Dancing to Hate

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One of my favorite form of music is R&B, having grown up listening to artist like Earth, Wind and Fire, the Ohio Players and soon being introduced to artists such as Prince and the only lady in the world I would turn straight if she asked me to, Janet Jackson.

Soon rap was thrown in that mix but not to sound old but when rap was introduced by artists such as Sugerhill Gang and Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, it was fun and touched on social issues that were affecting the black community. They created unity through their expression of music by bringing to light the issues of poverty, racism and black unity.

You never heard the word, "nigger' or 'faggot' or any other derogatory comments. Women were not told to bend over and shake that ass and manhood was not defined by how much bling you had or what designer labels covered your body.

Yet a shift happened. Rap artists and the music they sang changed. What was once empowering was now manufacturing language of hate and objectification. It seemed that manhood was defined on reducing those who were gay to less than and it became the norm for homophobic lyrics to work their way onto the dance floor.

It has even reached a point where certain artist through what they call music suggests that we 'kill the faggots', sending orders to young men of color who sometimes don't have the mental maturity to know the difference between right or wrong. Or worse, the music reinforces the beliefs they have been raised with by either their family or the church and peers in the community.

In a perfect world it would be nice for well known rappers produce lyrics that speak against such hate. Yet to do so would bring suspicion on them and have people and various African-American social media outlets wondering if they are gay. There's a certain website in particular of which I won't name simply because I don't want to help with their boost in viewers who questions any man who hugs or is in close approximately to another man as being suspect.

They would really gag if they were overseas as in other countries such as the Middle East men hold hands while walking and embrace each other or give a peck on the cheek as a form of goodbye. Even though they are not gay such actions in America would be construed as gay.

The biggest hypocrisies is that there are many rappers who are gay yet would never dare to put that label on them. In the eye of the public they may sing to us how it's sickening to be gay and at night they're doing the actions that they condemn. I'm fortunate enough to have friends who work in the industry and have had personal eyewitness accounts of well known rappers who are anti-gay yet have a taste for the male flesh. Unfortunately this is not a column on outing people, mostly as I feel that outing

is not an effective way for people to accept their identity and also it provokes people who may be considered coming out, less likely based on the public reaction which is surrounded by gossip and not support.

To be fair not all rappers condone hateful language. Artists such as Kayne West, Russell Simmons and The Game state they have no issues with those who are gay. They are but a few who have given public support. In mentioning The Game I respect his public comments in his support for 'gays' but sometimes when you take a step forward you inadvertently take a step back. In a recent article he states that he's comfortable with 'them' but blames them for the spread of AIDS in the linked website.
The Game on gays

It's sad to say but in this age and with the accessible information, people think only someone gay is either at risk or has the ability to pass along AIDS. Anyone, regardless of sexuality and race can get or pass along AIDS.

A serious dialogue has to be created about this type of thinking and behaviors of rappers spreading their messages of hate. The best way to hit rappers is where it hurts, their wallets. Whether you're gay or not by not supporting an artist who wrap their beats in hate, a message can be sent that it won't be tolerated. And even though the beats may be jamming and and you tell yourself 'it's my song' we have to draw a line and say this is not acceptable.

I know it hurts as I have had to erase from my IPod certain songs that have the inclusion of derogatory themes. And in not to be a hypocrite but it's not just songs that demonize gays but also the ones that treat women as if they are a piece of meat.

Will my actions change anything? Who knows? But in unity we can move mountains but for me the dancing to hate is over and I only dance for love. When it comes to hateful lyrics, I bow out gracefully.

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