with *Foundations* by Joseph Schloss, only it's much more visual.

Yes Yes Y'all is the [the best] -- a must read for everyone living through the hip-hop cultural revolution. That means you, hoss. Stemming from the ground-breaking hip-hop exhibit at Experience Music Project, Yes Yes Y'all embodies countless oral histories, photographs and artifacts that bring to life the rich history of MCs, DJs, B-Boys & Girls, and Graffiti artists. This publication is lavishly illustrated and lovingly crafted. It's a classic right outta the gate!

this book is great cause it has personal accounts from people that were around when hip hop was born. great pictures as well.

Anyone into Hip Hop must own this book. It's a seminal work. Like Toop's The Rap Attack or Nelson George's Hip Hop America...it must be owned. The most detailed Old School study ever and great visuals.

I got into hip hop in 1987 living in New York when Chuck Chillout, Red Alert and Mr Magic owned the city's airwaves. I've been a fan of "golden age" hip hop for over twenty years now and I find it amazing that until I read this book, I had no idea about the roots of this culture, something so important to me. At first I was skeptical about the style of the book, composed by quotes from the actual participants of the culture's creation. But it was put together very well and told a cohesive story. I found this history completely consuming. I was always aware of how exciting the hip hop rap scene was in '89 in New York. It would launch rap into a global phenomenon. But I can now see that the energy and excitement up in the South Bronx in the mid to late '70's may have been even more... mind blowing. If you haven't already bought the essential music (Cold Crush Brothers, Fantastic 5, Busy B, Crash Crew, Afrika Bambaataa) you will after you read the book.

This is a beautiful book with great information, but...WHY IS THERE NO MENTION OF LADY PINK??? I understand its a man's world and hip-hop as a reflection of society has been a man's game. but women also had a hand in the development of this culture. women always do. seldom does their labor or talents get acknowledged in the same way. its unfortunate, but its the way it is. very few women are mentioned in this book and i'm appalled that Lady Pink got no love. she is legendary. she is part of the Feminine Foundation of Hip-Hop. i think this book needs to be updated with HER INCLUDED and maybe a few other women while its in revision. otherwise, its just one side of the story, an impartial document, in my humble opinion. Girls need heros too! Cultural Legends to look up to, to help guide them. I wish Jim and Charlie would have been more aware of that when telling this important story on the birth of a culture that now has the whole world's attention, women and men alike. with that being said, i would still give this book as a gift to any hip-hop enthusiast in my life, but only after adding a few extra pages of my own. :)

This beautiful book attempts to trace the formation of hip-hop culture through interviews with those who were around for the first ten years. Fricke (a curator at the Experience Music Project museum) and Ahearn (photographer and director of the seminal hop-hop film Wild Style), attempt to document the New York City scene from about 1974-84 (right up to the formation of DefJam and Run-DMC) through photos, original party flyers, and the words of the DJs, MCs, b-boys (breakdancers), graffiti

artists, and promoters who were there. The early portion shows how DJ sound-system battles emerged in the early to mid '70s against the backdrop of a decaying Bronx, attracting youths to more or less impromptu parties in parks, streets, and playgrounds. Competition was fierce as to who had the loudest sound system and the best records, and tough security (gang members) was a necessity. One thing that gets disappointingly glossed over is how this copied what happened in Kingston, Jamaica ten years earlier. It was exactly the same: competing street sound systems, with competing DJs who would take the labels off records so spies couldn't find out what they were playing, gangs, violence—all the same. DJ Kool Herc, who lived in Jamaica until 1967, makes a fleeting reference to it, but that's all. For the first few years, the DJs were the "stars" of the scene, offering an alternative to disco music. But as DJs started to learn how to manipulate their turntables to extend the "beats" from a song, eventually MCing started to become more vibrant. What had initially only been calls to the crowd to keep the party's energy up evolved into more and more sophisticated catchphrases, freestyle rhymes, and soon MCs were writing and memorizing lines. Again, it's a bit puzzling that no mention is made of Jamaican "toasting" which emerged in the mid to late '60s. This was the practice of DJs who would talk and rhyme over the records they played, and soon progressed to a point where they would have instrumental versions of popular songs laid down for them to rhyme over—often in a boasting style, talking about how they were the "#1", "champion", and so on. Sounds familiar, doesn't it? The other two legs of hip-hop culture are given somewhat less space. The material on breakdancing (aka "b-boying" to the true old-schoolers) seems to indicate that the "b-boy" crews filled a kind of competitive void left by the waning of street gang culture. And while there was some of this dancing at the parties, music was the focus, rather than the dancing—which didn't get big until the early '80s. Graffiti, on the other hand, was clearly a prominent feature of the NYC landscape from the early '70s on. But, what's most interesting here is that while the graffiti artists often went to parties and knew some of the music people, the idea that graffiti was part of a larger hip-hop culture didn't emerge until late in the game. It wasn't until the downtown Manhattan art scene started getting interested that the music, breakin', and graffiti were packaged by the white art scene—a unified "street" culture. The book is lavishly put together, with tons to look at—however, the oral history structure isn't the greatest. From a historical perspective, it's great to hear all these unknown voices from the past telling about their roles, but at times it does get tedious. Especially when it comes to details on how so and so met so and so and that led to the formation of this or that. Even more so late in the book, when record companies get in the mix, and then all kinds of resentments come pouring out. There could have been a little more editing, as well as a little more context to fill in some of the gaps. For example, there are a lot of references to

gangs being involved in the early scene, and shootings, and violence, but there's never any unified discussion of it. The same for the role of drugs in the scene, at one point someone (I think Spoonie Gee) talks about how everyone was totally coked up all the time, and that's something that could have been explored a little more. In any event, it's still a great book for anyone with an interest in the days of hip-hop, giving proper space and voice to all the unknowns who deserve to be known.

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