HHHM...

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CELEBRATING

50 YEARS

OF

HIP-HOP

1973- UNTIL

"SALUTING 50 YEARS OF HIP-HOP: A TIMELESS EVOLUTION"

By Jaz

"Saluting 50 Years of Hip-Hop: A Timeless Evolution"
In the vibrant tapestry of music history, few genres have left an indelible mark as hip-hop. Born in the South Bronx in the early 1970s, this cultural phenomenon has grown from its humble origins into a global force, transcending boundaries and uniting diverse communities under a shared rhythm and rhyme. As we celebrate the remarkable journey of hip-hop's 50th anniversary, it's impossible not to be awed by the profound influence it has wielded over art, culture, and society.
From the pioneering days of DJ Kool Herc, Grandmaster Flash, and Afrika Bambaataa, to the poetic lyricism of Rakim, the social commentary of Public Enemy, and the genre-defying genius of artists like Missy Elliott, hip-hop has undergone a breathtaking evolution. It has transformed from an underground movement to a billion-dollar industry, giving voice to the marginalized, speaking truth to power, and offering an outlet for self-expression to countless individuals around the world.
In this special tribute article, we will take a journey through the decades, exploring the milestones, artists, and cultural shifts that have defined hip-hop. We'll delve into the iconic moments, the political impact, and the groundbreaking innovations that have made this genre a force to be reckoned with. From the birth of the breakbeat to the rise of the rap mogul, from the boombox to the streaming era, hip-hop has continually adapted and reinvented itself, maintaining its authenticity while staying relevant in an ever-changing world.

Our exploration will not only honor the trailblazers who have shaped hip-hop but also acknowledge the challenges it has faced along the way. We will reflect on the genre's ability to foster unity and spark conversations about race, identity, and social justice, as well as its power to reflect the triumphs and struggles of everyday life.
So, join us as we pay our respects to 50 years of hip-hop—a genre that has not only left an indelible mark on music but has also become a symbol of resilience, creativity, and cultural transformation. From its humble beginnings in the South Bronx to its global reign today, hip-hop remains a testament to the enduring power of art and the human spirit. It's a journey worth celebrating, and we invite you to embark on it with us.



DJ kool herc



Clive Campbell
April 16,1955

DJ Kool Herc, a Jamaican-American DJ, is widely recognized as a foundational figure in the birth of hip hop music. Originating his unique style in the Bronx, New York City, during the 1970s, he earned the title "Father of Hip-Hop" for his pioneering contributions to the genre.

YEAR
1973

PHOTO/Same passage

Lance Taylor
April 17, 1957

Afrika Bambaataa, an American DJ, rapper, and producer from South Bronx, New York, played a pivotal role in shaping the hip hop landscape. In the 1980s, he released a groundbreaking series of electro tracks that were instrumental in the evolution of hip hop culture. Recognized as one of the pioneers of breakbeat DJing, Afrika Bambaataa's contributions have left an indelible mark on the music industry.



Afrika Bambaataa



PHOTO/Victor Frankowski

Grandmaster Flash



PHOTO/docmonstereyes

debut
1978

Joseph Saddler
January 1, 1958

Grandmaster Flash, a Barbadian-born DJ and producer, revolutionized DJing with his innovative Quick Mix Theory. This technique, which involved extending drum breaks using duplicate vinyl records, significantly contributed to the evolution of cutting and scratching in DJing. It provided break-dancers and rappers with a continuous flow of beats, enhancing the musical backdrop for rapping. Additionally, Grandmaster Flash is credited with inventing the slipmat, a crucial tool in the DJ's arsenal.

Sugar Hill Gang
Wonder Mike- Master Gee-Big Bank Hank



Michael Anthony Wright
April 30, 1957
Guy Anthony O'Brien
1962
Henry Lee Jackson
January 11, 1956 – November 11, 2014

The Sugarhill Gang, hailing from Englewood, New Jersey, came together as an American hip hop group in 1979. In their inaugural year, they unleashed the groundbreaking track "Rapper's Delight," marking the first-ever rap single to storm into the top 40 of the Billboard Hot 100 chart. On January 12, 1980, it reached its zenith at the 36th position. While this was the group's sole hit in the United States, they continued to enjoy success in Europe until the mid-1980s. In 1994, the trio reunited, and in 2016, they embarked on a global tour.



Run-D.M.C

Jam master jay-dmc-run



Jason Mizel
January 21, 1965 –
October 30, 2002

Darryl Matthews McDaniels
May 31, 1964

Joseph Ward Simmons
November 14, 1964

RUN DMC, hailing from Hollis, Queens, New York City, emerged in 1983 as an iconic American hip hop group. They are celebrated as one of the most significant and influential entities in hip hop history, particularly renowned for their profound impact on the genre throughout the 1980s.

debut
1983

PHOTO/Arista Records

LL Cool J

debut
1984

James Todd Smith
January 14, 1968

LL Cool J, an acronym for "Ladies Love Cool James," is an American rapper, songwriter, record producer, and actor. He stands out as one of the first rappers to attain significant commercial success in the industry.



PHOTO/Peter Yang

2 Live Crew

Fresh Kid Ice-Brother Marquis-Uncle Luke-Uncle Luke



David P. Hobbs
September 23, 1963
Christopher Wong
Won
May 29, 1964 – July 13, 2017
Mark D. Ross
April 4, 1966
Luther Roderick Campbell
December 22, 1960

The 2 Live Crew, an American hip-hop ensemble hailing from Miami, Florida, enjoyed their peak commercial prominence from the late 1980s to the early 1990s. The group's most renowned lineup featured Luke, Fresh Kid Ice, Mr. Mixx, and Brother Marquis. They garnered significant notoriety in the United States due to the highly explicit nature of their lyrics, notably showcased on their 1989 release, "As Nasty as They Wanna Be."

debut
1984

Biz Markie



debut
1985

Marcel Theo Hall
April 8, 1964 – July 16, 2021

Biz Markie, known as an American rapper and singer, gained widespread recognition with his 1989 single "Just a Friend." This track not only became a Top 40 hit in various countries but was also honored as number 100 on VH1's 2008 list of the 100 greatest hip-hop songs of all time. Markie was affectionately dubbed the "Clown Prince of Hip Hop" for his unique style and entertaining persona.

PHOTO/keith Allison

Adam Keefe Horovitz
October 31, 1966

Adam Nathaniel Yauch
August 5, 1964 – May 4, 2012

Michael Louis Diamond
November 20, 1965

Beastie Boys, initially gaining regional recognition with their comedic hip hop single "Cooky Puss" in 1983, fully embraced hip hop soon after, leading to member Schellenbach's departure. The group's profile soared when they joined Madonna on tour in 1985. This momentum culminated in the release of their debut album, "Licensed to Ill" in 1986, which made history as the first rap album to reach the number one spot on the Billboard 200 chart.

debut
1986

Beastie Boys
Ad-Rock-MCA-MIKE D



PHOTO/Wytheen Photography

Public Enemy
chuck d- flava flav



Carlton Douglas Ridenhour
August 1, 1960
William Jonathan Drayton Jr.
March 16, 1959

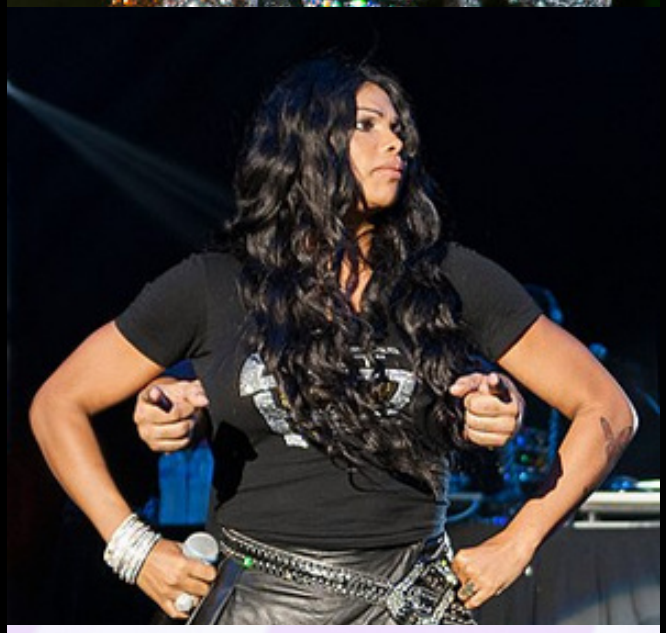
Public Enemy, an American hip hop group established by Chuck D and Flavor Flav in Long Island, New York, in 1985, became well-known for their politically charged lyrics addressing issues like American racism and media representation. They first gained critical acclaim with their debut album "Yo! Bum Rush the Show" in 1987, and their subsequent release, "It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back" (1988), achieved a significant milestone as the first hip hop album to lead The Village Voice's Pazz & Jop critics' poll.

