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RENOWNED DJ

REIGNS OVER MUSIC EVOLUTION



By Shannon Clash

University of Maryland, College Park

nternational disc jockey producer, Andrea Rucci, doesn't know when he became interested in deejaying, but when it happened, he just knew. Rap, Soul, Funk, Hip Hop, and House, just to name a few music genres Rucci has intertwined into his set. With a rambunctious personality and love for music, this Florentine native has become a "good connoisseur of the music industry," known for his development of electronic sound mixed with the appreciation of existing sound. He has a modest knowledge of the English language, but Rucci's infectious smile and determination shines as he tries to translate his true passion of deejaying.

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"The technique is different. Now technologies in other things have changed many, many things. But now the beats are more important than the structure of the song for example. The technology could lead the music but the message might be lost." – Rucci

"If you want to talk about music, it is a strange thing. It was a great opportunity to know different types of music," he said. "And I love music, all types of music in general."

From the beginning of his career in 1988, Rucci acquired a reputation for his natural instincts to keep the crowd moving. He used vinyl to loop melodies throughout renowned clubs such as Plegyne, Tabasco and Maramao. His famous tracks are recognizable throughout the center as a crossover of live beat production and DJ-sets. In 2002 Rucci decided to expand his musical talents by venturing into producing music. Because the interest was circulating, Rucci captured the attention of IRMA Records/Sony. He gained an international license to expand his studies outside his backyard.

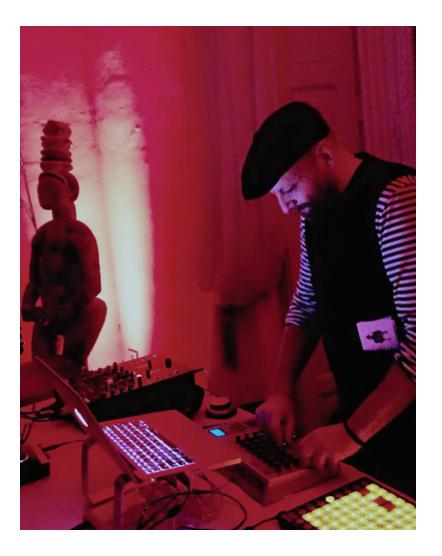
Not long after, Rucci's career would advance. Joining a groundbreaking Italian electronic music label called the Minus Habens (EMI) two years later, Rucci earned a Best Music Video 2005 nomination for a video he helped produce. He's also had sounds featured in sev-

eral motion pictures. Rucci traveled from Italy to India and was invited by the British Council to join "United in Sound: Live Electronic Music from the EU." Through this project, Rucci was able to stress the unification of music through an occasion called "Cultural Week."

As the years passed, the renowned DJ began distancing himself from crowded streams, but never ventured far from the dance floor scene to mix a beat from the evolving world of music. "The technique is different. Now technologies in other things have changed many, many things," he said.

"But now the beats are more important than the structure of the song for example. The technology could lead the music but the message might be lost."

Sumo Productions, first introduced in 1992 as a one-night event centered on collaborations between Jazz musicians and DJs, evolved into a digital label remixing tracks of selected young artists in 2007. Sumo Productions was more than a label. It was a self-production group.



Rucci gets ready to mix things up at an event.

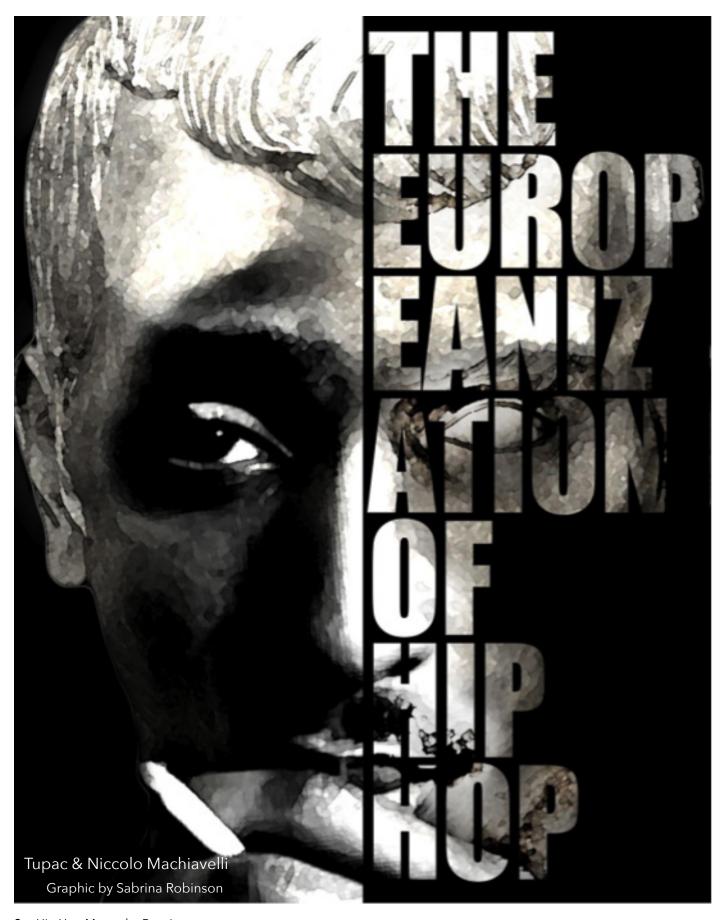
But Rucci wanted to take it to the next level. As an extension of Sumo Productions, Cosmic Sumo was born in 2011 – dedicated to cosmic-disco sounds. But just to add a little more spice, Rucci decided to strengthen the bond between his love for music and visual art. A graphic designer/architect, Rucci fully devoted his time to generating a special feature for the newly born label and support of stop motion technique. Producers' full devotion to reduce beats per minute in cosmic-disco sound largely developed an analogical synthesizer for the advancement of music.

In 2011, Rucci committed to the "PIGS TO BROOKLYN" project, which generates a fusion between Pop, electronic and free Jazz, com-

posed with several references to the late 1980s Chicago house music. Starting with deejaying, transiting to the collaboration of mixed art and in 2012, performing at the opening party of the Venice Film Festival, Rucci has become a trail-blazer in the reworking and re-mixing the consistently evolving Message.

"When I began in the 1980s there was a good spirit of Hip Hop because it was linked to Jazz with many groups like Queen Latifah but it was fascinating to me. But I believe that Hip Hop in the beginning was a interesting way to do music." Music is changing and even though the renowned DJ producer doesn't know if it's for better or worse, he said he is just lucky to "lead the love."

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By Charleston Parham

Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University

he process or result of Hip Hop embodying more characteristics of European culture is the Europeanization of Hip Hop. Jazz and Rock n' Roll are two artistic forms of expression created by African Americans that have been appropriated by Europeans within the mainstream. Europeans' adaptation of Hip Hop is different from Jazz and Rock n' Roll. Hip Hop isn't just a form of expression; it's a culture.

of Europe and North America, has had a conflicting relationship with Hip Hop since it began in the 1980's. Some Hip Hop artists have been as counter-cultural to oppressive European powers in America as Dr. Martin Luther King "Hip Hop... Jr. was. Hip Hop quickly spread started as a from the inner cities of Amerwindow on a really ica to suburban areas and hard world." would eventually jump over seas to Europe. -Leo El Feo, "As I understand Hip Hop Italian Disc Jockey it started as a window on a really hard world," said Leo El Feo an Italian Disc Jockey. "A kind of journalism, a form of information and with the groove would eventually evolve into something dancy or funny in the form of poetry." Many Hip Hop fans in Europe were at-

European culture, as it exists on the continents

"It started out as a big culture: graffiti, deejaying, emceeing and break dancing," said Andrea Rucci, a renowned international Italian DJ. "I think now it is more about business."

tracted to Hip Hop in the late 1980's and early

1990's because the music introduced them to

the thoughts and beliefs of the under served

black and brown youth of America.

