

Hip Hop music

Hip Hop culture emerged on the streets of New York in the 1970's, when African American DJs created a new sound. At block parties, DJ's played records two at a time, mixing and scratching the records for effect. They talked over the top of the music, a style which soon became known as rapping. The new sounds inspired an acrobatic new dance style known as break dancing, and rival gangs held dance-offs, competing in a non-violent way. Hip Hop culture today has four major elements: MCing or rapping, DJing or scratching with turntables, break dancing, and graffiti art.

Hip hop music, sometimes called rap music (though rapping is not always a part), usually features a vocal style of speaking or chanting over the rhythmic beats and other music. Hip hop often includes sampling of music from records of other musicians, and it may include beatboxing or synthesized rhythmic beats.

Hip Hop music in Missouri

Hip hop music is very strong in the Midwest and especially in Missouri. In St. Louis, Nelly, St. Lunatics, Chingy and Toya are just a few of the successful artists. In Kansas City, TechN9ne has been one of the leading artists.

Hip Hop Bios

Nelly

Cornell Iral Haynes (born 1974), known as Nelly, is a rapper, singer and songwriter who moved as a teenager to University City, a suburb of St. Louis, with his mother. He formed the St. Lunatics with his friends Ali, Murphy Lee, Kyjuan and Slo'Down, and his half-brother City Spud in high school. Nelly went solo, signed with Universal Music in 1999, and released his debut single "Country Grammar" which hit the charts and led to a debut solo album as well as an album with the St. Lunatics. The album Country Grammar was released in 2000, opening at number three in the *Billboard* 200 charts, and was certified platinum in 2004. Nelly's second solo album, *Nellyville*, was released in 2002, opening at No. 1 on Billboard's Top 200 Music Albums, with the single "Hot in Herre" a number one hit. He has performed on Super Bowl halftime shows, appeared on television and in films, won numerous awards, and worked with Vatterott College to create the Ex'treme Institute by Nelly to teach music production skills in downtown St. Louis.

Eminem

Rapper Marshall Bruce Mathers (born 1972), known as Eminem, was born in St. Joseph, Missouri and spent part of his early years there and in Kansas City before making his home in Detroit. Early support from Dr. Dre helped his career and by 1999 he had formed his own label, Shady Records and he has subsequently earned 13 Grammys and other awards, with some of his songs utilizing an alter ego, Slim Shady. "Lose Yourself" was the first hip-hop song to earn an Academy Award for Best Original Song in 2003, and *Billboard* crowned him Artist of the Decade (2000-2009) with more than 32 albums sold in the United States.

Article on Hip Hop

Nelly – and St. Louis hip-hop – officially arrived 20 years ago

With ‘Country Grammar,’ his unlikely phenomenon of a debut album, University City rapper delivered – and then some

By Kevin Johnson, Post-Dispatch Pop Music Critic

St. Louis rapper Nelly brought a mighty Midwest swing to the music world with “Country Grammar,” his unlikely phenomenon of a debut album, which marks its 20th anniversary June 27.

With the album in 2000, he cleared a path straight to the top during a big release year with new albums from Britney Spears, Coldplay, ‘N Sync, Green Day, Madonna, Outkast, U2, Ludacris, Erykah Badu and Sade.

“Country Grammar” is in a rare class of hip-hop albums to be awarded a diamond certification, selling more than 10 million copies.

In early 2000, Universal Records executives invited VIPs to Blueberry Hill to hear the label’s buzzy new rapper, University City native Cornell Haynes Jr. He had been plucked from his group, the St. Lunatics, for a shot at stardom.

Though everyone in the room was rooting for him, no one new Nelly would be the next big thing.

At the time, there had been only a couple of rappers with St. Louis ties to make any real noise nationally: Domino (“Ghetto Jam”), who claimed Long Beach over St. Louis because California wielded more hip-hop cred, and Sylk Smoov (“Trick Wit a Good Rap”), credited as the first St. Louis rapper with a major record deal.