debut
1986

PHOTO/Spotify

Salt-N-Pepa
salt-pepa-Spinderella









Cheryl Renee James
March 28, 1966
Sandra Jacqueline Denton
November 9, 1964
Deidra Muriel Roper
August 3, 1970

Formed in New York City in 1985, Salt-N-Pepa, occasionally stylized as Salt 'N' Pepa, is a pioneering American hip hop trio. Their groundbreaking debut album, "Hot, Cool & Vicious" (1986), surpassed 1 million sales in the United States, marking them as the first female rap act to achieve gold and platinum status from the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA). Among the album's tracks was "Push It," released in 1987 as a B-side to "Tramp," which soared into the Billboard Hot 100's top 20.

KRS-One



Lawrence "Kris" Parker

August 20, 1965

KRS-One, often referred to as Teacha, is an American rapper hailing from the South Bronx. He gained prominence as a key figure in the hip-hop landscape, particularly through his involvement with the hip-hop group Boogie Down Productions, co-founded with DJ Scott La Rock in the mid-1980s.

KRS-One is celebrated for his iconic tracks like "Sound of da Police," "Love's Gonna Get'cha (Material Love)," and "My Philosophy." In their early years, Boogie Down Productions garnered numerous awards and critical acclaim. Tragically, after the release of their debut album, "Criminal Minded," Scott La Rock was fatally shot. Despite this loss, KRS-One continued the group, effectively as a solo endeavor.

In 1993, he transitioned to releasing records under his own name. Beyond his musical endeavors, KRS-One is a prominent figure in politics, having initiated the Stop the Violence Movement following Scott La Rock's passing. He is also known for his advocacy of veganism, which is reflected in songs like "Beef." His influence on numerous hip-hop artists is widely acknowledged in the industry.



PHOTO/Saquan Stimpson

Eric B. & Rakim

debut
1986

Louis Eric Barrier
November 8, 1963
William Michael Griffin Jr.
January 28, 1968

Eric B. & Rakim, an iconic hip hop duo from Long Island, New York, formed in 1986. Known for their profound influence during the late '80s golden age of rap, they were widely regarded as the top DJ/MC pair in hip-hop. Celebrated for their substantial impact on contemporary pop music, NPR's Tom Terrell described them as "the most influential DJ/MC combo in contemporary pop music." Their legacy includes being ranked number five on About.com's list of the 10 Greatest Hip-Hop Duos of All-Time and similarly, they were placed fifth on Rolling Stone's list of the 20 Greatest Duos of All Time.



PHOTO/ MCA Records

Will Smith



Willard Carroll Smith II
September 25, 1968

Will Smith, is a renowned American actor, rapper, and film producer with an Academy Award, a Golden Globe, a Screen Actors Guild Award, a BAFTA, and four Grammys to his name. As of 2023, his films have grossed over $9.3 billion globally, establishing him as a top Hollywood star.
Smith's entertainment career began in the mid-1980s with the hip-hop duo DJ Jazzy Jeff & the Fresh Prince, formed with childhood friend Jeffrey "DJ Jazzy Jeff" Townes. Their first hit, "Girls Ain't Nothing but Trouble," released in 1986, led to their signing with Jive Records. The duo's debut album, "Rock the House" (1987), and their Grammy-winning singles "Parents Just Don't Understand" (1988) and "Summertime" (1991), cemented their success. Smith and Townes have remained close friends and collaborators throughout their careers



PHOTO/TechCrunch

Tracy Lauren Marrow
February 16, 1958

Ice-T, also known as Ice T, is an American rapper and actor known for his versatile presence in both the hip-hop and heavy metal realms. He commenced his career as an underground rapper during the 1980s and inked a deal with Sire Records in 1987, marking the release of his debut album, "Rhyme Pays." The subsequent year, he established the record label "Rhyme $yndicate Records," inspired by his collective of fellow hip-hop artists known as the "Rhyme $yndicate." Under this banner, he dropped another album titled "Power" in 1988, which achieved platinum status. Ice-T's discography also includes several gold-certified albums, notably "The Iceberg/Freedom of Speech... Just Watch What You Say!" (1989), "O.G. Original Gangster" (1991), and "Home Invasion" (1993).



Ice-T

Eazy-E

debut
1988

Eric Wright
September 7, 1963-
March 26, 1995

Eazy-E, an influential American rapper, played a pivotal role in shaping West Coast rap and gangsta rap through his leadership of the renowned group N.W.A and its record label, Ruthless Records. He is often hailed as the "Godfather of Gangsta Rap." Hailing from Compton, California, Eazy-E, whose real name was Wright, faced several legal challenges before establishing Ruthless Records in 1987. Following a brief solo career with frequent collaborations alongside Ice Cube and Dr. Dre, they came together to form N.W.A later that same year. N.W.A's debut studio album, "Straight Outta Compton," hit the scene in 1988, sparking controversy upon its release but ultimately earning its place as one of the greatest and most influential albums in history. The group followed up with their second and final studio album, "Niggaz4Life," in 1991, and shortly thereafter disbanded.



Ron Galella, Ltd./Ron Galella Collection via Getty Images

Scarface

debut
1988

Brad Terrence Jordan
November 9, 1970

Scarface, an American rapper and record producer, is most prominently recognized for his affiliation with the Geto Boys, a renowned hip-hop collective hailing from Houston, Texas. His roots trace back to Houston, and he originally hails from the South Acres (Crestmont Park) neighborhood of the city.
In 2012, The Source acknowledged his lyrical prowess by ranking him at #16 on their list of the Top 50 Lyricists of All Time. Additionally, About.com celebrated his artistry by placing him at #6 on their list of the 50 Greatest MCs from the period spanning 1987 to 2007.



Sir Mix-a-Lot

debut
1988

Anthony L. Ray
August 12, 1963

Sir Mix-a-Lot, also known by his CB handle Prime Minista, is a prominent American rapper, songwriter, and record producer. He achieved widespread recognition for his smash hit from 1992, "Baby Got Back," which soared to the top spot on the Billboard Hot 100 chart.



NWA

Dr.dre-ice cube-eazy e, mc ren-dj yella-Arabian Prince

Mik Lezan
June 17, 1965;
Antoine Carraby
December 11, 1967;
Andre Young:
February 18, 1965;
Eric Wright
September 7, 1964–
March 26, 1995
O'Shea Jackson:
June 15, 1969;
Lorenzo Patterson:
June 16, 1969

N.W.A, standing for "Niggaz Wit Attitudes," was a groundbreaking American hip hop group from Compton, California. They played a pivotal role in popularizing and shaping the gangsta rap subgenre. Known for their controversial and influential music, N.W.A is regarded as one of the most important and impactful groups in hip hop history.



PHOTO/iheart

Big Daddy Kane

debut

1987

Antonio Hardy
September 10, 1968

Big Daddy Kane, an American rapper, producer, and actor, launched his career in 1986 with the Juice Crew. He is celebrated as one of the most skillful and influential MCs in the hip hop genre. His prowess as a lyricist and artist is exemplified by Rolling Stone's ranking of his track "Ain't No Half-Steppin'" at number 25 on their list of The 50 Greatest Hip-Hop Songs of All Time. The magazine lauded him as a "master wordsmith of rap's late-golden age" and acknowledged his significant impact on numerous MCs of subsequent generations.



PHOTO/RustyShack

Richard Martin Lloyd Walters
January 14, 1965

Slick Rick, a rapper and record producer with English-American roots, gained fame in the mid-1980s through his collaboration with Doug E. Fresh & the Get Fresh Crew. Their hits "The Show" and "La Di Da Di" are hailed as classics of the early hip-hop era, with "La Di Da Di" becoming one of the most sampled tracks in music history. In 1986, Slick Rick's career further elevated when he became the third artist to sign with the influential Def Jam Records.