Capitalism is a European concept that aligns with the philosophies of America's founding fathers and their colonial agenda (Theory of Capitalism). The core Hip Hop elements such as emceeing, creating graffiti, deejaying and break dancing were in existence long before corporate America commercialized them. Commodification of Hip Hop music is responsible for the enormous reach it has gained across the globe. It also turned some of its fans away. Feo, who started out as a producer of rap

music, began searching for other forms of expression when the Hip Hop scene changed in the late 90's. "After the 90's I saw too much talking

about money and haters. I don't know what a hater is," Feo said. When he deejays he plays mostly techno music, a popular music genre throughout Europe. In the era of commercialized Hip Hop music, notable award shows such as the Grammy's and the MTV awards have been criticized for selecting winners of European descent in a genre that is typically dominated by non-white males. However, the sound of commercial Hip Hop music

has always been influenced by Europeans: for example Aerosmith and Run DMC collaborations, Rick Rubin productions, and Beastie Boy records to name a few. In 1986, Run DMC's "Walk This Way" was the first Hip Hop song to reach a top 5 spot on Billboard 100. "They wear Feo believes Europeans' influ-Hip Hop but ence on Hip Hop ethos is shown they are not Hip through the release of Mack-Hop in the heart." lemore's song "Same Love" that's in sup-–David Cantina, Italian port of same-sex marriage. "When language instructor Macklemore opened up to gay people, that is very European," Feo said. "For how I learned what Hip Hop is, I can't define Macklemore as a Hip Hop man. I don't get too much intention in his lyrics, but I really appreciate the opening to the gay world. That is very intelligent."

David Cantina, an Italian language instructor in Italy that plays bass for the local band Speed Kills said, "In the heavy metal culture there is a word —poser. Hip Hop Italian artists are all posers. They wear Hip Hop but they are not Hip Hop in the heart. Only American Hip Hop is true Hip Hop because it's American culture and is an American way

of life." Tupac "2Pac" Shakur and Christopher "Biggie" Wallace are arguably two of the most authentic Hip Hop artists because of thei street credibility and lyrical content.

> of dress was directly influenced by the European fashion brands Hugo Boss and Versace. considerably more influenced by European culture Biggie, than released his 6th studio album under the stage name Makaveli. The name Makaveli is an alteration of one of Italy's most notorious politicians, Niccolo Machiavelli, who gained

2Pac and Biggie's style

European culture has been a part of the evolution and adaptation of Hip Hop. The music and culture doesn't sound or look the same as it once did. But it has always lived in the hearts and the minds of the youth. Those who can't or won't adapt to the times will be left out of the "cypher" or forced to create a new one.

about politics and military affairs.

recognition because of his philosophy

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Off Track: how local NEWSPAPER tunes up community

Gianna Innocenti, a volunteer for the newspaper since 2009, shares the latest issue of Fuori Binario. The story, written by an anonymous reporter, is about the increasing number of immigrants who have died while crossing the Mediterranean Sea since 1990. Photo by Sabrina Robinson



By Dysheada Reid

Winston-Salem State University

qual treatment, fairness, dignity and hope are far from reality for the anonymous authors of the Fuori Binario newspaper. Fair, compassion and equal distribution of the fruits of economic growth is a part of social justice.

There seems to be a perpetual war between the oppressed and the oppressor. Although there are multiple ways a person or group can choose to be heard, words stand the test of time, whether they are spoken or written.

Gay rights, income inequality and equal access to education—are just a small array of issues the disadvantaged struggle with daily. With an intense need to help relay the struggles of the downtrodden domestically and internationally, Maria Pia Passigli chose journalism as her path to fight social injustices. So she started Fuori Binario newspaper in 1990.

Off Track is an organization for the homeless that produces the monthly newspaper written by citizens of Florence and immigrants. Off

Track and its newspaper are unique to Florence.

Gianna Innocenti, a volunteer for the newspaper since 2009, said mainstream news does not tell the true stories of what is really going on in the Florentine community and that it is important to hear what the news will not tell.

"We are the voice of the people who cannot speak for themselves," Innocenti said.

People desperate to communicate their messages often write on paper napkins, pieces of cardboard or even their bodies. These messages are given to Fuori Binario to be published.

Innocenti said these newspaper contributors are groups of people who are financially disadvantaged, have been discriminated against or victims of violence. Each month the newspaper

focuses on issues like these that plague the community.

By not including bylines to articles, the contributors' lives are protected from danger of retaliation. The newspaper is independent and

does not receive funding from the government, religious institutions or advertising revenue.

Innocenti said accepting money from those sources can alter the facts in a story and may put an obligation on the newspaper to publish censored stories. In order to keep the articles true and accurate, they refuse outside financial support.

Three thousand copies are published monthly and placed in newsstands throughout Florence. Each issue costs 99 cents.

They also sell books authored by people of the community. "This is how we pay for rent, lights, printing cost, food, everything," Innocenti said. There are no paid positions at the newspaper. All staff members are volunteers.

According to Innocenti, the newspaper editing process is usually "a mess." But despite the chaotic circumstances, the newspaper continues to print and distribute on time. Not only does Fuori Binario provide a voice for the disadvantaged, but they also provide food and shelter for a night. "There is even a place where the families can take a shower. The water is cold, but it is something they appreciate," Innocenti said.

Fuori Binario is partners with Suburbs at the

Heart Association, which permits them to provide the homeless with jobs, social services, legal help, food and temporary residence.

Food provided comes from local food banks is rationed to feed as many people as they can.

"We are the

voice of the

people who

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for themselves,"

Innocenti said.

Cianna Innocenti, a volunteer for

the newspaper since 2009

One volunteer, Franco, travels from country to country to lend a helping hand wherever needed. He collects the food on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, the only days Fuori Binario is open. Franco also created the Fuori Binario website and offers technical support.

"I fix the computers. I get the food," Franco said. "I volunteer because I know there [are many] people who need help."

Between 50 and 200 homeless immigrant families have used the

Fuori Binario as a mailing address so they may receive important documents such as passports, birth certificates, and employment information. Fuori Binario helps many Romanians, and a large number immigrate from northern Africa. According to CNN, 219,000 refugees and migrants from Syria, Mali, Eritrea and Libya have crossed the Mediterranean to escape violence, poverty and genocide.

Half of them settled in Italy last year. "We do not turn the families down," Innocenti said. "We have to help, even if they are illegal."

In 2009, the Italian government became financially strained because the unemployment rate was at its highest. Taxes were increased



Maria Pia Passigli, creator of Fuori Binario, has been providing services to people in need and using the paper as an instrument for their voices since 1990.

