

examiner.com

Black Music Month 2014: June 13 musical salute to Outkast



Shamontiel Vaughn
African American Entertainment Examiner
| Follow:

June 12, 2014

It's Black Music Month. Enjoy the 2014 series. Support the artists. Buy their licensed music. And turn up as you dance along.

Related Photo:



Photo by Kevin Winter

Brief history: In 2010, I wrote a music series honoring Black Music Month on Associated Content's site (republished on **Examiner**). The focus was to honor new R&B singers, veteran R&B singers, solo rappers, and evenly split the musical salute between female and male rappers. The only artists I was not willing to split up were Salt n' Pepa because they worked as a unit. In 2014, it's about time to salute

more artists, but in the spirit of Salt n' Pepa's legacy, R&B groups and rap groups will be included. The pattern in 2014 will be newer R&B singers (from 2000 to present), R&B and/or hip-hop groups, veteran R&B singers, and then solo rappers, still evenly split between women and men.

Black Music Month Turn Up Factor "Turn down for what?": Outkast was one of those groups that made even the biggest hip-hop snob give them a free pass. The East Coast ruled the charts in hip-hop during the "Golden Era," but Outkast made Atlanta seem like the coolest place to be way before the city was as popular as it is now. Of course now

southern rappers from many cities run the radio so it's much easier for artists to slide in from southern regions, as well as the East Coast, West Coast and Midwest. But in terms of lyricism plus beats plus creativity, nobody is messing with Outkast. Readers would be well within their rights to challenge my opinion for the **June 3 feature of Method Man and Redman** that states, "as a team, there is no other male duo who meshes as well as these two do." While Method Man and Redman have disappeared to live their lives and Andre 3000 did the same, every single semblance of either Andre "Andre 3000" Benjamin and Antwan Andre "Big Boi" Patton putting out a song was met with articles wondering if there would be an **Outkast reunion**. Even when Andre 3000 was doing Gillette commercials or starring in films, such as "Four Brothers" and "Jimi: All Is by My Side," people were still focused on "Idlewild." It was hope of new albums, songs and the group never breaking up, which they never did. The reunion questions must've been annoying, but there are so very few rap groups who come out, have such a steady success rate and don't sell their souls to record labels. And neither Big Boi or Andre 3000 were willing to stop being the Outkast members that they always were. Sure, they grew up. They also tried new styles. But they always kept it as funkalicious as they originally intended, and even drastically different tracks from what is expected of hip-hop sounded like them. Instead of forcing themselves to expand, they forced hip-hop to expand.

My Connection/First Memory to Artist: I primarily write in my journal or talk to a select few people when I need to vent, but if neither is available, I immediately turn on an Outkast song. For moments when I'm annoyed with needy people, I turn to Andre 3000's verse on "Elevator." I played "Movin' Cool" nonstop during my junior year of college while dealing with the highs and lows with a particular fellow (rhyme intentional). And when someone truly pisses me off, I turn on "The Whole World" immediately. I loved this song so much that it was my cell phone background music for months. Outkast is so good that they even got me interested in a guy because he had "Prototype" on his MySpace page. Name an experience that a woman goes through (outside of marriage and motherhood) and I can tie my own to Outkast's songs some kind of way. They're such an incredible group and equally talented as solo artists. There are moments I favor Big Boi over Andre 3000, primarily when I'm listening to "Movin' Cool," "So Fresh, So Clean" and "Morris Brown." But I can get so hype over Andre 3000's verse on "Green Light" and "I Do," and solely listened to him on the double disc "Speakerboxxx/The Love Below."

Numbers Don't Lie: Some of their songs were hood classics but not necessarily beating down the Billboard charts. Other songs got so comfortable on the Billboard charts that they

might as well have ordered lemonade. Three songs that made it to number one on the Top 100 Billboard charts were "Ms. Jackson" (23 weeks on the charts), "Hey Ya" (32 weeks on the charts) and "Roses" (21 weeks on the charts). But when the Hip-Hop/R&B Airplay charts come into play, "So Fresh So Clean" surfaces at number eight (on the Hip-Hop/R&B charts for 33 weeks).

For the first series of Black Music Month artists republished on Examiner (originally on Associated Content), [click here](#) to see all 30.

*Shamontiel is also **The Wire Examiner**, and for the gladiators, she's the **Scandal Examiner**, too.*

*Follow **Shamontiel on Pinterest** for all of her latest TV, book, music and movie reviews; photo galleries; entertainment saving tips and other entries, or subscribe to her National African American Entertainment channel at the top of this page. Also, follow her **@BlackHealthNews**, and follow this **Pinterest board** to read her **celebrity interviews**.*