

# The Connection Between Hip- Hop and Fashion

The connection between fashion and music

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In this paper you will be able to read how the music industry played a major role in the biggest trends in fashion. How musicians collaborated with major fashion brands resulting in starting their own clothing to build an empire. Fashion has been used in a way for an artist to expand their image outside of the music industry, being able to reach consumers in different demographics. The fashion industry. Also, music has been used in multiple ways to shape the fashion industry, showing there is a relationship between the two with the use of advertising techniques from clothing companies.

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Fashion has always served as an indicator of the times. What we wear depends on who we are and most importantly what we listen to. The music industry plays a massive role in determining what fashions are in or out. Music is one of the biggest influences in the world and its effect on fashion is second to none. Musicians utilize fashion to help expand their brand. Every major artist from the likes of Run D.M.C, Kanye West, LL Cool J and Rihanna have had an influence on fashion's biggest trends.

The Sixties proved to be a massive era for shaping the future of fashion and influencing people to be a whole lot more free-spirited when it came to dressing. Boundaries were broken across the fashion industry in the same way that musical boundaries were being broken. During the sixties musicians like the beetles helped shape men's wear. The Beatles popularized bright colors, paisley suits and shirts and trousers with floral patterns. The Beatles also made Indian-influenced fashions such as collarless shirts and sandals popular. Lennon also popularized wearing solid white suits, reflecting an interest in minimalist design that also influenced the cover of the album *The Beatles*. This mixture of casual wear and formal clothing could be seen in The Beatles' later years as they grew beards and flocked towards more hippie Indian clothing. The music of the seventies affected fashion. The followers of folk and psychedelic rock bands dressed in bell-bottom jeans and casual shirts with bold patterns such as paisley or floral landscapes. Females wore long, flowing cotton dresses known as maxi dresses. Later in the '70s, the punk music scene inspired its fans to dress in torn clothing, black leather/rebellious and anti-establishment styles. In the 1980s television began to emerge impacting everyday wear for both men and woman with the creation of the term 'yuppie' which stands for Young Urban Professionals handbook. The handbook served as a guide for how a young profession should dress in the workplace while being able to fit in with those around them. In the 90s Hip-Hop

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music was at an all-time high with the help of the show *Yo MTV Raps* which displayed the fashion of musicians as well giving fans a more personal feel with the artist. Rap group Run D.M.C was known for wearing Adidas tracksuits with white shell toe sneakers unlaced. The group created a song titled 'My Adidas' where they rapped about how many pairs of sneakers they own and how they styled them. During one of their concerts in New York City attended by thousands of people including a senior employee of Adidas. While performing the song the senior employee noticed the reaction of the audience and decided to grant the group a million-dollar endorsement deal to produce a limited-edition version of shell toe Adidas. Run D.M.C paved the way and starting a trend for other musicians to gain endorsement deals with other sportswear brands many artists such as Kanye West, Teyana Taylor and Pharrell Williams gained success in the shoe business with their endorsement deals from Adidas. Others like Rihanna have been the face of Puma and Travis Scott has done modeling for another sportswear company, Nike. These companies use musicians because the artist has a high social status in culture and by giving them an endorsement to the brand it tells the public that they give their stamp of approval, and it is much more likely that the brand will become popular.

In the film [Fresh Dressed](#) explained about a time where major fashion companies began to use Hip-Hop artists to help expand the variety of consumers to their brand but wasn't showing respect to the artist making them just feel like a marketing strategy. For Example, in 1999 clothing company The GAP asked popular rapper LL Cool J to participate in their commercial where he would be commissioned to freestyle about the brand and doing it while wearing their clothes. Due to the lack of respect the rapper still participated in the commercial but took a daring move wearing a baseball cap made by a up incoming brand FUBU while rapping in the commercial. According to the book [Free Stylin' :How Hip-Hop Changed The Fashion Industry](#)

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LL Cool J let the GAP company know that he was the official face and spokesperson of FUBU which was a competitor. The result of LL Cool J's move he managed to get The GAP's marketing team that was there during filming fired for not noticing the hat he wore. FUBU benefited from the commercial gaining national attention and became associated with another well-known brand despite being competitors. Since starting in the commercial LL Cool J started the pattern of rapper artist becoming the face for up incoming brands such as Tupac being the face for Karl Kani refusing to receive profit, Nas , TLC, Snoop dog being placed in advertisements and invited to walk in fashion shows for Ralph Lauren.