Slick Rick

PHOTO/Paras Griffin/Getty Images

De La Soul



Kelvin Mercer
August 17, 1969
Vincent Lamont
Mason Jr
March 24, 1970
David Jude
Jolicoeur
September 21,
1968 – February
12, 2023

De La Soul, an American hip hop trio, emerged in 1988 from the village of Amityville on Long Island, New York. Renowned for their innovative use of eclectic sampling, distinctive quirky lyrics, and their role in shaping the jazz rap and alternative hip hop subgenres, the group consists of Kelvin "Posdnuos" Mercer, David "Trugoy the Dove" Jolicoeur, and Vincent "Maseo" Mason. They formed De La Soul during their high school years and garnered the attention of producer Prince Paul with their demo tape featuring the song "Plug Tunin'."



PHOTO/Matti Hillig

Naughty by Nature
Treach-Vin Rock-KayGee

debut
1986

Anthony Shawn Criss
December 2, 1970
Vincent Brown
September,17,1970
Keir Lamont Gist
September 15, 1969

Naughty by Nature, an American hip hop trio from East Orange, New Jersey, comprises members Treach (Anthony Criss), Vin Rock (Vincent Brown), and DJ Kay Gee (Keir Lamont Gist). Originally formed in 1986 as The New Style, the group made their debut in 1989 with the album "Independent Leaders," featuring the minor hit "Scuffin' Those Knees." After this release, they were guided by Queen Latifah, a fellow New Jersey native, leading to a change in their name. The trio's first major hit, "O.P.P.," came from their 1991 self-titled album "Naughty by Nature." This track, which sampled the Jackson 5's "ABC," reached #6 on the Billboard Hot 100.



PHOTO/Tommy Boy Records, or the graphic artist(s)

A Tribe Called Quest

Q-Tip-Phife Dawg-Ali Shaheed Muhammad-Jarobi White

debut

1990

Jonathan Davis

April 10, 1970

Malik Taylor

November 20, 1970

Ali Shaheed Jones-Muhammad

August 11, 1970

Jarobi White

July 1, 1971

A Tribe Called Quest, a seminal American hip hop group from Queens, New York City, was formed in 1985. Renowned for pioneering alternative hip hop and fusing jazz with the genre, they significantly influenced numerous artists in hip hop and R&B. The group rose to fame as key members of the Native Tongues collective, which they helped establish in 1988. Their debut album, "People's Instinctive Travels and the Paths of Rhythm" (1990), garnered critical acclaim, notably receiving the first-ever five 'mic' rating from The Source magazine.



PHOTO/spotify

Redman

debut
1990

Reginald Noble
April 17, 1970

Redman, an American rapper, DJ, record producer, and actor, achieved prominence in the early 1990s while signed to the Def Jam label. Renowned for his collaborative efforts with his dear friend Method Man, they form the dynamic rap duo known as Method Man & Redman. Together, they've not only graced the hip-hop scene but have also taken on leading roles in both films and sitcoms, notable examples being "How High" and "Method and Red." Additionally, Redman was a pivotal member of the Def Squad during the late 1990s.



Ice Cube



debut
1990

O'Shea Jackson Sr
June 15, 1969

Ice Cube, an accomplished American artist, encompasses roles as a rapper, songwriter, actor, and film producer. His lyrical prowess on N.W.A's 1988 album, "Straight Outta Compton," played a pivotal role in propelling gangsta rap into the mainstream, earning widespread acclaim and popularity. As a solo artist, his politically charged albums, including "AmeriKKKa's Most Wanted" (1990), "Death Certificate" (1991), and "The Predator" (1992), not only garnered critical acclaim but also achieved significant commercial success. In recognition of his contributions, Ice Cube was honored with induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame as a member of N.W.A in 2016.

Master P

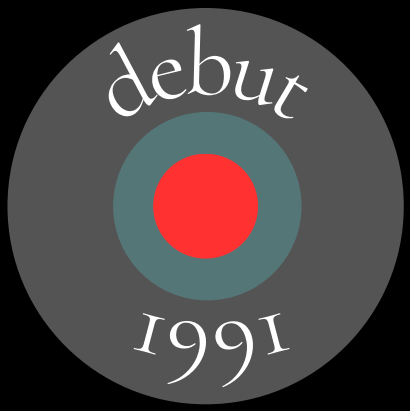


Percy Robert Miller Sr

April 29, 1970

Master P, an American rapper, record producer, record executive, actor, and entrepreneur, stands as a multifaceted figure in the entertainment industry. He is the visionary behind No Limit Records, which underwent various incarnations as New No Limit Records under Universal Records and Koch Records, and later transformed into Guttar Music Entertainment, and is presently known as No Limit Forever Records. Beyond music, he is the founder and CEO of P. Miller Enterprises and was involved in Better Black Television, an online television network that had a brief run.

Master P's journey to stardom began in the mid-1990s when his hip-hop group TRU and his fifth solo rap album, "Ice Cream Man" (1996), propelled him into the limelight, marked by the release of his debut single, "Mr. Ice Cream Man." His fame soared further in 1997 with the Platinum-certified hit "Make 'Em Say Uhh!" In total, Master P has graced the industry with 15 studio albums.



Dana Elaine Owens March 18, 1970

Queen Latifah established herself in the hip-hop world by addressing themes relevant to black women in her music. Her songs delved into various subjects such as domestic violence, street harassment, and challenges in relationships. With the assistance of Freddy, Latifah secured a deal with Tommy Boy Records. This led to the release of her debut album, "All Hail the Queen," in 1989, when she was just nineteen years old.t



Queen Latifah

PHOTO/Sister Circle TV

Tupac Shakur



debut
1991

Tupac Amaru Shakur
June 16, 1971- September 13, 1996

2Pac is celebrated as one of the most influential and successful rappers ever. His status as a best-selling music artist is cemented by over 75 million records sold worldwide. His music, known for its insightful exploration of contemporary social issues affecting inner cities, has left a lasting impact.

PHOTO/Albert Watson, 1991.

Busta Rhymes

debut
1991

Trevor George Smith Jr.
May 20, 1972

Busta Rhymes, an American rapper, songwriter, record producer, and actor, received his stage name from Chuck D of Public Enemy, inspired by the NFL and CFL wide receiver George "Buster" Rhymes. He is known for receiving 12 Grammy Award nominations throughout his career.

An original member of Leaders of the New School, Busta Rhymes first came to prominence when the group opened for Public Enemy on tour. His breakthrough occurred with a guest appearance on A Tribe Called Quest's "Scenario." After the disbandment of Leaders of the New School, Rhymes pursued a solo career, featuring on numerous tracks before releasing his debut album, "The Coming," in 1996. This album achieved top ten status on the Billboard 200, was certified platinum by the RIAA, and garnered him a Grammy nomination.



PHOTO/All-Pro Reels

Dr Dre

debut
1992

Andre Romell Young
February 18, 1965

Dr. Dre, an American record producer and rapper, stands as an influential figure in the music industry. He serves as the founder and CEO of Aftermath Entertainment and Beats Electronics, having previously co-founded, co-owned, and presided over Death Row Records.

Dr. Dre's musical journey commenced in 1985 as a member of the World Class Wreckin' Cru, but he achieved widespread recognition and fame with the gangsta rap ensemble N.W.A. The group pioneered explicit lyrics in hip-hop, vividly portraying the harsh realities of street life. In the early 1990s, Dre played a pivotal role in shaping and popularizing West Coast G-funk, a subgenre characterized by its foundation in synthesizers and slow, weighty beats.

His exceptional talent and impact have solidified Dr. Dre's legacy as one of the greatest music producers of all time.



PIMP C



PHOTO/Promo photograph

debut
1992

Chad Lamont Butler
December 29, 1973 –
December 4, 2007)

Pimp C, an American rapper and record producer, was renowned for his collaboration with Bun B as part of the hip-hop duo Underground Kingz (UGK). After signing with Jive Records in 1992, UGK released their critically acclaimed major-label debut, "Too Hard to Swallow." They continued their success with subsequent albums "Super Tight" in 1994 and "Ridin' Dirty" in 1996, both charting on the Billboard 200. UGK gained national fame in 2000 with their feature on Jay-Z's hit "Big Pimpin'," which reached #18 on the Billboard Hot 100 and topped the Rhythmic Top 40 chart.

