

The Cambridge Companion to Hip-Hop

It has been more than thirty-five years since the first commercial recordings of hip-hop music were made. This *Companion*, written by renowned scholars and industry professionals, reflects the passion and scholarly activity occurring in the new generation of hip-hop studies. It covers a diverse range of case studies from nerdcore hip-hop to instrumental hip-hop to the role of rappers in the Obama campaign and from countries including Senegal, Japan, Germany, Cuba, and the UK. Chapters provide an overview of the “four elements” of hip-hop – MCing, DJing, breakdancing (or breakin’), and graffiti – in addition to key topics such as religion, theater, film, gender, and politics. Intended for students, scholars, and the most serious of “hip-hop heads,” this collection incorporates methods in studying hip-hop flow, as well as the music analysis of hip-hop and methods from linguistics, political science, gender and film studies to provide exciting new perspectives on this rapidly developing field.

JUSTIN A. WILLIAMS is Lecturer in Music at the University of Bristol, and the author of *Rhymin’ and Stealin’: Musical Borrowing in Hip-Hop* (2013). He has taught at Leeds College of Music, Lancaster University, and Anglia Ruskin University, and has been published in *Popular Music*, *Popular Music History*, and *The Journal of Musicology*. As a professional trumpet and piano player in California, he ran a successful jazz piano trio and played with the band Bucho! which won a number of Sacramento Area Music Awards and were signed to two record labels. He has co-written (with Ross Wilson) an article on digital crowd funding for *The Oxford Handbook to Music and Virtuality* and is currently co-editing (with Katherine Williams) *The Cambridge Companion to the Singer-Songwriter*.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-03746-5 - The Cambridge Companion to Hip-Hop
Edited by Justin A. Williams
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-03746-5 - The Cambridge Companion to Hip-Hop
Edited by Justin A. Williams
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

The Cambridge Companion to

HIP-HOP

.....

EDITED BY
Justin A. Williams



Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-03746-5 - The Cambridge Companion to Hip-Hop
Edited by Justin A. Williams
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University’s mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107643864

© Cambridge University Press 2015

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2015

Printed in the United Kingdom by TJ International Ltd. Padstow Cornwall

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

The Cambridge companion to hip-hop / edited by Justin A. Williams.
pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-107-03746-5 (hardback : alk. paper) 1. Rap (Music) – History and criticism.

I. Williams, Justin A.

ML3531.C356 2015

782.421649–dc23 2014032226

ISBN 978-1-107-03746-5 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-107-64386-4 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-03746-5 - The Cambridge Companion to Hip-Hop
Edited by Justin A. Williams
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Dedicated to the memory of Professor Adam Krims

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-03746-5 - The Cambridge Companion to Hip-Hop
Edited by Justin A. Williams
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Contents

List of figures [page ix]
List of music examples [xi]
Notes on contributors [xii]
Acknowledgments [xv]

Introduction: the interdisciplinary world of hip-hop studies
Justin A. Williams [1]

Part I • Elements

1 MC origins: rap and spoken word poetry *Alice Price-Styles* [11]
2 Hip-hop dance *Imani Kai Johnson* [22]
3 Hip-hop visual arts *Ivor Miller* [32]
4 DJs and turntablism *Kjetil Falkenberg Hansen* [42]
5 The fifth element: knowledge *Travis L. Gosa* [56]
6 Hip-hop and religion: from the mosque to the church
Christina Zanfagna [71]
7 Hip-hop theater and performance *Nicole Hodges Persley* [85]

Part II • Methods and concepts

8 Lyrics and flow in rap music *Oliver Kautny* [101]
9 The musical analysis of hip-hop *Kyle Adams* [118]
10 The glass: hip-hop production *Chris Tabron* [135]
11 Hip-hop and racial identification: an (auto)ethnographic perspective
Anthony Kwame Harrison [152]
12 Thirty years of Rapsploitation: hip-hop culture in American cinema
Geoff Harkness [168]
13 Barbz and kings: explorations of gender and sexuality in hip-hop
Regina N. Bradley [181]
14 Hip-hop and politics *Christopher Deis* [192]
15 Intertextuality, sampling, and copyright *Justin A. Williams* [206]