Artist like singer Rihanna turned entrepreneur used her musical talents gained likely-ness with multiple designers turning herself into a fashion icon. Rihanna has collaborated with a lot of designers such as Balmain, Manolo Blahnik, first black spokesperson for Dior but her major collaboration was with athletic company Puma market for female leisure gear. In 2014 Rihanna became the creative director of Puma and has designed several sell-out shoe collections along with debuting a collection during New York fashion week where she mixed high-end with street style. Since then, Rihanna has been able to dominate the fashion industry pushing out her own luxury fashion house brand named after herself "Fenty" where she is highlighting streetwear to a broader audience making herself the first woman of color to have a fashion house under a well-known luxury house besides clothing the singer produced multiple products such as sunglasses, a cosmetic brand Fenty Beauty where she is hands on in the process creating make up for women of all shades. During New York Fashion Week Rihanna showcase her lingerie brand collection titled "Savage X Fenty" sticking to her musical roots she managed to have other musicians perform giving the show's audience the feeling of being at a concert rather than a traditional fashion show using dance as a key role in showcase the new collection. Through Rihanna

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influence on fashion, she was able to expand her image and likeliness to other consumers outside of the music industry. Rapper Kanye West is one of the biggest fashion icons in the music industry with his major success in the shoe business with his brand Yeezy. Kanye West uses the ones of the theories of fashion adoption the upward flow also known as streetwear with the production of sweatpants, bomber jackets, oversized hoodies, and distressed denim jeans. Like Rihanna, Kanye West uses his fashion shows to show case his music for example during the premiere of his collection Yeezy Season 3 Kanye used his anticipated album at the time “The Life of Pablo” as the soundtrack to the show giving the fans the opportunity to have access to the new collection and album showing how music and fashion can go together. Kanye influences the trend of streetwear which can be seen by fellow rapper ASAP Rocky and his partnership with Guess producing a collection of distress denim jeans and oversized denim jackets.

Music videos play a role in the development of fashion trends as well. Fans take fashion from their favorite music videos for inspiration when creating an outfit. Fans are most likely to buy from the brands that sell what they see their favorite music artist wearing. For example, in Drake's music video for his hit song ‘hotline bling’ the rapper sported a pink puffer coat pushing the sales of puffer jackets to an all-time high. Female artists like Ariana Grande, Cardi B and Rihanna have influenced young women through their street style looks that incorporate things like oversized clothing, ripped jeans, that still look feminine and daring outfits with patterns and embellishments. Their music has also affected how women wear street style because much of their music has undertones of feminism and empowerment which translates into their fashion. Although Kanye West's clothing can be seen as a replication of the grunge era from the early 1990s, he has incorporated one of today's biggest trends which is street style into his designs. Street style emerges from many diverse types of young influencers such as models, TV

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personalities and especially hip-hop artists in the music industry. Most people gain their inspiration for street style through images they see on social media and inside magazines.

In Conclusion, Music and fashion are entangled in a continuous cycle that will always serve as reliable indicators of society. Artists in the music industry are constantly pushing the boundaries of what society considers fashionable. As soon as a new trend is seen on an artist the media is very quick to pick it up and those trends will be seen and recreated by the public. The influence of artists can help major companies reach a different and broader demographic of consumers using the status and likeliness of the artist. Fashion and music are both a form of expression used by people as a gateway to create personas for themselves and both are powerful to start movements within the world.

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