Photo by Sabrina Robinson

substantially and several small business were shut down. "Since the financial crisis that happened, there has been an increase of Florentine families becoming homeless," Innocenti said. "A lot of families lost their businesses, so they can't pay their bills and provide for their families. So there has been more coming here [Off Track] for help."

Fuori Binario has seen an increase of the families in need and an increase in the people who want to vocalize their disparities. Passigli,

the creator of Fuori Binario, said simply surviving financially has been their biggest challenge since she started the newspaper 25 years ago. Passigli's decision to choose the written word proves words of a few can narrate the lives of many.

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By Katrina Q. Robinson

Winston-Salem State University

ou're an African American in one of Florence, Italy's most popular nightclubs on Monday night. Surprisingly, it's Hip Hop night. Even more surprising, is that the club is blasting nothing but American Hip Hop music...

Energetic bodies from across the globe are fluent in fist pumping, twerking and grinding. Asking someone to dance doesn't require much interpretation. Quickly, you'll find the only thing 100 percent translated in American Hip Hop music is the beat. Because as you jam to an uncensored version of "Niggas in Paris" with Kanye and Jay-Z, you realize

everyone is singing along with you: "Got my niggas in Paris and they going gorillas!"

"I'm African American, I'm African. I'm Black as the moon, heritage of a small village. Pardon my residence. Came from the bottom of mankind." Kendrick Lamar, "The Blacker the Berry" from the album To Pimp a Butterfly.

The re-appropriation [when a group reclaims something used badly for the benefit of that group] of what some comfortably refer to as the "N-word" is a timeless debate because of its offensive origins rooted on American soil.

'Nigga' was first popularized by stand-up comedians in the 1970s as puns for Blacks and quickly found its quips popularized in the streets. It wasn't long before the term would formulate into Hip Hop culture.

Despite its new context, the mother phrase has the blood of Blacks in America who have been enslaved, lynched and oppressed. It's an unwritten law – any use of the epithet, nigger – by non-Blacks shall result in endless controversy and your impending social death. But can the rule apply to a group of people who don't even speak English as their first language?

Can it be counted against people who, according to Thomas Phoenix, are more than likely to learn about the Holocaust than the transatlantic slave trade?

"It [nigga] doesn't have much meaning here," Phoenix said. Phoenix owns three clubs and several other estates in Florence. He moved from Nigeria in 1979, dancing his way into the night scene in Florence.

In an article "Domestic Slavery" in Renaissance Italy, author Sally McKee said it's unlikely that additional data found in Italian archives will alter the conclusions reached by 20th century historians in regards to slavery in Italy during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

According to McKee, the ways merchants in Italy distinguished along ethnic and religious lines among the slaves sheds light more on how the people of Italy made distinctions among themselves than on the origins and religion of their captives.

In the 21st century, Florentine's allegedly don't identify by race or pigmentation. "To us, we just call them [minorities] colored people," said David Cantina, a Florentine instructor at the Scuola a la Toscana, a university in Florence. He said to refer to their skin color or religious background is considered disrespectful.

The preference for vague descriptions serves as a parallel for the superficiality of Hip Hop music's reception in Italy. 'Nigga' can be just slang or what Americans refer to themselves. "I don't understand it. I just play the music," said Giovanni Bencini, a 21 year old who's been deejaying for four years.

"You sabotage my community, makin' a killin'. You made me a killer, emancipation of a real nigga." – Kendrick Lamar, "The Blacker the Berry."

American Hip Hop artist Kendrick Lamar performed a song titled "The Blacker the Berry" where he spits pride in Blackness and antagonizes those who oppress his community.

Like many other Hip Hop artists, Lamar uses 'nigga' to reference a pseudo-slave – people who are not technically owned as property but still bound in unfair circumstances that will swallow their chance for equal opportunity. The

systematic discrimination [like poverty and jail representation] and rough livelihood of Black people in America sets free their reaction and retaliation, if not always in a diplomatic way. 'Nigga' is Hip Hop's surname and artists, as well

as communities, adorn it like defiant brides anxious to start a new life.

It's complex to justify the marriage to non-Black Americans, nevertheless to Florentines. Especially, if the streets of Florence are correct, the city doesn't use or acknowledge their own racial epithets in modern-day conversation.

It's simpler just to use 'nigga' as a unifier than to acknowledge it as a

slur. "I think they [Italians] know it, just in a superficial way," said Filippo Bellini, a Florentine who prefers American Hip Hop over Italian. "[Nigga] has nothing to do with [a person]. You just love like it's art. It's in the architecture... there's Hip Hop," he said.

Paco Tall of Senegal has been in Florence for

14 years. As a DJ and a club promoter, he said no matter where he goes it's obvious party-goers don't see color. Black and White is always on the dance floor.

"In a way, [Nigga] unifies us," he said.

like imitating the U.S. You can feel the love and don't feel the hate. They start to listen to Hip Hop; they're trying to get into Black people. You get to connect."

And "connect" is an under-

And "connect" is an understatement. Hip Hop has gained enough international influence that many of its elements, like fashion and dance crazes, have been globalized. Since it has been integrat-

"They [Italians] just

–Paco Tall, DJ and Club Promoter in Florence, Italy

ed into the equation, so has 'nigga,' minus the backstory.

But to those who oppose the word's adaptation, like the style, it must be superficial. Otherwise, why else would it be okay to "watch" white people "Whip?"

Message on the Walls: Using Street Art to Understand Italy's Deepest Social and Political Issues



By Dysheada Reid

Winston-Salem State University

ince its explosion onto city walls and subway cars in the late 1960's, graffiti has gained national notoriety. Writings and graphics on the walls can be traced to ancient Rome. In fact, the word graffiti is the derivative of the Italian word 'graffiare,' which means to get scratched. The message on the walls can reflect celebrations or times of endless hardship including financial and personal.

Graffiti was a widespread, respected form of writing in ancient Rome. It was often interactive, with greetings from friends, popular poems with personal clever twists, and a variety of drawings, according to Smithsonian.com. As in the city of Pompeii, where its people used the ancient writings to show their admiration for their emperor Nero, who reigned from 54-68 AD. There are declarations of more goodwill than ill will about the government and society

they lived in. But today, the writings on Italy's walls convey different stories and meanings.

Most will not find declarations of love on the Wine Country's walls. Instead they might see desperate scribblings and paintings from the 'unheard' about the political and social injustices in Italy.

The graffiti lingers on the brick walls with the disposition of an abstract painting in a museum. Seen by several, appreciated by a few, but only a hand full can understand the artist intent behind it.

Marshall Domenico Cillis, the head commander of the Carabinieri Toscana Police Station in Piazza Pitti, said the graffiti in Florence is extremely political and often radical. "If you see the letter A or N with a circle around, it means anarchy," Cillis said. Describing graffiti as "a movement" Cillis said most of the graffiti talks about how people want to see more of the police and free housing for Florentine citizens.

But in the same breath, Cillis said these words and phrases are written by alcoholics and drug addicts. Could this illicit artwork be a cry for help from the Italian community? Gianna Innocenti, a volunteer at the Fuori Binario newspaper and a homeless organization, said since the economic crisis in 2009 and the recent spike in immigration to Italy, she has seen an increase in the number of homeless people coming to the organization for food, shelter and job opportunities. "Many families have lost their business after the crisis. Therefore, they can't pay for their bills, and they lose their homes,"

Innocenti said.

Another struggle that made its way onto the city's walls is the No TAV movement.

