

Black Music Month 2014: June 5 musical salute to Drake



Shamontiel Vaughn
African American Entertainment Examiner
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June 4, 2014

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

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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.

couple. And while I know he's had some pretty questionable and goofy lyrics (ex. the chorus of Baby's "**4 My Town (Play Ball)**"), I found far more times when he took the time to rap something worth hearing rather than the garbage I hear on the radio 95 percent of the time. He doesn't hesitate to rap about his grandmother, his mom's health and his own friends' health as quickly as he would some woman he met at the mall, his bank account or his lifestyle. There's nothing wrong with rapping about what you know, but very few artists are willing to expand their topic matter. Drake's voice; his looks; the bright white smile and the unapologetic intelligence in his interviews made me really zoom in on him.

I've lost count of the number of times he's made a great song even better. The top five collaborations that I'll never get tired of hearing are Timbaland "Say Something," his verse on "In the Morning," the version of "Fancy" with Mary J. Blige and Swizz Beatz, and "Missing You" and "Replacement Girl" with Trey Songz from his mixtape.

Numbers Don't Lie: The Billboard charts and Drake have never been strangers in his entire rapping career. His first two radio singles did incredible numbers on the charts: "Best I Ever Had" skyrocketed to number 2 and spent 24 weeks in the Top 100. "Successful" peaked at number 17 and stayed on the charts for 18 weeks.

Songs that made it on the Billboard Top 100 for 10 weeks or less: "Pound Cake / Paris Morton Music 2" (10 weeks, peaked at number 65),

Songs that made it on the Billboard Top 100 for 15 weeks or less: "Worst Behavior" (11 weeks, peaked at number 89)

Songs that made it on the Billboard Top 100 for 20 weeks or less: "I'm Going In" (17 weeks, peaked at number 40), "Over" (20 weeks, peaked at number 14), "Miss Me" (20 weeks, peaked at number 15), "Fancy" (20 weeks, peaked at number 25), "Marvin's Room" (18 weeks, peaked at number 21), "Make Me Proud" (20 weeks, peaked at number 9), "HYFR (Hell Yeah F*****g Right)" (20 weeks, peaked at number 62), "Crew Love" (20 weeks, peaked at number 80), "All Me" (20 weeks, peaked at number 20), "The Language" (20 weeks, peaked at number 51)

Songs that made it on the Billboard Top 100 for 25 weeks or less: "Forever" (24 weeks, peaked at number 8), "Find Your Love" (21 weeks, peaked at number 5), "Headlines" (25 weeks, peaked at number 13), "Started from the Bottom" (22 weeks, peaked at number 6)

Songs that made it on the Billboard Top 100 for 35 weeks or less: "Take Care" (34 weeks, peaked at number 7), "Hold On, We're Going Home" (33 weeks, peaked at number 4)

My Personal Rant: I have not done this with any of the first 30 artists and probably won't for the other 29 in 2014, but I sincerely have a bone to pick with people who hate Drake solely on the strength of him being successful and not being afraid to own up to his feelings. For adult boys who think the n-word is a compliment, the b-word and/or ho is a synonym for women, and the highest goals to have in life are gawdy jewelry and unnecessarily tricked out cars to get it, I expect nothing less than mediocre standards. But it bugs the hell out of me to see people refuse to support an obviously talented artist because he's not disrespecting women nonstop. Hell, LL Cool J and Big Daddy Kane made a killing off of being able to be ladies' men in the rap game but still be able to go hard. Nelly has done quite nicely for himself, too. And quiet as it's kept, there are *married* rappers (ex. Ice Cube, Method Man, Big Boi, Snoop Dogg, T.I., Jay Z) and producers (Dr. Dre, Timbaland, Pharrell, Swizz Beatz).

I can't wrap my mind around men who hate songs that aren't disrespecting women. If you hate women that much, date other men and save women the bitter rants and name calling. Before the age of 21, I could ignore songs being disrespectful as hell to women and just dance to the beat. By the age of 25, I'd wiped my hands of most of the misogynistic lyrics. I can still respect the producer who made the beat, but I'll cut a song clean off as soon as I hear someone ridiculing women through a song. I'm blown away by men who can't stand man-hating songs (ex. Jasmine Sullivan's "Bust Your Windows" or TLC's "Scrubs") or women's empowerment songs (ex. Destiny's Child "Independent Woman" or Ne-Yo and Jamie Foxx's "She Got Her Own"), but you think women are overreacting when they're not willing to get low to a song insulting them from the hook to the chorus to the lyrics. I don't even listen to the handful of Drake songs that do this. Hell, even Mr. "Give Me That" Webbie took time out to salute women on "Independent."

But as author/speaker Michael Eric Dyson said in the June 2014 issue of Ebony magazine, "His predictable alienation of men with the emotional IQ of a brick has been matched by a surprisingly negative female reaction." While my expectations are low for the men Dyson described, I'm almost always stunned when I hear women say they don't Drake for being too emotional. Girl, aim higher. You have got to think more of yourself than someone to call you all out of your name, be disrespectful for fun, and be physically and mentally violent. Do yourself a favor. Date more Drakes and less losers. I'm sure he has his fair share of

women with heartbreaks (he raps about that), but there's nothing wrong with cuffing the right woman. Listen to **these hip-hop love songs**. Tell the knucklehead part of your brain to have a library moment (in more vulgar terminology, tell it to STFU). And, ladies, realize you deserve better.

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.*

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