Bun B

debut

1992

Bernard James Freeman

March 19, 1973

Bun B, an American rapper, gained fame as one half of the southern rap duo UGK (UnderGround Kingz), which he founded with Pimp C in 1987. In addition to his contributions to UGK, Bun B has carved out a successful solo career, releasing five albums. Notably, his 2010 release, "Trill OG," earned the distinguished 5-mic rating from The Source.



PHOTO/Dom Brady

Calvin Cordozar Broadus Jr October 20, 1971

Snoop Dogg, formerly known as Snoop Doggy Dogg and briefly Snoop Lion, is a well-known American rapper and actor. He first gained prominence in 1992 with his guest appearance on Dr. Dre's debut solo single "Deep Cover," and subsequently on Dre's album "The Chronic" released the same year. Throughout his career, Snoop Dogg, whose real name is Calvin Cordozar Broadus Jr., has sold over 23 million albums in the United States and 35 million globally. His achievements include winning an American Music Award, a Primetime Emmy Award, and receiving 17 Grammy Award nominations.



Snoop Dogg



PHOTO/The 85 South Comedy Show

Wu-Tang Clan

RZA, GZA, Ol' Dirty Bastard, Method Man, Raekwon, Ghostface Killah, Inspectah Deck, U-God, Masta Killa, Cappadonna



Wu-Tang Clan, a prominent American hip hop collective from Staten Island, New York City, was formed in 1992. The group, including members like RZA, GZA, Method Man, and the late Ol' Dirty Bastard, gained acclaim with their 1993 debut album "Enter the Wu-Tang (36 Chambers)," widely regarded as one of the greatest hip hop albums ever. Following individual solo projects, their 1997 album "Wu-Tang Forever" topped the Billboard 200 and received a Grammy nomination. Despite releasing several more albums, their popularity waned, with their seventh album, "Once Upon a Time in Shaolin," famously selling as a single $2 million copy. Wu-Tang Clan, known for launching affiliated artists' careers, has been recognized as the top hip hop group by About and praised by Rolling Stone and NME for their significant influence.

Robert Fitzgerald Diggs
July 5, 1969
Gary Grice
August 22, 1966
Jason Richard Hunter
July 6, 1970
Lamont Jody Hawkins
November 10, 1970
Dennis David Coles
May 9, 1970
Clifford Smith, Jr
March 2, 1971
Corey Woods
January 12, 1970
Jamel Irief
August 18, 1969
Darryl Hill
September 18, 1968
Russell Tyrone Jones
November 15, 1968 – November 13, 2004



PHOTO/ascap

Fat Joe

debut

1993

Joseph Antonio Cartagena

August 19, 1970

Fat Joe, an American rapper hailing from New York City, initially stepped into the music scene as a member of the Diggin' in the Crates Crew (D.I.T.C.) in 1992. Just a year later, he embarked on a solo journey, releasing his debut album, "Represent," in 1993. Cartegena later founded the hip-hop group Terror Squad and established its namesake record label in the late 1990s. Through Terror Squad, he not only made a mark in his own career but also played a significant role in shaping the New York hip-hop scene. He discovered and signed fellow New York artists such as Big Pun, Remy Ma, Tony Sunshine, and Cuban Link. Additionally, he provided a platform for then-unknown producers like DJ Khaled and Cool & Dre to rise in the industry.



PHOTO/Jai Lennard for Men's Health

Fugees



Lauryn Noelle Hill
May 26, 1975

Nel Ust Wyclef Jean
October 17, 1969

Prakazrel Samuel Michel
October 19, 1972

The Fugees, an American hip-hop trio originating from South Orange, New Jersey, was established in 1990. The group's name, derived from the term "refugees," encompasses the talents of Wyclef Jean, Pras Michel, and Lauryn Hill.

During the mid-1990s, The Fugees soared to fame by pioneering a unique fusion of reggae, R&B, funk, and hip-hop. Their distinctive sound distanced them from gangsta rap, positioning them as one of the most influential alternative hip-hop acts of the era. In their performances, they occasionally incorporated Haitian Creole into their lyrics, distinguishing themselves as one of the early hip-hop groups to introduce live instrumentation into their shows, alongside The Roots.



The Notorious B.I.G.



Christopher George Latore Wallace May 21, 1972-March 9, 1997

The Notorious B.I.G., also known as Biggie Smalls or simply Biggie, was an iconic American rapper. His style, deeply embedded in East Coast hip hop and gangsta rap, has earned him recognition as one of the all-time greatest rappers. Wallace was renowned for his unique, relaxed lyrical flow, which contrasted with the often dark themes of his music.



PHOTO/Bad Boy Records

Nas

debut

1994

Nasir bin Olu Dara Jones September 14, 1973

Nas, an American rapper known for his significant impact on East Coast hip hop, is widely acclaimed as one of the greatest rappers ever. The son of jazz musician Olu Dara, he began his musical endeavors in 1989 under the alias "Nasty Nas." Nas's early career involved creating demos for East Coast rapper Large Professor, leading to his notable appearance on the 1991 song "Live at the Barbeque" by Main Source.



PHOTO/All-Pro Reels

Bone Thugs-n-Harmony
Bizzy bone- flesh n bone-krayzie bone-wish bone- layzie bone



Bryon Anthony McCane II
September 12, 1976
Stanley Howse
June 10, 1973
Anthony Henderson
June 17, 1973
Steven Howse
September 23, 1974
Charles C. Scruggs Jr
February 21, 1975

Bone Thugs-n-Harmony, formed in Cleveland, Ohio in 1991, made their mark in the music industry after signing with Eazy-E's Ruthless Records in late 1993. Their debut EP, "Creepin on ah Come Up," released in 1994, featured the standout single "Thuggish Ruggish Bone." The group's momentum continued with their 1995 album "E. 1999 Eternal," which included popular tracks like "1st of tha Month" and "East 1999." Their song "Tha Crossroads," a heartfelt tribute to their late mentor Eazy-E, earned them a Grammy Award in 1997.



PHOTO/under the radar

Kool G Rap

debut
1995

Nathaniel Wilson
July 20, 1968

Kool G Rap, often known as G Rap, is an esteemed American rapper whose career blossomed in the mid-1980s, initially as one half of the dynamic duo Kool G Rap & DJ Polo and as an integral part of the Juice Crew. Widely regarded as one of the most influential and proficient MCs in the history of rap, he is recognized as a trailblazer in mafioso rap, street narratives, and hardcore lyrical content, as well as a pioneer of intricate multisyllabic rhyming.

Intriguingly, on his album "The Giancana Story," he asserted that the "G" in his moniker was an homage to the infamous mobster Sam Giancana. Nevertheless, on different occasions, he has also suggested that it symbolizes "Genius."

Kool G Rap's impact reverberates through the hip-hop landscape, serving as a significant influence on some of the genre's most critically acclaimed artists, including The Notorious B.I.G., Nas, Eminem, Jay-Z, and numerous underground talents.



OutKast

Big Boi-André 3000

debut 1994

André Lauren Benjamin

May 27, 1975

Antwan André Patton

February 1, 1975

Outkast, an American hip hop duo from Atlanta, Georgia, formed in 1992.Renowned for their work from the mid-1990s to the early 2000s, they played a significant role in bringing Southern hip hop to mainstream prominence. Their music, known for its complex lyricism, catchy melodies, and uplifting themes, was marked by experimentation across various genres, including funk, psychedelia, jazz, and techno.



PHOTO/Michael Lavine

Anthony Cruz
March 9, 1972

AZ, an American rapper, is renowned for his enduring and frequent musical collaborations with East Coast rapper Nas. He is also recognized as a key member of the hip-hop ensemble The Firm, which included Nas, Foxy Brown, Cormega, and Nature.
AZ's talent has often been overlooked, earning him the title of the "Most Underrated Rapper of All Time" according to online magazine About.com. He also secured a place on their "Top 50 MCs of Our Time (1987–2007)" list, where he was consistently identified as "arguably the most underrated lyricist ever." AZ's initial claim to fame came through his appearance on Nas's iconic 1994 album, "Illmatic," notably on the track "Life's a Bitch," and his vocal contributions to the album's opening track, "The Genesis." Following this, AZ signed with EMI and released his debut album, "Doe or Die," in 1995, receiving critical acclaim. The album's lead single, "Sugar Hill," marked a significant commercial breakthrough, reaching the 25th spot on the Billboard Hot 100 chart and earning Gold status. Subsequently, AZ's EMI contract transitioned to sister labels Noo Trybe Records and Virgin Records when the EMI Label Group underwent changes.