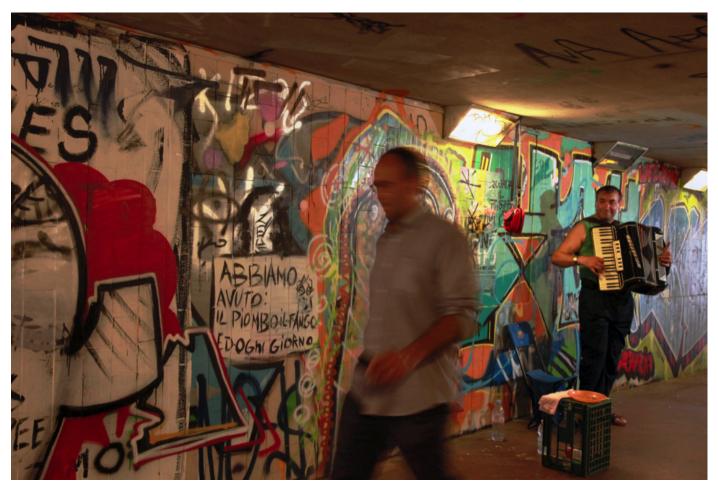
The No TAV movement is a well-known two-decade battle to stop the construction of high-speed railways northwest [J4] of Italy. No TAV stencil graffitican be found in many cities in including Flor-

ence, Milan, Turin and Paris. The protest graffiti features "No TAV" with a black silhouette of a train in between the two words. This graffiti can be spotted on buildings, near railways and on trains.

The movement involves a large number of people in Susa Valley struggling against the construction of high-speed railways since the early 1990's.

The group was organized by Susa Valley residents, a heavily populated area that has become highly militarized because of the movement. They have gathered in large numbers for over two decades to stop the construction of the railway through their city to Paris.

While their protests are non-violent, they quickly erupt into battles with the police and military force. It's militarized to block the pro-







In this subway tunnel the space is covered from ground to ceiling in graffiti art (Opposite).

A street artist performs in a graffiti-decked subway tunnel in Florence. (Top)

A biker is exiting the tunnel which also displays tagging. (Left)

A group of graffiti artists congregate to spray-paint on a makeshift plastic wall. (Right)







Clet Abraham, prefers to alter street signs to show people his political and social views. (Top) Visitors look around Clet's art shop in Florence. (Left)

transformations. (Right)

if they want to tag something other than walls, like this trash dispenser (Opposite).

testers from interfering with the construction, according to the No TAV website.

Their goal was to stop the environmental devastation and the dis-lodgment of thousands of the resident's houses, family and govern-

ment owned business in the mountainous region. Their form of retaliation is non-violent protesting, using social media and updating daily on their website, www.notav.info.

The movement has attracted up to 80,000 people in one protest. There are organized marches and riots are in various cities in Italy to support Susa Valley.

Meanwhile back in Florence, there is a freedom of expression struggle taking place in the inner city. Very

different from Susa Valley's long-standing volatile protest, but the concept of using street art as a medium for change stays the same.

The 57-year-old Italy-based French artist Clet Abraham is the pioneer. Preferred to be called Clet, he believes that street art is not just confined to walls and subways anymore. Altering street signs is his preferred way of reaching people on his political and social views. He calls it a "modern invasion." He likes to challenge the Florentines to think about the laws of the land they inhabit on a daily basis. Clet is a oneman show.

Clet said by altering visual symbols of undisto interfere where elements break with history.

"As a society member, one should always question why, not just quietly accept norms and obligations imposed from above." Clet said Florence is not a place where modern art—especially street art—is readily accepted among the

> Renaissance city's historical landmarks. "Florence is not a city that allows many artists to express themselves. Very conservative," he said. "They are not open-minded to new ways of art."

> It is that very idea that makes Clet believe that Florence is the perfect city that can benefit from his street art. His strategy for change does not require a group of protesters or the defense of the military. However, it does require is a trusty bike, a bag of stickers

and nightfall.

He usually works at night because he is less likely to get caught. He props his bicycle against the post, stands on it and applies the stickers he has made in advance. His process takes a matter of seconds.

He fully understands that what he is doing is illegal, but he intends his "sticky man" to make people re-think concepts of legality and justice and to expose the rules limit individual expression.

The ancient walls tell a story of prosperity, love and few economic hardships. Today's graffiti artists paint murals of struggles that tells the story about the absence of freedom of expression, economic instability, and the perpetual battle between authorities and citizens that want to be heard. If you understand today's writings on the walls, you will be able to delve below the surface of a society.

Clet sells stickers and household items like these carpets inspired by his traffic sign puted obedience and authority like traffic signs, he adds irony to civility. "I want to be able to Florence's historical landmarks may be off limits for graffiti, but artists have learned to improvise redefine and possibly discuss the frame around which our legal system rotates," he said. He likes

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The Prison ReMiX

By Charleston Parham

Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University

ip Hop and the art of remixing go together like cheese and wine at a Florentine cafe. Cafés and prisons rarely come together in the same manner—unless you're referring to the Le Murate in Florence, Italy once a fully operational correctional facility.

The idea of repurposing a prison into a venue conducive to social interaction is exotic, but not entirely strange within the Italian culture. David Cantina, an art historian from the Scuola Toscana, said the rooms of The National Museum of Bargello are filled with torture instruments as art.

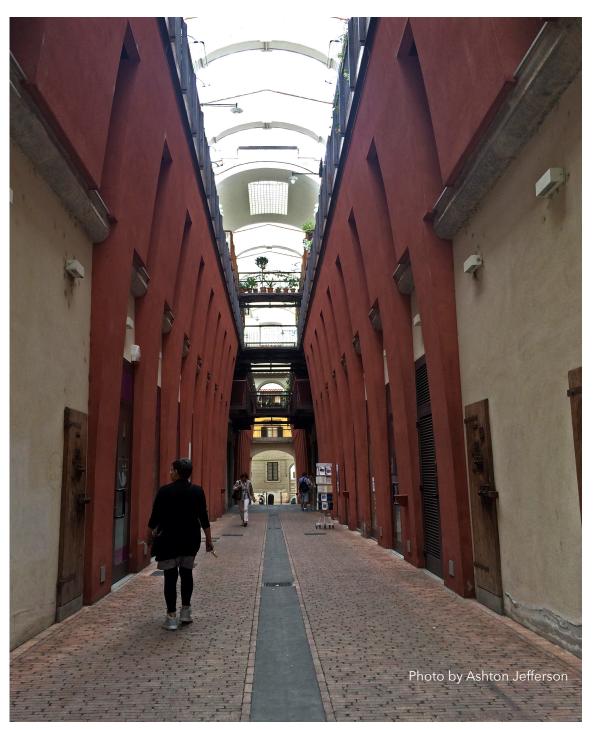
In the middle ages, the Bargello served as a police station that eventually became a prison to house murderers, rapists and thieves. The prison was notorious for torture and the execution of inmates, but that has nothing to do with why most people go there today. Bargello has been remixed by the Italian government and is now a museum that houses renaissance art – not criminals.

"We know that these places were prisons, but we are not interested about this. It's not a tourist of horror like other countries, the perspective has completely changed," Cantina said.

People who visit the museum to admire the art may still find traces of the prison. Prisoners sometimes write their last words on the walls before being executed. Many of these carvings are still visible. In the case of Bargello, the Italian government has managed to turn a negative into a positive.