Part III • Case studies

16 Nerdcore hip-hop *Amanda Sewell* [223]

viii Contents

17 Framing gender, race, and hip-hop in *Boyz N the Hood*, *Do the Right Thing*, and *Slam* *Adam Haupt* [232]

18 Japanese hip-hop: alternative stories *Noriko Manabe* [243]

19 Council estate of mind: the British rap tradition and London’s hip-hop scene *Richard Bramwell* [256]

20 Cuban hip-hop *Sujatha Fernandes* [263]

21 Senegalese hip-hop *Ali Colleen Neff* [271]

22 Off the grid: instrumental hip-hop and experimentalism after the golden age *Mike D’Errico* [280]

23 Stylized Turkish German as the resistance vernacular of German hip-hop *Brenna Reinhart Byrd* [292]

24 “Bringin’ ’88 Back”: historicizing rap music’s greatest year *Loren Kajikawa* [301]

25 “Where ya at?” Hip-hop’s political locations in the Obama era *Michael P. Jeffries* [314]

Select bibliography [327]

Index [341]

Figures

The author and publishers acknowledge the following sources of copyright material and are grateful for the permissions granted. While every effort has been made, it has not always been possible to identify the sources of all material used, or to trace all copyright holders. If any omissions are brought to our notice, we will be happy to include the appropriate acknowledgments on reprinting.

- 3.1 Painting of people by DOZE (early 2000s). [page 37]
- 3.2 Painting of Ganesha by DOZE (early 2000s). [38]
- 4.1 The DJ instrument set-up optimized for scratching and beat juggling (image: K. F. Hansen). [47]
- 4.2 Images showing a short sequence of typical gestures from a DJ performance. [50]
- 5.1 Afrika Bambaataa and Charlie Chase at the Kips Bay Boys Club, Bronx, New York, 1981. Image JC_01131, The Joe Conzo, Jr Archive, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University. [58]
- 5.2 Afrika Bambaataa at Bronx River Projects, February 2, 1982. Photo by Sylvia Plachy (picture of Afrika Bambaataa courtesy of the Cornell University Hip-hop Archive). [59]
- 5.3 Party Flyer, “The Message: Don’t Waste Your Mind on Dust or Any Drugs That Harm Your Body,” Bronx, New York, 1981. Image HHC8052EE_0012, “T-Connection, Fri., Feb. 20, 1981.” Breakbeat Lenny Archive, 1980–2004 (#8052), Cornell: Hip Hop Party and Event Flyers, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University. [60]
- 9.1 George List, diagram from “The Boundaries of Speech and Song.” [125]
- 9.2 Graph of articulation and affective states in rap. [125]
- 9.3 “Playful” articulation: Digable Planets, “It’s Good to Be Here,” Ladybug Mecca’s verse (1:40–2:00), recorded on *Reachin’ (A New Refutation of Time and Space)*. Pendulum Records, 1993. 9 61414–2. [127]
- 9.4 “Angry” articulation: “Wu Tang Clan Ain’t Nuttin’ ta Fuck Wit’,” The RZA’s verse (0:14–0:43), recorded on *Enter the Wu-Tang (36 Chambers)*. Loud Records, 1993. 07863–66336–4. [128]
- 9.5 “Relaxed” articulation: Digital Underground, “Nuttin’ Nis Funky,” Big Money Odis’s verse (1:01–1:24), recorded on *This is an EP Release*. Tommy Boy Records, 1991. TBEP 964. [129]

x Figures

- 9.6 “Authoritative” articulation: Ice-T, “You Played Yourself,” last verse (3:14–4:02), recorded on *The Iceberg: Freedom of Speech . . . Just Watch What You Say*. Sire/Warner Bros., 1989. 9 26028–2. [130]
- 16.1 MC Frontalot. Credit: Phil Palios / Philthy Photography (with permission from Damien Hess). [224]
- 21.1 Senegalese woman rapper Toussa Senerap. [276]
- 22.1 The process of sample chopping in J Dilla’s *Donuts*. (a) The Escorts, “I Can’t Stand (To See You Cry)” (full sample at 1:23); (b) sample chopped into eighth notes, distributed among the pads of an Akai MPC sampler/drum machine; (c) MIDI piano roll of the “Baby” chop as performed on “Don’t Cry.” [284]
- 22.2 Created by Jay Hodgson, this image depicts the perception of rhythmic events in a heavily compressed aural mix. [286]
- 22.3 Beat deconstruction of “The Payback” done in Ableton Live. [287]

