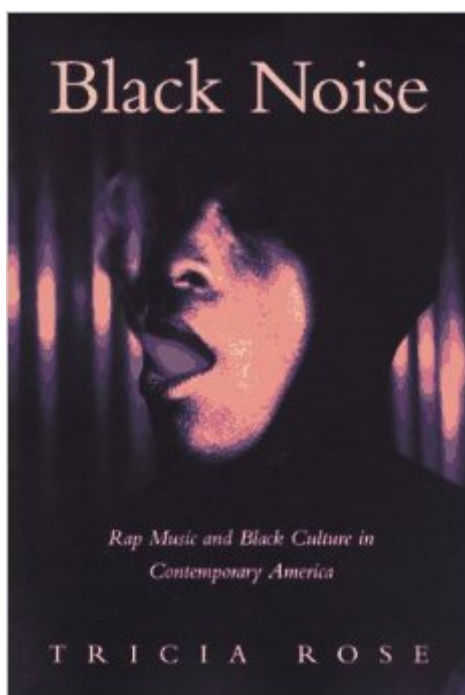


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Black Noise: Rap Music And Black Culture In Contemporary America (Music/Culture)



Synopsis

From its beginnings in hip hop culture, the dense rhythms and aggressive lyrics of rap music have made it a provocative fixture on the American cultural landscape. In *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America*, Tricia Rose, described by the *New York Times* as a "hip hop theorist," takes a comprehensive look at the lyrics, music, cultures, themes, and styles of this highly rhythmic, rhymed storytelling and grapples with the most salient issues and debates that surround it. Assistant Professor of Africana Studies and History at New York University, Tricia Rose sorts through rap's multiple voices by exploring its underlying urban cultural politics, particularly the influential New York City rap scene, and discusses rap as a unique musical form in which traditional African-based oral traditions fuse with cutting-edge music technologies. Next she takes up rap's racial politics, its sharp criticisms of the police and the government, and the responses of those institutions. Finally, she explores the complex sexual politics of rap, including questions of misogyny, sexual domination, and female rappers' critiques of men. But these debates do not overshadow rappers' own words and thoughts. Rose also closely examines the lyrics and videos for songs by artists such as Public Enemy, KRS-One, Salt N' Pepa, MC Lyte, and L. L. Cool J. and draws on candid interviews with Queen Latifah, music producer Eric "Vietnam" Sadler, dancer Crazy Legs, and others to paint the full range of rap's political and aesthetic spectrum. In the end, Rose observes, rap music remains a vibrant force with its own aesthetic, "a noisy and powerful element of contemporary American popular culture which continues to draw a great deal of attention to itself."

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Customer Reviews

Rap music is the subject of much criticism and debate. Controversial lyrics, loud dance sounds, and misinterpreted music videos have led rap and subsequently the hip hop movement to fall under intense scrutiny. In *Black Noise*, Tricia Rose enters this scene of intense arguments surrounding Hip Hop, and offers a unique view of Hip Hop: the view of a historian, scholar, professor. Rose takes on debates regarding Hip Hop and grounds them in academic research and history, unravelling the complexities of the genre. *Black Noise* begins by explaining the importance of graffiti and b-boying in Hip-Hop/Rap. For this reason, Tricia Rose successfully communicated the relationship between graffiti, b-boying, and rap as black noise--black expression. Unfortunately, because the historical content of this text is limited to the relationship between Graffiti and b-boying within the black community--as it should--the text consequently loses insight on the contributions from non-black ethnic groups to these Hip-Hop elements. While Tricia Rose sought to make the black community the focal point of her writing, it seems confining to discussing the emergence of graffiti and B-boying without acknowledging its influence from/on different cultures (i.e Greek, Latino, and Asian) Rose provides the reader a historical background explaining the emergence of these distinct forms of expression within the Hip Hop domain and greater black culture. She draws a picture of postindustrial New York, influenced by the growth of multinational telecommunications networks, technological revolution, global economic competition, new migration patterns from Third World countries, and changing divisions of labor.

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