"They made this decision to erase the bad things committed inside," Cantina said. "When the death penalty was abolished, even the right of torture was abolished." The Italian government has done more then just remix prisons, they've created a "prison mash-up" too. In the music world, a mash-up is the combination of two musical pieces that were originally independent.

Such is the case for the Medicean Fortress (Maschio) in Volterra where inmates are allowed to participate in theatrical shows the public may attend. "The people in jail can do a lot of activities like arts and crafts," said Martino Rampolla, a legal marijuana grower who's been impacted by Italy's justice system. "Also every year they do a show, a theatrical show where the prisoners



are acting."

Mastery of the mash-up at Maschio is best seen at Fortezza Medicea, a restaurant within the prison fortress that's staffed by inmates who serve dishes to non-convicts. Officials at the prison believe allowing inmates to contribute to society in this way has a positive impact on the their futures. "People have this need of interaction with others. Normal people do it, why not prisoners. It's something necessary for our being," Rampolla said.

Rehabilitation programs like Fortezza Medicea permit prisoners to be released for good behavior, this also helps solve the problem of overcrowded prisons in Italy. To dine at Fortezza Medicea, a reservation is required so that the prison can conduct a background check. Once individuals are approved to dine they're required to show identification and hand over cell phones upon arrival. Visitors should also expect to eat with plastic cutlery.

The purpose of prison has shifted dramatically in Italy since the Middle Ages. Before the death penalty was abolished prisons were a very grim place. Now people wait in lines wrapped around the block to view art and wait months to confirm a reservation to dine. Just like Hip Hop, sometimes the remix is better.

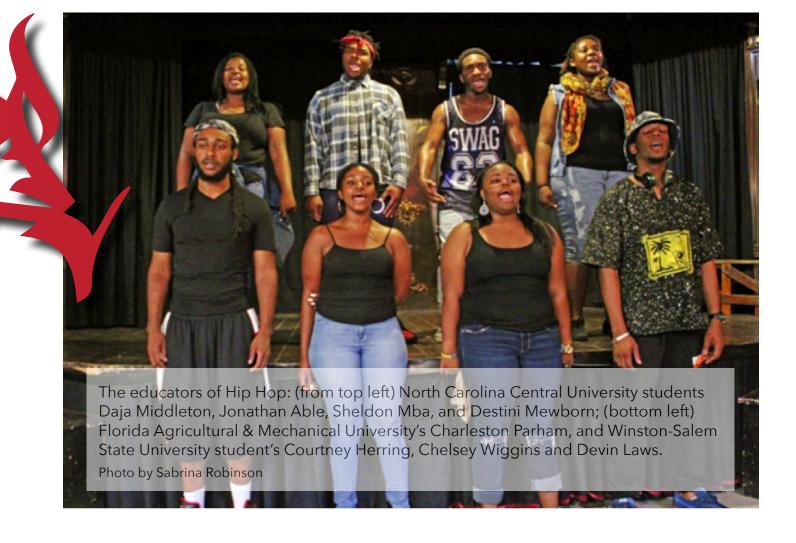
Before its remix, this former prison stored prisoners in small dark cells with wooden doors on each side of the walls.

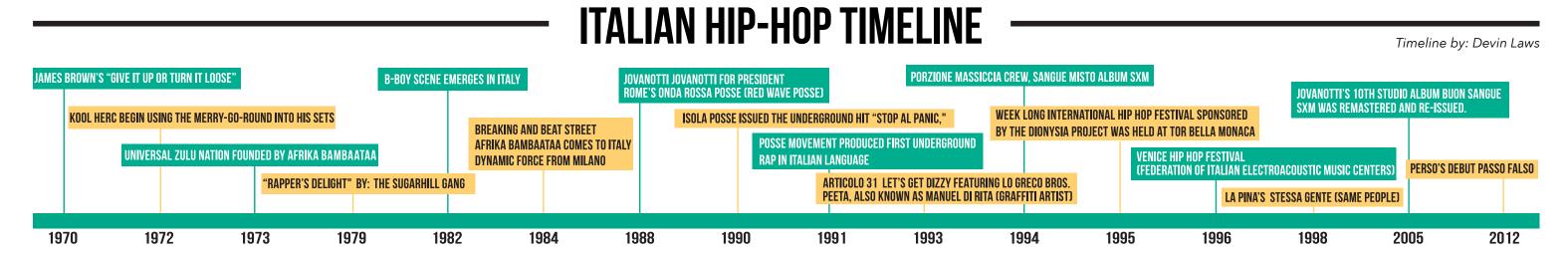
The Mis-Education of



Winston-Salem State University

he definition of what Hip Hop is can vary. Pioneers of the art like Afrika Bambaataa and KRS-One continuously refer to Hip Hop as five elements: emceeing, graffiti, deejaying, break-dancing, and knowledge. Other artists refer to it as a way out of impoverished situations. A line in the late Christopher Wallace's (aka The Notorious B.I.G.) hit single "Juicy" says: "I never thought it could happen this rappin' stuff, I was too use to packin' gats and stuff."







"Your voices have been silenced." The troubled youth, played by (left) Sheldon Mba, Jonathan Able, Daja Middleton and Destini Mewborn are tasked by the powerful African Griot played by Lewis Miller to discover the true meaning of Hip Hop and its origins. Photo by Sabrina Robinson

Hip Hop has undeniably influenced the world with its culture and its significance within black culture.

Students from, North Carolina Central University, Winston-Salem State University Florida Agricultural& Mechanical University and University of Maryland College Park united to bridge the gap between Hip Hop culture and the Italian Renaissance.

Four theatre majors – Destini Mewborn, Daja Middleton, Sheldon Mba, and Johnathan Able – and their director, Stephanie "Asabi" Howard took things a step further by writing the Hip Hop theatrical production, "The Mis-Education of Hip Hop." Students took on the task of introducing Italians to what Hip Hop means to them and its connection to black culture. "The Mis-Education of Hip Hop" focuses on what lies beneath the surface of Hip Hop using history lessons, poetry, a Hip Hop pioneer and an African Griot, who guides the group of troubled African-American youth by storytelling through time travel.

The youth [played by Mewborn, Middleton, Mba and Able] are chastised by the Griot and pioneer for their misrepresentation of Hip Hop culture, as they continuously latch onto the faux-lifestyle of defiling women, drug abuse and fast money. The Griot charged them to find Hip Hop's roots of influence and impact



The storytelling African Griot takes on a new role as the head of household who guides his family when they attempt to escape the clutches of slavery. From left, Courtney Herring, Chelsey Wiggins and Lewis Miller. Photo by Sabrina Robinson

during Trans-Atlantic slavery, Italian and Harlem Renaissance and modern urban livelihood. WSSU students Devin Laws, a senior art major, played the Hip Hop pioneer; Lewis Miller, a senior communications and media studies major played the African Griot.

"We talk about the missing element that nobody talks about in Hip Hop," said Mba, rising NCCU senior. "We have b-boying, graffiti, a DJ, and the MC but the thing that is lacking is the knowledge." The five elements that are the soil of the play are taken from the definition of Hip Hop by the Universal Zulu Nation. The Universal Zulu Nation is the international Hip Hop awareness group formed and lead by the

Hip Hop pioneer Afrika Bambaataa ("Planet Rock," "Looking for a Perfect Beat.") It grew in the 1970s from a street gang in the South Bronx known as the Black Spades. Since the 1980s, Hip Hop has spread internationally, and the Universal Zulu Nation has followed suit.