AZ



Mika-photography

Lil' Cease

YEAR

1995

James Lloyd

August 20, 1977

Cease, a member of Junior M.A.F.I.A., made his album debut with "Conspiracy" in 1995. He rose to mainstream prominence with his notable verse on "Player's Anthem," the most successful single from the album. Throughout his career, frequent mentions by his mentor, The Notorious B.I.G., played a significant role in maintaining his visibility in the rap scene.



PHOTO/Lil Cease X/ twitter

Jay-Z

debut
1996

Shawn Corey Carter
December 4, 1969

Jay-Z is a distinguished American rapper, record producer, and entrepreneur. Celebrated for his role in fostering the creative and commercial triumphs of many artists, he was hailed as the greatest rapper of all time by Billboard and Vibe in 2023. As the founder and chairman of Roc Nation, an entertainment company, and the former president and CEO of Def Jam Recordings from 2004 to 2007, Jay-Z has made significant contributions to the music and entertainment industry.



Dave Benett/Dave Benett/Getty Images for Netflix

Lil' Kim



PHOTO: LIL' KIM/INSTAGRAM

Kimberly Denise Jones
July 11, 1974

Lil' Kim, an American rapper from New York City, spent much of her youth on the streets after leaving home. Influenced by female hip-hop artists like MC Lyte and the Lady of Rage, she honed her skills in freestyle rap during her teenage years. In 1994, she caught the attention of The Notorious B.I.G., who brought her into his group Junior M.A.F.I.A. Their debut album, "Conspiracy," produced two top 20 U.S. singles and earned a gold certification from the RIAA



PHOTO/Atlantic Records

Inga DeCarlo Fung Marchand September 6, 1978

Foxy Brown, an American rapper, made her debut with Def Jam Recordings in 1996, releasing her first album "Ill Na Na" that November. The album achieved both critical and commercial success, going platinum and selling over 7 million units globally. The next year, she joined the hip hop supergroup The Firm, alongside Nas, AZ, and Nature (replacing Cormega), releasing their sole album in 1997 through Dr. Dre's Aftermath Entertainment. In 1999, Brown's second album, "Chyna Doll," also saw great success, debuting at the top of the Billboard 200 and marking her as the second female rapper to achieve this feat after Lauryn Hill in 1998.



Foxy Brown



PHOTO/Spotify

Eminem



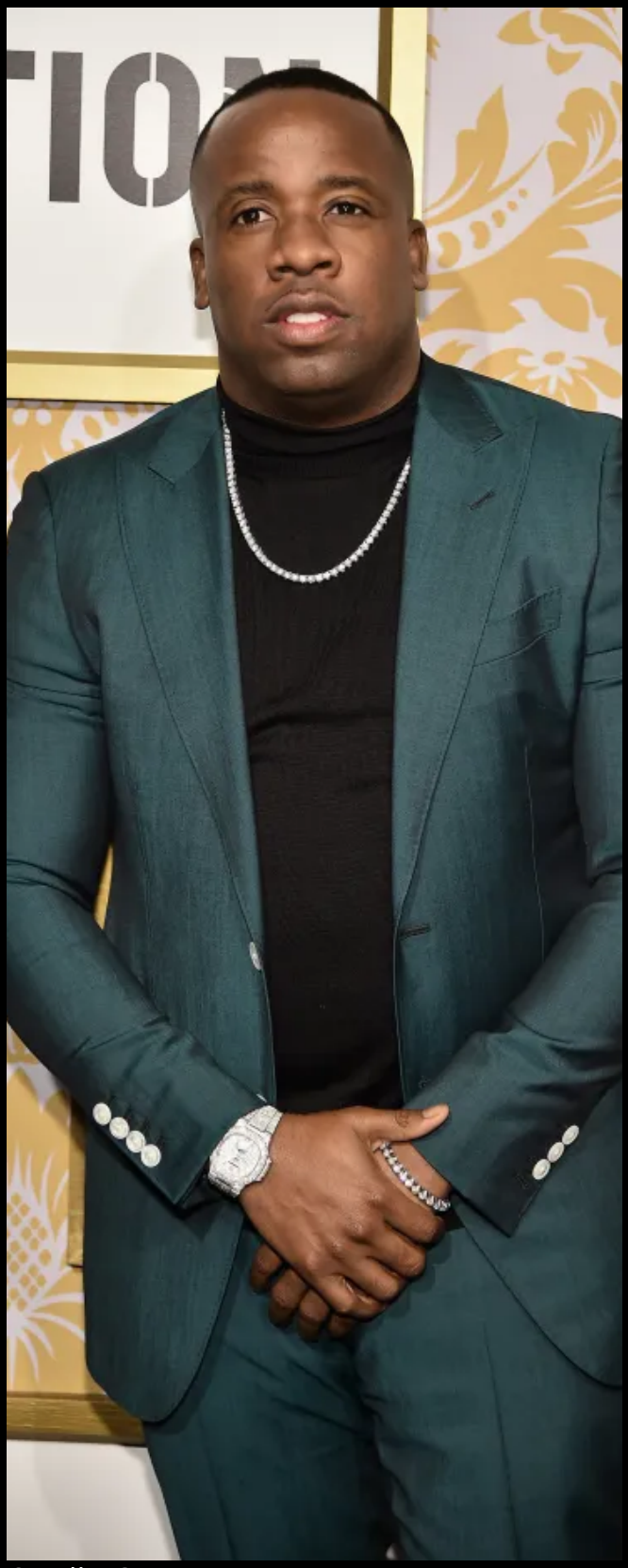
PHOTO/Brendan_linden

debut
1996

Marshall Bruce Mathers III
October 17, 1972

Eminem, often stylized as EMINƎM, is a renowned American rapper known for bringing hip hop to Middle America and consistently ranked among the greatest rappers of all time. His global success and critically acclaimed music have played a significant role in breaking down racial barriers for white rappers in the mainstream music industry. Despite the controversy surrounding his provocative work in the late 1990s and early 2000s, Eminem has become a symbol of the American underclass's angst and has influenced numerous artists across different genres.

Yo Gotti



Credit: Getty

debut
1996

Mario Sentell Giden Mims
May 19, 1981

Yo Gotti, an American rapper, commenced his career in 1996 with the release of his debut album titled "Youngsta's On a Come Up," using the alias Lil Yo at the time. Over the years, he continued to build his discography with albums such as "From Da Dope Game 2 Da Rap Game" (2000), "Self-Explanatory" (2001), "Life" (2003), "Back 2 da Basics" (2006), "Live from the Kitchen" (2012), "I Am" (2013), "The Art of Hustle" (2016), "I Still Am" (2017), "Untrapped" (2020), and "CM10: Free Game" (2022).

In 2012, Yo Gotti ventured into the realm of record labels and founded Collective Music Group (CMG). Under his leadership, CMG has successfully signed and promoted talented artists, including Moneybagg Yo, 42 Dugg, Blac Youngsta, GloRilla, EST Gee, and Mozzy.

Mason
Durell Betha
August 27,
1975

Mase, formerly known as Murda Mase and stylized as Ma$e, is an American rapper renowned for his contributions to the music industry. During the late 1990s, he made his mark under the Bad Boy Records abel alongside its founder, Sean "Puff Daddy" Combs, achieving remarkable mainstream success.
In 1997 and 1998, Mase enjoyed incredible success with five platinum singles, five number-one singles on the Hot Rap Songs chart, and six top-ten singles on the Billboard Hot 100. These achievements were a result of his collaborations on hit tracks such as Sean Combs' "Can't Nobody Hold Me Down" and "Been Around the World," and The Notorious B.I.G.'s "Mo Money Mo Problems." Additionally, Mase made his presence felt as a lead artist with singles like "Feel So Good" (featuring Kelly Price), "What You Want" (featuring Total), and "Lookin' at Me" (featuring Sean Combs). Notably, both "Can't Nobody Hold Me Down" and "Mo Money Mo Problems" claimed the top spot on the Billboard Hot 100.
Mase's debut album "Harlem World" in 1997 achieved quadruple platinum certification from the RIAA. His subsequent albums, "Double Up" (1999) and "Welcome Back" (2004), attained gold certification, further solidifying his place in the rap industry.