Music examples

- 8.1 A Tribe Called Quest, “Push It Along” (1990), 1:18–1:20 (first verse), recorded on *People’s Instinctive Travels and the Paths of Rhythm* (Jive Records, 1990, 1331–1-J). [page 104]
- 8.2(a) KRS-One, “MC’s Act Like They Don’t Know” (1995), 3:43–3:54, third verse, lyrical chart. Recorded on *MC’s Act Like They Don’t Know* (Jive Records, 1995, 01241–42321–1). [106]
- 8.2(b) KRS-One, “MC’s Act Like They Don’t Know” (1995), 3:43–3:54, third verse, rhythmic analysis. [106]
- 8.3 Absolute Beginner, “Hammerhart” (1998), 0:42–0:53, first verse, recorded on *Bambule* (Buback/University Music, 1998, 070 095–2, UMD 70095). [108]
- 8.4(a) Eminem, “Till I Collapse” (2002), 0:55–1:07, first verse, recorded on *The Eminem Show* (Interscope/Aftermath, 2002, 493 327–2), analysis of rhymes. [109]
- 8.4(b) Eminem, “Till I Collapse” (2002), 0:55–1:07, first verse, notation of delivery. [110]
- 8.4(c) Eminem, “Till I Collapse” (2002), 0:55–1:07, first verse, schema of rhymes. [112]
- 8.5 Dynamite Deluxe, “Wie jetzt” (2000), 0:49–0:59, first verse, recorded on *Deluxe Soundsystem* (Buback/EMI, 2000, 7243 5 25152 2 6, 7243–5 25152–2–6). [114]
- 9.1 Sampled guitar riff from De La Soul, “Say No Go,” recorded on *3 Feet High and Rising* (Tommy Boy Records, 1989, TBLP 1019). [120]
- 15.1 Sample A (mm. 70–71) Brandenburg Concerto No. 3, 1st movement. [214]
- 15.2 Sample B (mm. 68–69) Brandenburg Concerto No. 3, 1st movement. [215]

Contributors

Kyle Adams is Associate Professor of Music Theory at Indiana University. He has published on the analysis of sixteenth-century music in *Theoria* and the *Journal of Music Theory*, and on the analysis of rap music in *Music Theory Online*.

Regina N. Bradley, Ph.D., researches African American culture, specifically twentieth- and twenty-first-century African American literature, the American South, and hip-hop. Bradley is the founder of Outkasted Conversations, a critically acclaimed dialogue series that discusses hip-hop duo Outkast's impact on popular culture. She can be reached at www.redclayscholar.com.

Richard Bramwell is a Research Associate at the University of Cambridge. He completed his Ph.D. at the London School of Economics and Political Science. His teaching and research are in the fields of postcolonial studies, contemporary literature and culture, and the sociology of culture, with a focus on Black British and African American literary and vernacular cultures.

Brenna Reinhart Byrd is an Assistant Professor of German at the University of Kentucky. Her research interests include Germanic linguistics, Turkish-German identity, hip-hop studies, style and sociolinguistic variation, second language acquisition, and the history of the German language.

Christopher Deis specializes in the study of race and the politics of popular culture. He has taught courses on hip-hop culture and politics at a number of institutions including the University of Chicago and DePaul University, and has presented at national conferences and colloquia on the politics of popular culture in the USA.

Mike D'Errico is a Ph.D. candidate in the UCLA Department of Musicology, and the Digital Humanities graduate program. His research focuses on sound, software, and interface design in digital audio production, from beatmaking in hip-hop and electronic dance music to haptic interfaces in video games, apps, and mobile media.