"The Mis-Education of Hip Hop" focused on knowledge. The students/actors, who created the concept and script in two weeks, took their audience on a journey of the influences of Hip Hop. "They [Italians] have knowledge of what Hip Hop is, but they don't know its roots," said Middleton, an NCCU senior. "Hip Hop is not just music."



Actors Jonathan Able and Destini Mewborn set up the lighting in the play's venue. Photo by Sabrina Robinson

The production provides a timeline about how Hip Hop came to be. Starting with slavery, surfacing in the Harlem Renaissance and touching on the early findings of Hip Hop. It relates to Italian Renaissance, the production also included famous historical figures from Niccolo Machiavelli, Michelangelo to Zora Neale Hurston and Langston Hughes.

The play, "The Mis-Education of Hip Hop" relates Hip Hop and the Italian Renaissance with the concept of rebirth. "They [Italians] seem to have a foundation of it [Hip Hop], but they don't have the right gravel, the right grout," said Mewborn, NCCU sophomore. "So we're giving

them that sustainability, that concrete so they can have a solid foundation if they really want to understand Hip Hop." Incorporating the commercialized exploitation of the genre, the actors also wanted their audience to recognize the difference between Hip Hop music and its culture. "What I've definitely seen here in Florence is surface culture," Middleton said. "They're imitating the replica instead of the real deal." The mis-education in the play features Hip Hop of the past and Hip Hop now. "As time started to progress everything in Hip Hop started to sound the same; looking back it just lost its roots," Mba said. "Honestly, all Hip Hop



Director Stephanie "Asabi" Howard demonstrates a scene for her student-actors. Photo by Saundrina Smith

music is about getting money, smoking weed, doing drugs and calling another brother nigga."

The actors and their director had plenty of challenges. "The short amount of time to write and rehearse the show was an anticipated challenge for which I knew we would have to prepare," said Asabi, NCCU associate professor of theatre and chair of the department of theatre and dance.

"We are really doing raw theatre without a set, lighting, costumes or any other theatrical spectacle," Asabi said. "This is probably a great artistic challenge for the both of us [director and actors]."

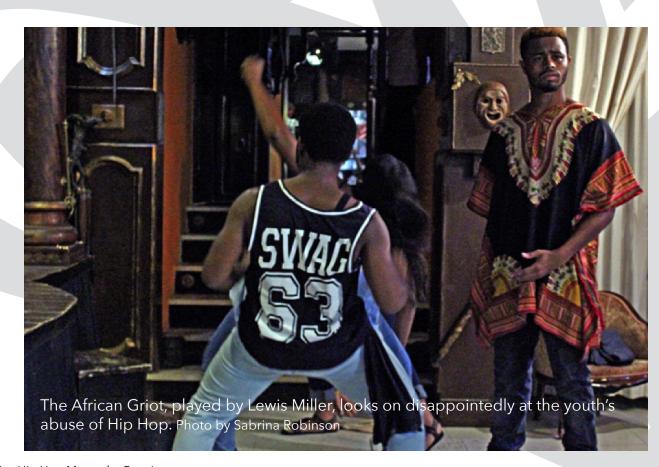
The production also included several non-theatre majors into the world of drama; from FAMU and WSSU.

"The Mis-Education of Hip Hop" thrives to disarrange any misinformation of the Hip Hop culture one may have perceived," Parham said. "Its vision of appreciation and overall love of the art is firmly displayed throughout the play."



Destini Mewborn performs a spoken word to Sheldon Mba's interpretive dance as Jonathan Able and Daja Middleton sing "Wade in the Water." Photo by Sabrina Robinson







The Hip Hop pioneer, played by Devin Laws, helps educate the lost youth on the whims of Hip Hop culture.

Photo by Sabrina Robinson









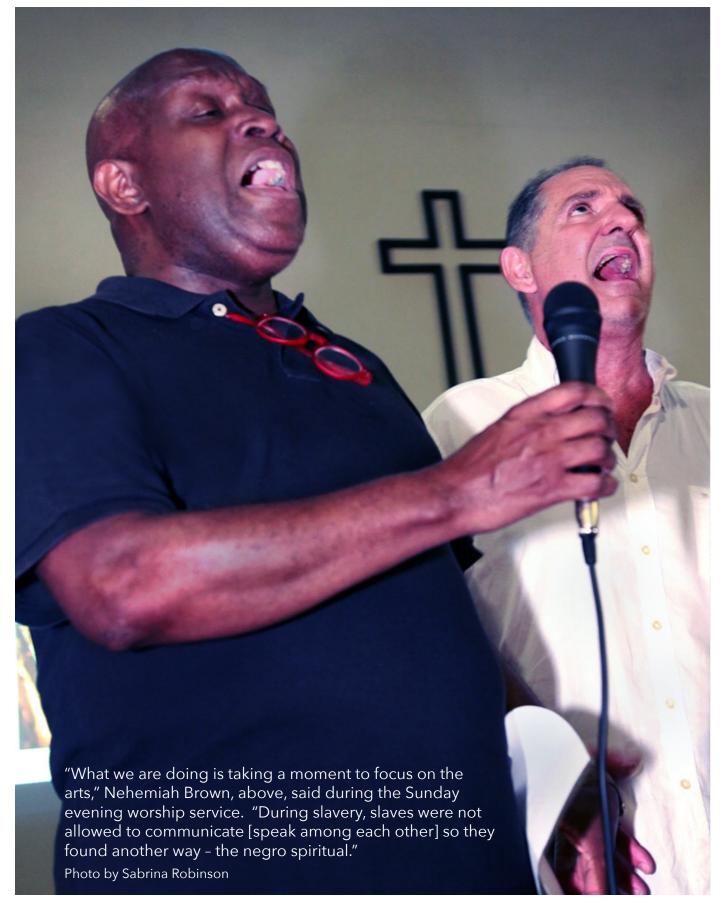
Paintings, Poets and Pews



By Daja Middleton

North Carolina Central University

Plorence Gospel Fellowship International is ushering fine arts to the ministerial gates in Florence, Italy. Pastor of the Methodist Church, Nehemiah Brown, brought in artist in residence, Prince Adetomiwa Gbadebo, to showcase his paintings during the heartfelt sounds of the Florence Gospel Choir School. As the choir rendered negro spirituals such as "Motherless Child" and contemporary gospel songs like Mary Mary's "Shackles," (Praise You) Gbadebo used his body as a dancing paint brush to create abstract works.





Vocalists, dancers, actors, others, and students in the ieiMedia Hip Hop Meets the Renaissance study abroad program took to the microphone and shared their experiences about their journeys as artists and how they used their artistic talents in ministry. The students—performed a spoken word and choreography accompanied the negro spiritual, "Wade in the Water."





With each stroke of his brush and even his limbs, Gbadebo encrypted the testimony from the songs on his canvas that was lying on the floor. Brown invited the ieiMedia students to return to the church later that month to perform in front of a diverse audience of Italians, Africans, African Americans, and many other ethnicities and nationalities.





la Vita Di Notte



By Suandrina Smith

Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University

Walking down the street in Florence, you can see and hear that Hip Hop has a strong presence in the Florentine culture. People in taxis and on mopeds zoom through the streets as they make their way to their destinations.