The deck may have been staked against Nelly. According to his Universal publicist in 2000, hip-hop media was hesitant to cover this unconnected, unproven St. Louis rapper after hearing his single. Billboard magazine’s rap editor at the time said he couldn’t stand Nelly’s album – though he’d later come around.

Ultimately, Nelly’s newness paid off. His music felt like a fresh alternative to the hip-hop coming from the coasts.

And he was always sure of himself when it came to introducing the masses to St. Louis hip-hop.

“I think I can do it, for sure. That’s what I want to do and that’s the plan,” he told the Post-Dispatch before the release of “Country Grammar.” “I look to Missouri as being the last in everything – the last to give up slavery to the last to get on the map. But nothing comes easy, and everybody has to wait their turn. So we sharpened up our skills, worked harder and appreciated everything we got.”

As he prepared to release “Country Grammar,” he promised listeners would get something they’d never heard before. “It’s well-rounded, universal,” he said. “I got it for the streets, I got it for the clubs, I got it for your house, I got it for your car. I’m showing you I can do it all.”

He delivered – and then some.

The “Country Grammar” single, released in February 2000, was something all its own. The insanely catchy, singsong tune was brazen right off the top, mixing a classic children’s rhyme with a gun reference.

Apparently, it was just what the world was waiting for. The song was a top 10 Billboard 100 hit and No. 1 on Billboard’s Hot Rap Songs chart.

The album came next, a St. Louis hip-hop affair that produced several hit singles: “E.I.,” “Ride Wit Me” and “Batter Up.”

The album’s unabashed St. Louis flow included the use of local lingo, the song “St. Louie,” posse cut “Steal the Show” with the St. Lunatics, production by Jason “Jay-E” Epperson of Basement Beats, and an intro and outro by Cedric the Entertainer of Berkeley.

Nelly received Grammy nominations – rap solo performance (“Country Grammar”) and best rap album – but lost to Eminem. Other honors soon followed, though: an MTV Video Music Award for best rap video (“Ride Wit Me”), a World Music Award for world’s best-selling new artist, a BET Award for best new artist and a Soul Train Music Award for best new artist.

Nelly – and St. Louis hip-hop – had officially arrived.

It didn’t take long for his local influence to resonate. Most notable was Chingy (“Right Thurr,” “Holiday Inn,” “One Call Away,” “Pullin Me Back”), who once told the Post-Dispatch that Nelly’s success influenced him in a big way.

“It opened the door and let me know, at the same time I was doing my own music, that you can be an artist from here and make it in a major way,” he said. “I saw it and said someone from St. Louis can actually be serious, and get it done. That’s the importance of that album to me. It was a lot of encouragement there.”

Others included Jibbs (“Chain Hang Low”), J-Kwon (“Topsy”), Huey (“Pop, Lock & Drop It”), Ebony Eyez (“In Ya Face”) and Pretty Willie (“Lay Your Body Down”), while Penelope, Potzee, Da Banggaz, Joka, Spaide R.I.P.P.E.R. and Gena (now known as Fresco Kane) all brought new heat from St. Louis.

There was also the rise of those in Nelly’s direct camp. St. Lunatics released their own album, “Free City,” and there were solo hits from group members Murphy Lee (“Wat Da Hook Gon Be”) and Ali (“Boughetto”).

A number of hits came out of St. Louis, but the music – undemanding with an undeniably feel-good party vibe – often wasn’t highly regarded.

Nelly continued to ride the wave, upping his game and adding production from the Neptunes, Jermaine Dupri and Just Blaze for chart-topping follow-ups including “Nellyville” (2002), “Sweat” (2004) and “Suit” (2004).

He has performed at the Super Bowl; won Grammy Awards (“Dilemma,” “Shake Your Tailfeather,” “Hot in Herre”); debuted “Suit” and “Sweat” at No. 1 and No. 2 simultaneously on the Billboard 200; and landed country smashes with Tim McGraw (“Over and Over”) and Florida Georgia Line (“Cruise”), paving the way for Lil Nas X.

But that initial rush of success with “Country Grammar” surely means the most, not just to Nelly but to St. Louis.