Mase

PHOTO/ Jeff Kravitz

Missy Elliott



Melissa Arnette Elliott

July 1, 1971

Missy Elliott, also known by the moniker Misdemeanor, is an American rapper, singer, songwriter, and record producer, born on July 1, 1971. Her musical journey began in the 1990s with the R&B group Sista, and she later joined the Swing Mob collective, working closely with Timbaland, a childhood friend and frequent collaborator. Together, they wrote and produced for artists like 702, Aaliyah, SWV, and Total. Elliott launched her solo career in 1997 with "Supa Dupa Fly," featuring the hit single "Sock It 2 Me." The album's debut at No. 3 on the Billboard 200 marked the highest charting debut for a female rapper at that time.



PHOTO/Atlantic Records

Big Pun



Christopher Lee Rios November 10, 1971

Big Pun, also known as Big Punisher, was an American rapper who rose from the Bronx's underground hip hop scene. He gained prominence after being discovered by fellow Bronx rapper Fat Joe, leading to his appearance on Fat Joe's 1995 album "Jealous One's Envy."

debut 1997

PHOTO/@erniepaniccioli

Trick Daddy

debut
1997

Maurice Samuel Young
September 27, 1974

Trick Daddy, an American rapper hailing from the Liberty City neighborhood of Miami, Florida, is best known for his 2003 hit single "Let's Go" featuring Twista and Lil Jon, which achieved a notable peak at number seven on the Billboard Hot 100 chart. His most successful recordings to date can be attributed to the album that followed, "Thug Matrimony: Married to the Streets" (2004), which reached the impressive position of number two on the Billboard 200 albums chart. Trick Daddy's earlier career involved signing with the local record label Slip-n-Slide Records for the release of his debut album, "Based on a True Story" (1997), and its sequel, "www.thug.com" (1998). Becoming the flagship artist for the label, he entered into a joint venture with Atlantic Records, leading to the release of "Book of Thugs: Chapter AK Verse 47" (2000), "Thugs Are Us" (2001), and "Thug Holiday" (2002). These albums achieved moderate commercial success.
In subsequent years, Trick Daddy made notable guest appearances on tracks such as DJ Khaled's 2007 single "I'm So Hood" and his 2008 single "Out Here Grindin'," showcasing his enduring presence in the music scene.



Lauryn Hill



Tore Sætre

debut
1998

Lauryn Noelle Hill
May 26, 1975

Lauryn Hill, an accomplished American rapper, singer, songwriter, and record producer, holds an esteemed position in the annals of music history. She is widely acknowledged as one of the preeminent rappers of all time and stands as one of the most influential musicians of her generation.

Lauryn Hill's impact on the music industry is multifaceted, having broken barriers for female rappers, popularized melodic rap, redefined the landscape of hip-hop, and played a pivotal role in propelling neo-soul into mainstream consciousness. Her remarkable vocal prowess has earned her recognition as one of the "50 Great Voices" by NPR and a place among the "200 Greatest Singers of All Time" according to Rolling Stone. In 2015, Billboard bestowed upon her the title of the greatest female rapper. Lauryn Hill's illustrious career has yielded eight Grammy Awards, a feat that remains unparalleled among female rappers to this day.

DMX

debut 1998

Earl Simmons
December 18, 1970 – April 9, 2021

DMX, an influential American rapper and actor, played a pivotal role in shaping 2000s hip hop. Known for his intense rapping style, his lyrics ranged from hardcore themes to introspective prayers. Beginning his rap career in the early 1990s, DMX made a significant impact with his debut album "It's Dark and Hell Is Hot" in 1998, which achieved both critical and commercial success, selling 251,000 copies in its first week. His 1999 album, "... And Then There Was X," featured the popular track "Party Up (Up in Here)" and became his best-selling album. Hits like "Where the Hood At?" and "X Gon' Give It to Ya" in 2003 further cemented his success. Notably, DMX was the first artist to have five consecutive albums debut at No. 1 on the Billboard 200 charts, and he sold over 74 million records globally.



PHOTO/Mika-photography

Cam'ron

debut
1998

Cameron Ezike Giles
February 4, 1976

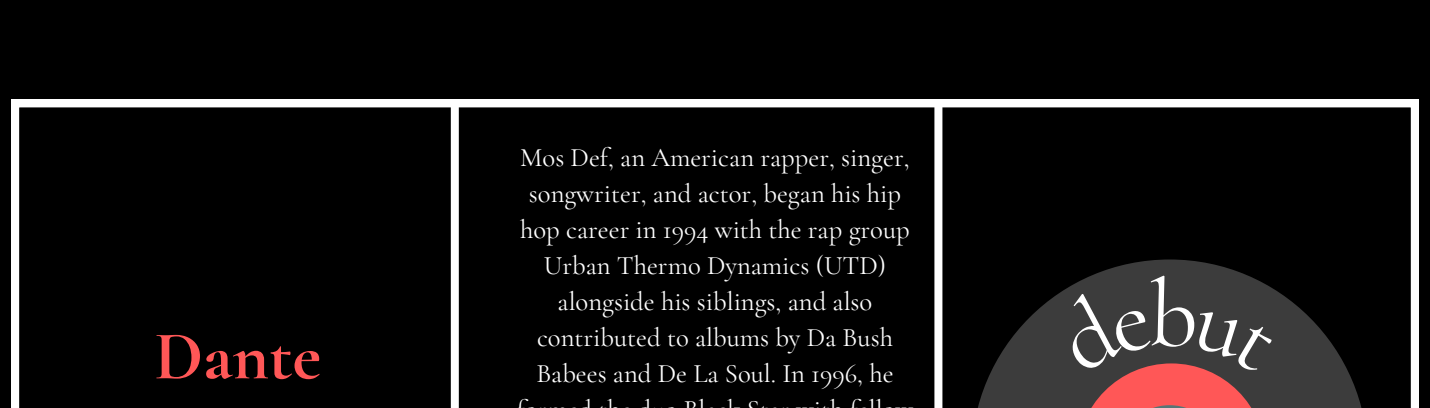
Cam'ron, an American rapper, started his career in the mid-1990s under the moniker Killa Cam. He initially signed with Lance "Un" Rivera's Untertainment, a subsidiary of Epic Records, releasing his first two albums: "Confessions of Fire" (1998), which earned RIAA gold certification, and "S.D.E. (Sports Drugs & Entertainment)" (2000). After his tenure with Epic, Cam'ron moved to Roc-A-Fella Records in 2001 and in the following year, released "Come Home with Me." This third studio album achieved RIAA platinum status and featured his most successful singles, "Oh Boy" (featuring Juelz Santana) and "Hey Ma" (with Juelz Santana, Freekey Zeekey, and Toya), which reached No. 4 and No. 3 on the Billboard Hot 100, respectively. His fourth album, "Purple Haze," released in 2004, also saw significant success and was certified gold by the RIAA.



PHOTO/fuseboxradio

Dante Terrell Smith December 11, 1973

Mos Def, an American rapper, singer, songwriter, and actor, began his hip hop career in 1994 with the rap group Urban Thermo Dynamics (UTD) alongside his siblings, and also contributed to albums by Da Bush Babees and De La Soul. In 1996, he formed the duo Black Star with fellow Brooklyn rapper Talib Kweli, releasing their debut album with hits like "Definition" and "Respiration." His solo career took off with "Black on Both Sides" in 1999, followed by albums such as "The New Danger" (2004), "True Magic" (2006), and "The Ecstatic" (2009). Known for tracks like "Oh No," "Ms. Fat Booty," and "Mathematics," Mos Def was ranked 14th in About.com's "50 Greatest Rappers of All Time" in 2014.