Graffiti covers the streets and alleyways defying authority. Fabio Luna, a graffiti artist in Florence, thinks it is time that the Florentine people take the power back from the authorities. "Why should the police decide what is art or vandalism? Luna asked. "I have people who praise my work and when graffiti becomes more allowed in Italy, I will be recognized as a genius."

"YAB" and "Bamboo" are night clubs known for their hip-hop nights on Monday and Tuesday. YAB is an underground club accented with glass walls and a dance floor lit with glowing neon lights. The songs of popular artists, such as Beyoncé and Jay-Z are sung by everyone enjoying the music whether or not they understand the lyrics. In Italian culture, the DJ's spin Hip Hop songs and turn them into "discotec"—when they add a pop sound to the original soundtrack to give it more of an energetic and upbeat feel.

Cher Mitchell, a study abroad student from Chicago, loves the remix of the Hip Hop songs. "Certain songs in America aren't meant to be danced to, but in Italy, the lyrics aren't necessarily important," Mitchell said. "What matters more is if the DJ is able to get everyone to vibe to the same songs." People of all ages, races, and nationalities fill the dance floors in the clubs.

The language of love does not have to be spoken as you see couples stealing kisses on the glowing carousel or walking with intertwined hands, drunk in love. Street vendors in abundance sell tokens of romance including roses and horse carriage rides.

While other vendors satisfy late night cravings with cold and creamy gelato, pastries, and crepes layered with hazelnut Nutella. Turkish Kebabs filled with spicy meats and vegetables or pizza with rich pomodoro sauce and cheese.

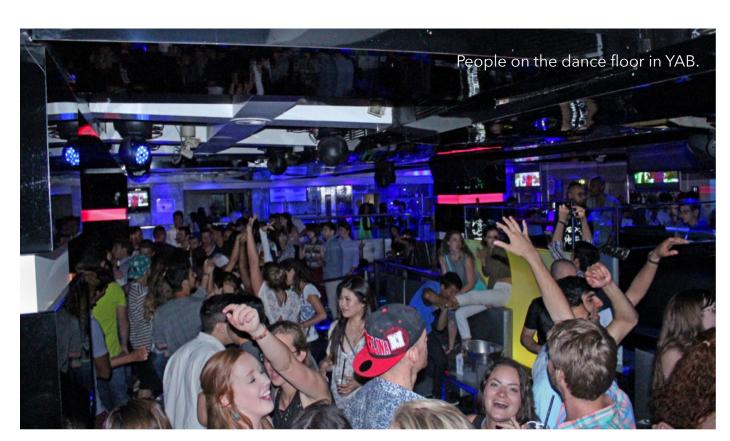
People gather at local bars and pubs to catch up and unwind from a long day. Wine and beer flow freely, as laughter and commotion fill the air.

Giovanna Carleo, a Florence resident, explains these shops are a part of Italian

Culture. "Some shops might not be as fancy, but it's more about tradition to Italians." Carleo said. "I don't care about changing and being popular for tourists; tourists will like my bar because they will get an authentic feeling every time."

People travel to see monumental statues transform under the night sky. The Duomo Cathedral is a huge tourist attraction in the day, but at night it can become a romantic scene of couples looking as if on their first date.

"The scenery and authentic wine has enhanced every experience that I have had and it's a beautiful place with some of the kindest people you will ever meet," Mitchell said.







A Black Marble in Tuscany:

By Shannon Clash

University of Maryland, College Park

In a country where more than 18 percent of the population is considered the minority, race is a topic most don't think about. "Brown is just brown and white is just white. Only colors. No race," said David Cantina, an Italian language instructor and art history major at the the Scuola a la Toscana.

However, "no race" might not be the case for everyone.

Graphic by Sabrina Robinson

Two Tales and Two Heritages.



Gradient Upbringing

Celeste Guidugli is from Ivory Coast of West Africa. With springy-curly hair and sun-kissed skin, her appearance reflects her genetic make-up of African and Italian descent.

In Guidugli's childhood,

diversity played a major factor in her adult life. Her social landscape required her to learn three languages. Traveling back and forth from Ivory Coast and Italy, she would learn that her background would make her unique but also stand out like a statue in a piazza.

"Coming here [Italy] during the summer won't make me feel like I was Italian," Guidugli said.

"I felt more like a stranger here than back home in Ivory Coast. I didn't feel in my place." She said about her earlier stays in Italy, she experienced prejudice and discrimination—even from her fraternal grandmother. "I didn't know being mixed was a different thing. I didn't even have the mind that I was mixed. To me I had a black mom and a white dad. To me it was normal. For most people it wasn't."

Ashley Renee Davis, is a Texas native and two-year resident of Florence, Italy. Photo courtesy of Shannon Clash

Over time, Guidugli she learned to accept her true self. She said, "...to not let the negative influence your life and leave the negative behind."

An American Element

Ashley Renee Davis, a Texas native and twoyear resident of Florence, turns heads as she walks the streets of Italy. She rocks an Afro and latte-café skin.

Davis studied abroad during her undergraduate education at Baylor University. The feeling of 'home away from home' is what she remembers most during her time abroad.

"I didn't really research about what kind of black people were here [Florence] or if there even was a black community," Davis said. "But when I got here it was pretty obvious there's not. There's not a very unified center for Black Americans and immigrants."

But this feeling was nothing new to Davis. After attending a private Christian high school and predominantly white institution, Davis has seen her differences as lucky. "Don't ever feel like you're stuck...if you really want something, you will just go and get it."



Celeste Guidugli said diversity played a major role in her childhood. Photo courtesy of Shannon Clash

Jonathan Able is a native of Charlotte, North Carolina. He is a junior at North Carolina Central University, Durham. He is majoring in theatre with a concentration in performance. Jonathan is a singer and models in his free time. While in Florence, Jonathan assisted writing and performing in the theatrical production the original theatrical production "The Mis-Education of Hip Hop." He hopes to perform professionally in Hollywood or on Broadway.

triculating senior working on a bachelor's in broadcast journalism at the Philip Merrill College of Journalism at the University of Maryland, College Park. The 22-year-old native of Baltimore wants to pursue a career in broadcast television producing. Along with being a full-time student, Clash is a reporter for the Capital News Service - UMTV. She was the executive producer for the Hip Hop newscast.

Shannon Clash is a ma-

Jaquel Horne is a senior Communications maior at Winston-Salem State University in Winston-Salem. She is a native of High Point, North Carolina and enjoys movies, poetry, short stories and spending time with her family. Jaquel was one of the two WSSU students this year to receive a scholarship from the prestigious Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program. Gilman provides financial awards for undergraduate study abroad. In Florence, she participated in ieiMedia's newscast.

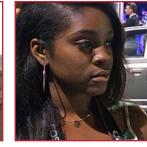
Veniscia Jones is a 2015 graduate of Winston-Salem State University. She was a reporter for the award-winning campus newspaper The News Argus. She is a reporter and assistant editor and contributor for the ieiMedia Hip Hop meets the Renaissance magazine. Veniscia plans to seek a career in communications.

