

What's Going On? Current Economic and Cultural Influences of Black Music in the Music Industry

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Abstract

Black music, primarily the hip-hop and R&B genres, is prominent at the forefront of the U.S. and global music landscapes, evidencing an influential cultural footprint. Black music refers to music that is innovated by African American people in the United States, derived from Black experiences, stories, and culture, is created to speak to Black audiences, and is created or performed by a Black composer, artist, producer or other Black music creative. Gaps in the collective music business narratives of America fail to acknowledge the critical role African Americans play in shaping our country's heritage and culture. The National Museum of African American Music (NMAAM) commissioned an analysis as part of its annual State of Black Music programming, in concert with its mission to tell the story of the role of African Americans in creating America's Soundtrack. In doing so, NMAAM and the authors recognize that this is a story of both business enterprise and artistic endeavor.

Keywords: Black music, National Museum of African American Music, music industry



Cheryl Slay Carr is an Attorney and a Professor of Music Business at Belmont University in the Mike Curb College of Entertainment & Music Business. Dr. Carr earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Michigan, received a Master of Public Administration from Clark-Atlanta University, earned her Juris Doctor degree from The University of Maryland School of Law, and earned her Doctorate of Education in Higher Education at Fairleigh Dickinson University. Her research and writing emphases include equity and justice in law, arts and entertainment, and career and leadership empowerment narratives. She is an author of published articles and books, including *Music Copyright Law* and *Music Business Careers: Career Duality in the Creative Industries*. In addition to her publications, she teaches, speaks, and writes extensively on commerce in the music industry, diversity in the business of jazz, and marginalization in the entertainment industry. She is founder of Minding the Gap, a Diversity in Entertainment Indus-

try Symposium, which facilitated an annual dialogue on a range of equity issues in the entertainment industry. As an attorney and entrepreneur, she founded and managed her own law firm, practicing law as an entertainment and intellectual property attorney representing a range of businesses, filmmakers, authors, record companies, musicians, technology companies, and visual artists. She completed the Harvard Law School Program of Instruction for Lawyers in International and Comparative Intellectual Property, is a Maryland Bar Foundation Fellow, and an alumna of Leadership Music. She has been honored as a recipient of the Nashville Business Journal's Women of Influence award and Nashville Business Journal Women in Music City award. She is an experienced singer and producer of *Invocation*, an EP of her jazz-inspired recordings.

than thirteen years of professional experience in consumer market research and strategic decision analysis with several Fortune 500 companies and government agencies prior to her career in academia. She also serves as the Vice Chair of the Board of Directors for the Give A Note Foundation, a national non-profit organization supporting the provision of music education in culturally diverse, underserved, and Title I K-12 schools throughout the country.



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