Mos Def



PHOTO/Tuomas Vitikainen

Memphis Bleek

debut

1999

Malik Cox

June 23, 1978

Memphis Bleek, an American rapper, gained recognition through his association with renowned New York rapper Jay-Z, serving as his hype man and protégé. He signed with Jay-Z's Roc-A-Fella Records in the late 1990s, releasing four major studio albums: "Coming of Age" (1999), "The Understanding" (2000), "M.A.D.E." (2003), and "534" (2005). Bleek later established his own record labels, launching Get Low Records in 1998 and Warehouse Music Group in 2016, under which he signed rapper Casanova that year.



PHOTO/Mikamote

Ja Rule



PHOTO/WebSummit

debut

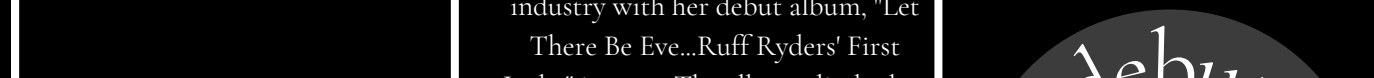
1999

Jeffrey Bruce Atkins
February 29, 1976

Ja Rule, an American rapper hailing from New York City, broke onto the music scene in 1999 with his album "Venni Vetti Vecci" and the hit single "Holla Holla". Throughout the 2000s, under Irv Gotti's Murder Inc. Records, he enjoyed significant success. Between 1999 and 2005, Ja Rule charted several top 20 hits on the U.S. Billboard Hot 100, including "Between Me and You" featuring Christina Milian, "I'm Real (Murder Remix)" and "Ain't It Funny" with Jennifer Lopez (both reaching the top of the Hot 100), the number 1 hit "Always on Time" featuring Ashanti, "Mesmerize" also with Ashanti, and "Wonderful" featuring R. Kelly.

Eve Jihan Jeffers-Cooper November 10, 1978

American rapper, singer, and actress Eve marked her entry into the music industry with her debut album, "Let There Be Eve...Ruff Ryders' First Lady," in 1999. The album climbed to the top of the Billboard 200, making Eve the third female rapper to achieve this distinction, and received a double platinum certification from the RIAA. It featured successful singles like "What Ya Want" (featuring Nokio), "Love Is Blind," and "Gotta Man." Additionally, in the same year, she contributed to The Roots' Grammy-winning single "You Got Me" and Missy Elliott's "Hot Boyz," which reached the top ten on the Billboard Hot 100.



Eve



PHOTO/The Heart Truth

Lil Wayne

debut
1999

Dwayne Michael Carter Jr.
September 27, 1982

Lil Wayne, an American rapper, singer, and songwriter, is recognized as one of the most influential hip hop artists of his generation and is frequently cited as one of the greatest rappers ever. He started his career in 1995 at the age of eleven when he was signed by rapper Birdman to Cash Money Records, becoming the label's youngest member. Lil Wayne remained Cash Money Records' leading artist until he parted ways with the label in June 2018.



PHOTO/The Heart Truth

Lil Bow Wow



MICHAEL TRAN/AFP

Shad Gregory Moss

March 9, 1987

Bow Wow, previously known as Lil' Bow Wow, is an American rapper and actor whose journey began when he caught the eye of rapper Snoop Dogg in the late 1990s. Snoop Dogg's discovery led to Bow Wow's introduction to record producer Jermaine Dupri and his subsequent signing to So So Def Recordings. As Lil' Bow Wow, he unveiled his debut album, "Beware of Dog," at the tender age of 13 in 2000, followed by "Doggy Bag" a year later.

In 2003, Bow Wow released his third album, "Unleashed," marking the first album under his modified stage name, sans the "Lil'," and the first not under the So So Def label. His subsequent album, "Wanted" (2005), produced his two highest-charting singles, "Let Me Hold You" featuring Omarion and "Like You" featuring Ciara. In September 2015, Bow Wow inked a management deal with Puff Daddy's Bad Boy Records.



David Banner

debut
2000

Lavell William Crump
April 11, 1974

David Banner, an American rapper, record producer, and actor, was born in Brookhaven, Mississippi, and later relocated to Jackson, Mississippi, where he spent his formative years. After earning a bachelor's degree from Southern University, he pursued further education at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore to obtain a master's degree.

Banner embarked on his musical journey as part of the rap duo Crooked Lettaz before venturing into a solo career in 2000 with his debut release, "Them Firewater Boyz, Vol. 1." In 2003, he inked a deal with Universal Records and subsequently released four albums: "Mississippi: The Album" (2003), "MTA2: Baptized in Dirty Water" (2003), "Certified" (2005), and "The Greatest Story Ever Told" (2008).

In addition to his successful music career, David Banner is widely recognized as a talented producer, having crafted beats for various artists, including himself, Trick Daddy, T.I., Lil Boosie, and Lil Wayne, among others.



Michael W. Eaton

Beanie Sigel



Dwight Grant
March 6, 1974

Beanie Sigel, an American rapper from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, gained initial fame through his connection with Jay-Z, becoming a prominent artist on the now-defunct Roc-A-Fella Records. Under this label, Sigel released his debut studio album, "The Truth," in February 2000, which was met with both critical acclaim and commercial success.



PHOTO/Mika-photography

Katrina Laverne Taylor December 3, 1978

Trina, an American rapper, made her mark in the late 1990s through collaborations with Trick Daddy on hit singles like "Nann Nigga," "Shut Up," and "Take It to da House." Her debut album, "Da Baddest Bitch," was released in 2000, further solidifying her place in the music scene.

Trina's career continued to flourish as she lent her talent to the remix of "One Minute Man" by Missy Elliott and Ludacris. In 2002, she dropped the Kanye West-produced single "B R Right," featuring Ludacris, as part of her sophomore album, "Diamond Princess."

Her third album, "Glamorest Life" (2005), gave rise to the certified gold single "Here We Go," featuring Kelly Rowland. This achievement was recognized by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA). Trina's follow-up album, "Still da Baddest" (2008), not only secured a place in the top ten on the Billboard 200 but also reached the number one spot on the US R&B/Hip-Hop Albums chart.

In 2010, her fifth album, "Amazin'," showcased her versatility, featuring the Lady Gaga co-penned track "Let Dem Hoes Fight" and collaborations with esteemed artists like Diddy, Nicki Minaj, Lil Wayne, and Rick Ross.



Trina

KENDRICK KEN*

50 Cent



Curtis James Jackson III
July 6, 1975

50 Cent, an American rapper, actor, television producer, and businessman, hails from South Jamaica, Queens. He started his music career in 1996 and recorded what was intended to be his debut album, "Power of the Dollar," for Columbia Records in early 2000. However, following a shooting incident in May of that year, where he was struck by nine bullets, the album's release was scrapped, and he was dropped from the label. In 2002, he made a comeback with the mixtape "Guess Who's Back?" and caught the attention of Eminem, leading to his signing with Shady Records, a branch of Dr. Dre's Aftermath Entertainment and Interscope Records.



PHOTO/The Heart Truth

Nelly



PHOTO/reebok2008

debut

2000

Cornell Iral Haynes Jr.
November 2, 1974

Nelly, an American rapper, singer, and actor, began his music career in St. Louis, Missouri. He started in 1993 with the Midwest hip hop group St. Lunatics and signed a solo deal with Universal Records in 1999. His debut album "Country Grammar" released in 2000, featuring hits like the title track and "Ride wit Me" (with City Spud), both reaching the top ten on the Billboard Hot 100. The album also topped the US Billboard 200 and became his best-selling album, moving over 8.4 million copies in the United States. His 2002 follow-up, "Nellyville," produced number-one hits "Hot in Herre" and "Dilemma" (featuring Kelly Rowland), and the top-five hit "Air Force Ones" (with Murphy Lee and St. Lunatics).

Christopher Brian Bridges
September 11, 1977

Ludacris (/ˈluːdəkrɪs/, homophonous with 'ludicrous' in American English), is an American rapper and actor. Born in Champaign, Illinois, Ludacris moved to Atlanta, Georgia at age nine, where he first began rapping. Starting out with a brief stint as a DJ, he formed his own record label, Disturbing tha Peace in the late 1990s, closing the decade with his debut album Incognegro (1999). The album was re-released as his major label debut, Back for the First Time (2000) upon signing with Def Jam Recordings. Its singles "Southern Hospitality" (featuring Pharrell) and "What's Your Fantasy" (featuring Shawnna), became top 40 hits on the Billboard Hot 100 chart.



