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4 slept-on entertainment projects from 2015 to 2016 that represent hip-hop the best



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4 slept-on entertainment projects from 2015 to 2016 that represent hip-hop the best



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★ MOVIES TV MUSIC

There's more to hip-hop than just the four elements: breaking, emceeing, deejaying and graffiti writing. And although today's hip-hop sometimes seems like a competition between who can use AutoTune the best or who can brag the most about guns and killing, there's far more to the culture. For the late bloomers who couldn't be around for the Golden Era of Hip-Hop, these four projects are not only spot-on for what emceeing used to be but also highlight the culture itself.



(Photo credit: @FreshOffABC/Twitter)

"[Fresh Off the Boat](#)": There's no question that creator Eddie Huang knows his hip-hop. Watch one episode of "Fresh Off the Boat" and '80s babies immediately shrink into the childhood version of themselves. It's certainly worth noting that this is the first time a Chinese prime time TV sitcom has been seen and a major hit. Not only does it school viewers on Chinese New Year and the qualms of Americanizing Chinese names, but it's by far one of the most essential sitcom representations of hip-hop for Generation X and Y to enjoy.

There is currently no other show that truly appreciates a girl playing "Nothin' But a G Thang" on the flute but "Fresh Off the Boat." Eddie, his brothers and father not only give an outstanding (and hilarious) Boyz II Men tribute, but "Fresh Off the Boat" pulls out hip-hop gems that a true fan would recognize: "I love Burger King bathrooms" lines, "You always was a black queen, momma" birthday cards and singing along to Dove Shack's "Summertime in the LBC."



(Photo credit: @TheBreaksVH1/Twitter)

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"[The Breaks](#)": VH1's "The Breaks" gave the era a go with actor/singer [Mack Wilds](#) (popularly known from "90210" and "The Wire"), although many viewers complained about the wardrobe and hairstyles. But what this TV series did was what many hip-hop films don't do: It pointed out the often left out women's role in hip-hop through Afton Williamson's character, Nikki. Even an Oscar-worthy film like "Straight Outta Compton" all but left out hip-hop female influences at the time. This TV movie not only showed Nikki in action but made her as much of an influential character as Mack Wilds' role as DeeVee. The show was such a hit on VH1 that the station decided to [pick it up as a TV series](#) later this year.



(Photo credit: @aka_delo/Instagram)

"[Unsung Hollywood: 'New York Undercover'](#)": From 1994 to 1998, this was one of the most popular TV shows for hip-hop fans. Not only was it the first time viewers had ever seen two minority actors in a cop series, but it was just outstanding acting overall from both Malik Yoba and Michael DeLorenzo. This episode gave a behind-the-scenes look at why the actors went on a temporary strike, how FOX ruined the show after not realizing how influential it was within hip-hop culture (on the same night as "Martin" and "Living Single") and how much rapping got its shine on the show. Today's TV viewers have "Empire" to give sneak peeks of hot hip-hop and R&B acts, but "New York Undercover" did it first, featuring rising or legendary stars like MC Lyte, Biggie, Sticky Fingaz, Yo-Yo and Ice T.

(Side note: "Unsung" episodes dedicated to Whodini, The Fat Boys, Big Daddy Kane, Kool Moe Dee, Heavy D and The Boyz, The Geto Boys, Bone Thugs-n-Harmony, DJ Quik, Kid n' Play, Yo-Yo, Nate Dogg, EPMD and Arrested Development are also worth watching.)



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(Photo credit: @DopeMovie/Twitter)

"Dope": This 2015 film was a sleeper hit that blended today's flock of hip-hop fans with the memories of yesteryear. One of the most amusing scenes to watch was Malcolm (played by Shameik Moore) talking to Dom (played by Rakim Mayers, popularly known as A\$AP Rocky) about '90s hip-hop. Malcolm, who was sporting a high-top fade and going on about how cool '90s hip-hop was, had his dates all wrong, and Dom was quick to point that out. Golden Era fans applauded from their couches.

Not only did A\$AP Rocky do a noticeably great job at acting (along with the rest of the cast full of new actors), but this film wasn't just a hip-hop film. It also explored rock, the LGBT community, the drug trade, gangs, school violence, nerd life and African-Americans versus higher education. And who wouldn't want to see Zoe Kravitz, the offspring of Lenny Kravitz and Lisa Bonet, make her star acting debut? Somehow the writer Rick Famuyiwa managed to make the film comedic, oddly sexy and thought-provoking without ever losing its hip-hop credibility. If this film isn't in your Netflix queue, it certainly should be.

All images