Sujatha Fernandes is an Associate Professor of Sociology at Queens College and the Graduate Center, City University of New York. She is the author of *Who Can Stop the Drums? Urban Social Movements in Chávez's Venezuela* (2010); *Cuba Represent! Cuban Arts, State Power, and the Making of New Revolutionary Cultures* (2006); and *Close to the Edge: In Search of the Global Hip Hop Generation* (2011).

Travis L. Gosa is Assistant Professor of Africana Studies at Cornell University, where he teaches courses on education, music, and popular culture. Gosa is editor of *Remixing Change: Hip Hop & Obama* (Oxford University Press, 2014). He serves on the advisory board of Cornell's hip-hop library archive.

Kjetil Falkenberg Hansen is affiliated with the Sound and Music Computing Group at KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, where he was awarded his Ph.D. on analyzing and modeling scratch DJ performances. Current research interests are new interfaces for expressive performances, and rehabilitation and training through interacting with sound.

xiii Contributors

Geoff Harkness is Assistant Professor of Sociology at Morningside College. His book, *Chicago Hustle and Flow: Gangs, Gangsta Rap, and Social Class*, was published by University of Minnesota Press in 2014.

Anthony Kwame Harrison is the Gloria D. Smith Professor of Africana Studies at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. He is author of *Hip Hop Underground: The Integrity and Ethics of Racial Identification* and has published widely in the fields of popular music studies and qualitative research methodology.

Adam Haupt is an Associate Professor in the Centre for Film and Media Studies at the University of Cape Town. Haupt is the author of *Stealing Empire: P2P, Intellectual Property and Hip-Hop Subversion* (Human Sciences Research Council Press, 2008) and *Static Race and Representation in Post-apartheid Music, Media and Film* (Human Sciences Research Council Press, 2012).

Michael P. Jeffries is Associate Professor of American Studies at Wellesley College. He is the author of *Paint the White House Black: Barack Obama and the Meaning of Race in America* (Stanford University Press, 2013), and *Thug Life: Race, Gender, and the Meaning of Hip-Hop* (University of Chicago Press, 2011).

Imani Kai Johnson is an interdisciplinary scholar, specializing in the African diaspora, global popular culture, hip-hop, and dance. She is an Assistant Professor of Dance Studies at University of California Riverside. Her manuscript, "Dark Matter in B-Boying Cyphers: Race and Global Connection in Hip Hop," examines invisible forces within the ritual dance circles of breakers.

Loren Kajikawa teaches in the University of Oregon's School of Music and Dance where he serves as Assistant Professor, Ethnomusicology and Musicology. His book *Sounding Race in Rap Songs* (University of California Press) explores the relationship between stylistic change and racial formation in rap's first two decades as a commercial genre.

Oliver Kautny is Assistant Professor of Musicology and Music Education at the University Wuppertal. He has published various articles about hip-hop and co-edited *Die Stimme im Hip-Hop* (2009, with Fernand Hörner) and *Sampling im Hip-Hop* (2010, with Adam Krims).

Noriko Manabe is Assistant Professor of Music at Princeton University. She has published articles on the antinuclear movement, Japanese rap, DJs, the mobile internet, and children's songs. Her monographs, *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised: Music and the Antinuclear Movement in Japan Post-Fukushima Daiichi* and *The Revolution Remixed: A Typology of Intertextuality in Protest Songs*, are forthcoming from Oxford University Press.

Ivor Miller is a cultural historian specializing in the African diaspora in the Caribbean and the Americas. His book *Aerosol Kingdom* (University Press of Mississippi, 2002, reprint 2010) documents and interprets the creation of hip-hop culture in New York City from its beginnings in the late 1960s until the present, focusing on the Afro-Caribbean and African American contributions resulting from twentieth-century migrations.

