

DON'T BELIEVE THE 'HYPE'

Written by Jeffrey L. Boney, Associate Editor
Wednesday, 03 April 2013 00:00



Today, I would like to take a moment to highlight the “Hype Man.”

First off, in hip hop music and rapping, a “hype man” is a backup rapper and/or singer who supports the primary rapper(s) with “exclamations and interjections,” and who attempts to increase the audience’s excitement with call-and-response chants.

Now don’t act all brand new on me.....you know you have heard them before and probably know them by memory.

Okay, here we go.

“Now throw your hands in the air and wave ‘em like you just.....!”

Come on.....you know the rest. Okay, let me try another.

“Somebody, anybody, everybody.....!”

Go ahead and finish it for me.

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Alright, here is my last one.

“The roof, the roof, the roof is on fire, we don't need no water let the.....!”

Alright, I know you are with me now.

Although these cliché chants may sound familiar, more often than not, the individual(s) shouting them might as well be unknown. The “hype man” can usually be found on the stage at concerts or behind a DJ booth at a club or party with the main entertainment or primary artist(s).

Whatever the case may be, the typical “hype man” isn't usually recognizable and normally receives less attention, less praise and less money, than the main entertainer does.

Check it out though, you can never diminish this person's role or discount them, because while they may be shouting out these cliché chants and familiar sounding phrases, they play a key role in getting people emotionally charged to do what they want them to do.

If they tell you to throw your hands in the air, what do you do?

If they tell you to scream, what do you do?

If they tell you to get out of your seat, what do you do?

Truth be told, a real successful “hype man” has the power to influence and persuade people to do things that they otherwise wouldn't be willing to do.

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Flavor Flav is mostly known for popularizing the role of the “hype man” in the hip-hop world. Flavor Flav rose to prominence as a member of the hip-hop group Public Enemy. He was best known for walking around with a clock around his neck, which was one of his primary gimmicks to gain attention.

In addition to looking the part, he would yell the memorable phrases, “Yeah boy!” and “Flavor Flav!” during performances. Nobody cared about Flavor Flav’s intellect or personal life. All they cared about seeing Flavor Flav do was wear that clock, dance funny and yell out his catch phrases.

If you look around, you will find that there is a “hype man” in almost every place or arena you frequent. You can find him where you eat, live, work, play and even worship.

You have a lot of so-called Christians who quote scriptures from the Bible and spew religious rhetoric better than anyone, yet they are as callous and cold-hearted to the lost and to the poor as a non-believer. That’s a “hype man.”

You have a lot of community activists that are never seen in the community. That’s a “hype man.”

You have people that will lie to you and use emotionalism to get you to do what they want and then turn around and screw you over without thinking twice. That is a “hype man.”

You have a lot of elected officials who frequent your churches, your civic club meetings and your community events and tell your community one thing and tell another community something entirely different, promising that they will represent you and that the community will be better for it, yet they vote against you repeatedly; only come around when it is time for you to vote for them again; have no resources coming to your community; and can show you no true community improvement. That is a “hype man.”

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Sadly, most of us love getting hyped up about stuff. Unfortunately, the difference between following the lead of the “hype man” at a concert versus having to live with the consequences of following the lead of the real life “hype man,” could mean the difference between success and failure. Now think about that the next time you are listening to a “hype man.”

Yeah boy!!!!

Jeffrey L. Boney serves as Associate Editor and is an award-winning journalist for the Houston Forward Times newspaper. Jeffrey is a Next Generation Project Fellow, dynamic, international speaker, experienced entrepreneur, business development strategist and Founder/CEO of the Texas Business Alliance. If you would like to request Jeffrey as a speaker, you can reach him at jboney1@texasbusinessalliance.org.