Dysheada Reid, 21, is a senior mass communications major at Winston-Salem State University. Dysheada resides in Louisburg, North Carolina. She is the associate editor and contributor for the Hip Hop Meets the Renaissance magazine. Reid has been appointed as the 2015-2016 editor-in-chief of The News Argus, WSSU's award-winning student newspaper.



















Taylor A. Bishop, a senior at Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University in Tallahassee, has written for the FAMUAN, the student newspaper, as well as anchored for FAMU TV 20. Taylor is a production assistant for The Rickey Smiley Morning Show, where she is responsible for booking on-air talent, managing boards, assisting producers and on-air talents in daily morning show operations. While in Florence Taylor created stories for the ieiMedia news show.

Courtney Herring, 21, is a 2015 Winston-Salem State University graduate who earned a bachelor's in Mass Communications. A native of Goldsboro, North Carolina, Courtney was one of the performers in the original theatrical production "The Mis-Education of Hip Hop." She also created stories for the ieiMedia broadcast news show.

Diyana Celeste Howell is a senior at Winston-Salem State University, majoring in Mass Communications. She is a reporter for RAMTV, a student-run TV station. She created stories and anchored for the iei-Media broadcast news show.

Devin M. Laws, 22, is a native of Raleigh, North Carolina. Devin is a senior majoring in Art + Visual Studies at Winston-Salem State University. He is the art director for the Hip Hop Meets the Renaissance magazine. He was also a cast member in the original theatrical production "The Mis-Education of Hip Hop." Devin wants to become a worldclass graphic artist and CEO of a visual graphics company.

Katrina Q. Robinson is the editor and contributor of Hip Hop Meets the Renaissance magazine. The 23 year old earned her bachelor's in Mass Communication at Winston-Salem State University in spring 2015. Robinson was the editor-in-chief for the award-winning student newspaper, The News Argus, and earned various awards, including "Best Editorial Writing." She plans to pursue a career as a TV news producer and write features and news for various media outlets.

Contributors

Sheldon Mba is a native of Durham, North Carolina. He is a senior at North Carolina Central University studying theatre and dance performance. He has worked with artists such as international choreographer Leonie McDonagh, BaBa Chuck Davis and Nia Love. Sheldon assisted with script writing and performed in the original theatrical production "The Mis-Education of Hip Hop."

Destini Mewborn, 18 years old, is from Charlotte, North Carolina. She is a sophomore at North Carolina Central University in Durham. She recently portrayed the characters of Emma Schlarp in "Leap of FAITH, "a few minor roles in "God Spoke My Name "- Maya Angelou. Destini helped write the original script and performed in the theatrical production of "The Mis-Education of Hip Hop."

Lewis Amir Miller, 23, is a senior mass communications major at Winston-Salem State University. He was a host on 2nd Take, a broadcast production of The News Argus, student newspaper. The Durham, native is a recipient of the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship. He was one of the performers in the theatrical production "The Mis-Education of Hip Hop." He hopes to secure a career in television or radio and to become a media entrepreneur.

Saundrina Smith is a 23-year-old New York native. She is a 2015 graduate from Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University in Tallahassee, where she received her degree in broadcast journalism. She is one of two anchors for the ieiMedia Hip Hop newscast. She loves to dabble in photography and video editing. Being on camera is what she knows best, and she aspires to become a correspondent or host for a major television network for the younger generation.

Brandi McIver is a rising senior Mass Communications major at Winston-Salem State University. She served as a reporter, production assistant, writer and photographer during ieiMedia's Hip Hop Meets the Renaissance program. As an independent producer, her dream job is to host a game show and to own a production company.



















Sabrina P. Robinson is a 2015 graduate of Winston-Salem State University. Born in Little Rock, Arkansas, she studied art with concentrations in animation and computer graphics. Sabrina served as graphics editor for the student newspaper, The News Argus, and won two awards in a state-wide competition. Her expertise extends to sketching, photography and painting. Her assignments in the Hip Hop program included designing promotion fliers for the theatrical production, graphics for the magazine and pho-

tography.

Ashton Jefferson graduated spring 2015 with a bachelor's degree in Mass Communications from Winston-Salem State University. She studied media production and videography. A Charlotte, North Carolina native, Ashton worked on the Hip Hop TV production in Florence.

Daia Middleton is a theatre major at North Carolina Central University in Durham. She is working on a double concentration in performance and education. Her theatrical attributes include a wide range Effie White in Dream Girls, and Beneatha Younger in A Raisin in the Sun, and Claudia Macteer in The Bluest Eye for which she was nominated for the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival Irene Ryan Acting Award in 2015. Daja assisted with script writing and performed in the theatrical production "The Mis-Education of Hip Hop."

Charleston Parham, 22. is an alumnus of Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University, Tallahassee. He was born in Washington, D.C. and has lived in numerous states across America. Charleston is an associate producer for the ieiMedia Hip Hop news show. He is also a contributor for the 2015 Hip Hop Magazine and a performer in the original theatrical production "The Mis-Education of Hip Hop."

Chelsey Wiggins, 21, is a senior majoring in Mass Communications, and minoring in speech at Winston-Salem State University. She is a native of Rocky Mount, North Carolina. While in Florence, she was a reporter for the ieiMedia Hip Hop newscast. Post-graduation, she plans are to attend graduate school and focus on strategic communication.

Contributors continued



n behalf of 20 students, 7 faculty/ staff and ieiMedia, let me introduce the Hip Hop Meets the Renaissance magazine.

On June 12, students from Winston-Salem State University, North Carolina Central University, Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University and the University of Maryland, College Park journeyed to historic-laden Florence, Italy to utilize our interdisciplinary studies in the media arts to discover a world different from their own.

We were charged to scavenge for Hip Hop remnants and their influences and channel our findings through broadcast, journalism and theatre arts. We produced this magazine, a broadcast featuring in-depth investigative reporting and an eye-opening play titled, "The Mis-Education of Hip Hop."

For anyone who might think on these productions lightly, I challenge them to seek the Hip Hop experience elsewhere when it hasn't been cultivated in their own country. Since Hip Hop's debut in the early 1970s in The Bronx, it has permeated society and globalized as much as Jazz and Rock n' Roll. Yet too often, both Americans and Florentines asked me and my colleagues, "Why Hip Hop?" or "Why not do something else?" I get it.

This program is just as unique as the students who participated in it. All of the 20 students involved are Black; most are from Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and one from the University of Maryland, College Park. When only 5 percent of American students who study abroad are African-American [NAFSA: Association of International Educators] that's a boundary-breaking ratio.

These facts could have simply been dismissed, and the students could have imitated other media internships where American students find cultivation while learning their media practices. But this program challenged us not to blend, but to infiltrate. Music in general is colorless, but the circumstances in Florence were not.

We utilized our unique experiences and talents and decided to participate in the cultivation of Hip Hop, something embedded to the history of Black lives. And the discussion ventured far from drugs, industrial sexism and fast-money. I've become accustomed to that conversation in America, where people dismiss a generation's artistic expression as garbage. It humbled me to venture from that to Florence.

As a Black woman, it comforts me to know that if I can find traces of such an exotic culture in such a small city, I can find acceptance anywhere. My influence doesn't just reside in my rural community, but across the globe.

Today Florence, tomorrow the world.

Enjoy!

Katrina Robinson, editor

2015 Hip Hop Meets the Renaissance Magazine

Thank you, Andy for helping to make this happen. And thanks to WSSU and Dean Corey Walker.