Ali Colleen Neff is a media anthropologist and Ph.D. Drawing from her dual ethnographic fields of urban Dakar, Senegal, and the Mississippi Delta, and her experience as a turntablist and film-maker, her work centers on the anthropology of media, music, and sound. These and other work can be found at her website, www.ethnolyrical.org.

xiv Contributors

Nicole Hodges Persley is an Assistant Professor of Theater at the University of Kansas. She is a professional actress and producer. Her forthcoming book, *Sampling Blackness: Performing African Americanness in Hip-hop Theater and Performance*, explores non-African American hip-hop theater, conceptual art, and dance artists from the United States, Korea, and the UK.

Alice Price-Styles is a freelance writer based in London. She earned her BA in English and Drama at Goldsmiths College, where her research interests became music and spoken word poetry. Since graduating she has traveled often, interviewed a range of musicians and artists, worked with record label Delicious Vinyl, and now regularly contributes to publications such as *Wax Poetics*, *Dazed & Confused*, and *NYLON Magazine*.

Amanda Sewell is a professional academic editor in Traverse City, Michigan. She holds a Ph.D. in musicology from Indiana University. Her scholarship has appeared in the *Journal of the Society for American Music* and the *Journal of Popular Music Studies*.

Chris Tabron is a multi-platinum record producer and mixer based in New York City who has worked with a wide array of artists including Beyoncé, Blondie, Flume and Mary J. Blige. A Ph.D. candidate at New York University, his doctoral work focuses on hip-hop production in New York from 1989 to 1999.

Justin A. Williams is Lecturer in Music at the University of Bristol, and the author of *Rhyming and Stealing: Musical Borrowing in Hip-Hop* (2013) for University of Michigan Press's Tracking Pop series. In addition to editing this volume, he is co-editing (with Katherine Williams) *The Cambridge Companion to the Singer-Songwriter*.

Christina Zanfagna is an Assistant Professor of Ethnomusicology at Santa Clara University. She has published on subjects such as gospel rap, hip-hop "krump" dancing, and digital DJing practices. She is currently writing a book on holy hip-hop culture in Los Angeles.

Acknowledgments

This book was a nerdy dream of mine, the kind that young academics have when they get enthusiastic about an academic book series they “grew up” with. As a student, then as an educator, my copies of books such as *The Cambridge Companions to Jazz*, *Beethoven*, *Rock and Pop*, and *Schubert* are well worn, and used year on year for numerous purposes. Victoria Cooper helped make my nerdy dream a reality. Special thanks to her and to Fleur Jones and Emma Collison at the press for their patience and advice. I would also like to thank all the contributors to the volume and for their enthusiasm for the project. Many of the authors are scholars whom I met at conferences where we ended up having long and passionate discussions about hip-hop, and I thank them for always reinvigorating me with passion for the topic. I’d like to think we are the Wu-Tang Clan of hip-hop academics, a diverse collective with different skills that has created a force more powerful than the sum of its parts.

Many authors were able to use their personal interviews with a number of practitioners and scholars (Amiri Baraka, Doze Green, MC Lars, MC Frontalot, Compton Virtue, to name a few) and I want to thank all the interviewees and those who gave permission to use photos for the volume. Special thanks to Belinda Lawley for letting us use two of her photos from the Breakin’ Convention in Sadler’s Wells for both the front and back covers, and thanks to Dave Barros at Sadler’s Wells for finding them in the archives. I would also like to thank my students at Bristol University who took my Hip-hop Music and Culture class in spring 2014. The class provided a useful forum to test and discuss many of the ideas that follow. Thanks to my wife Katherine for her support, as always.

A large debt, personally and professionally, is owed to my former Ph.D. supervisor. All who study hip-hop, but especially those who analyze hip-hop music, are indebted to the work of the late Adam Krims. As Kyle Adams rightly states in his chapter: “No one contributed quite as much to the analysis of hip-hop as Adam Krims; in fact, analytical approaches can productively be divided into ‘Krims’ and ‘Other.’” Professor Krims had agreed to contribute two chapters to this volume (one on Russian rap and another on geography), but passed away suddenly in September 2012. Professor Krims’s work has touched everyone working on hip-hop scholarship and thus looms as an important presence and influence on this book and the entire field. He had an extremely important professional influence on me, and I am happy to say he was also a friend. The book is very much dedicated to his memory.