Ludacris



PHOTO/Eve Baker

Fabolous



John David Jackson
November 18, 1977

Fabolous, an American rapper hailing from Brooklyn, initially made his mark while still in high school. He garnered attention with a live performance on record executive DJ Clue?'s Hot 97 radio show. Following this, he signed with Clue's Desert Storm record label and later formed a joint venture with Elektra Records. Fabolous achieved widespread recognition through his debut studio album "Ghetto Fabolous" in 2001, featuring hit singles like "Can't Deny It" (with Nate Dogg) and "Young'n (Holla Back)." His second album, "Street Dreams" (2003), included commercially successful tracks such as "Can't Let You Go" (featuring Lil' Mo) and "Into You" (featuring Tamia or Ashanti), both reaching number four on the Billboard Hot 100.



PHOTO/Gary Gershoff

T.I.



PHOTO/The 85 South Comedy Show

debut

2001

Clifford Joseph Harris Jr. September 25, 1980

T.I., also known as Tip and often stylized as TIP or T.I.P., is an American rapper hailing from Atlanta, Georgia. He is recognized as one of the forerunners of trap music, a hip hop subgenre, alongside other Atlanta-based artists like Jeezy and Gucci Mane. Harris secured his first major-label deal in 1999 with Arista Records' subsidiary LaFace. His debut album, "I'm Serious," released in 2001, received a tepid commercial response, leading to his departure from the label. He then joined Atlantic Records and, in 2003, co-founded his own label imprint, Grand Hustle Records.

Gucci Mane

debut

2001

Radric Delantic Davis
February 12, 1980

Gucci Mane, an American rapper and record executive, is widely recognized as a trailblazer in the trap music subgenre of hip-hop. He played a pivotal role alongside Atlanta-based rappers T.I. and Jeezy in propelling trap music into mainstream prominence during the 2000s and 2010s.

In 2005, Gucci Mane made his debut with "Trap House," followed by his second and third albums, "Hard to Kill" in 2006 and "Back to the Trap House" in 2007. After gaining acclaim for a series of independent mixtapes, he achieved both critical and commercial success with his fourth studio album and major label debut, "The State vs. Radric Davis" in 2009. He continued his winning streak with the sequel, "The Appeal: Georgia's Most Wanted" in 2010.

Despite a two-year incarceration period from 2014 to 2016, Gucci Mane made a triumphant return with various retail projects, beginning with his ninth album, "Everybody Looking" in 2016, which peaked at number two on the Billboard 200 chart. His collaboration with the hip-hop duo Rae Sremmurd on the hit single "Black Beatles" in 2016 marked a significant milestone, as it became Gucci Mane's first number-one song on the Billboard Hot 100 chart.



PHOTO/ Evan Guest

Juelz Santana



LaRon Louis James
February 18, 1982

Juelz Santana, an American rapper and a member of the East Coast hip-hop group known as The Diplomats, or Dipset, has gained recognition for his notable contributions to the music scene. He is prominently remembered for his featured appearances on Cam'ron's hit singles in 2002, "Oh Boy" and "Hey Ma," both of which climbed to impressive positions on the Billboard Hot 100, reaching numbers 4 and 3, respectively. Additionally, he played a significant role in Chris Brown's 2005 triple-platinum hit, "Run It!," which dominated the number one spot on the Billboard Hot 100 for five consecutive weeks.

Santana's albums, "From Me to U" (2003) and "What the Game's Been Missing!" (2005), have left their mark on the music charts as well, with the former peaking at number 8 and the latter at number 9 on the Billboard 200. The latter album also features the platinum single, "There It Go (The Whistle Song).".



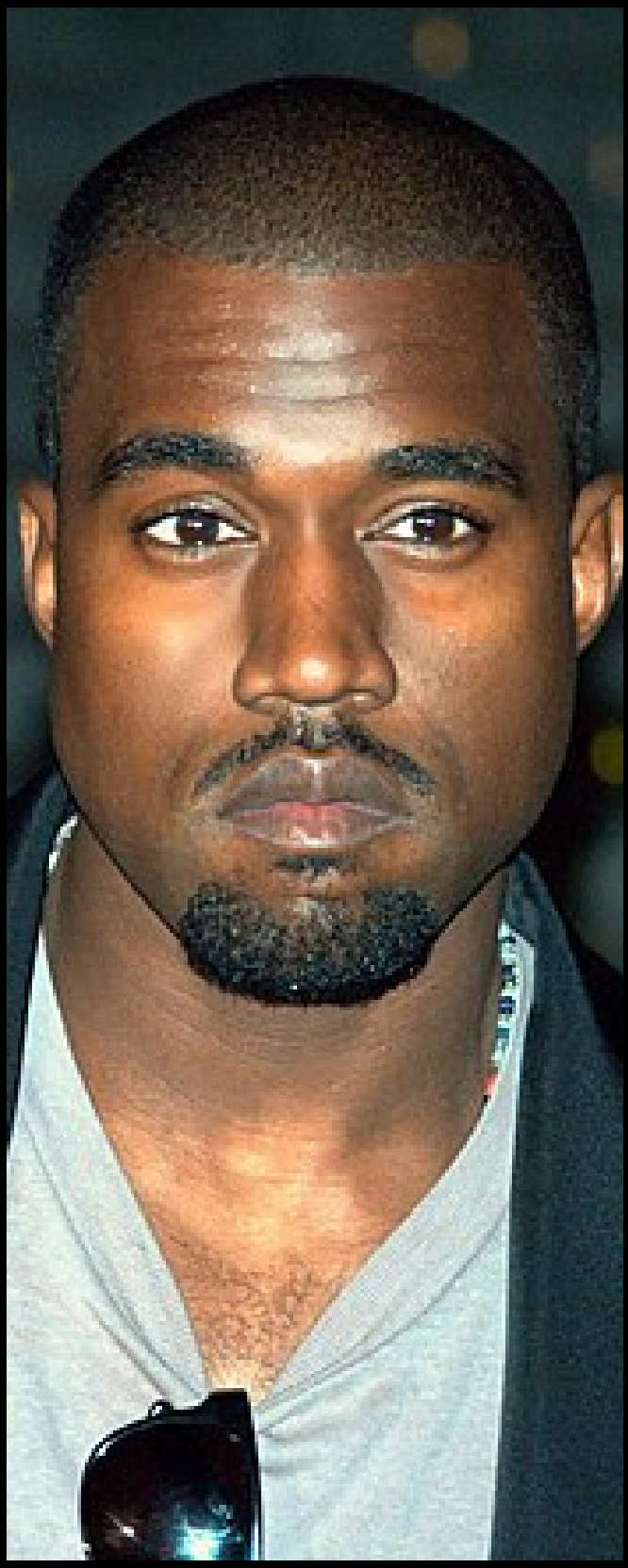
PHOTO/Timothy M. Moore

Kanye West

debut
2004

Kanye Omari West
June 8, 1977

Kanye West, an American rapper, singer, songwriter, record producer, and fashion designer, ranks among the top-selling music artists globally, with sales of 160 million records. He has received 24 Grammy Awards, tying for the tenth-most in history and the most for any hip hop artist, a record he shares with Jay-Z. Additionally, West's achievements include a Billboard Artist Achievement Award, three Brit Awards for Best International Male Solo Artist (a joint-record), and the Michael Jackson Video Vanguard Award.



PHOTO/David Shankbone

Nicki Minaj

debut 2004

Onika Tanya Maraj-Petty
December 8, 1982

Nicki Minaj, originally from Trinidad and now a renowned rapper, singer, and songwriter in the United States, is often acclaimed as the "Queen of Rap." Noted for her eclectic musical style, lively rap flow, and various alter egos, she has made a significant mark in popular music. Minaj first rose to prominence with her three mixtapes released between 2007 and 2009. As one of the best-selling music artists, she has sold over 100 million records worldwide. Billboard has recognized her as the top-selling female rapper of the 2010s and one of the greatest rappers of all time. Minaj has achieved twenty-three top 10 singles in the US, a record for a female rapper, including six as a solo artist.



PHOTO/MTV International

Jim Jones



debut
2004

Joseph Guillermo
Jones II
July 15, 1976

Jim Jones, an American rapper and record executive, is renowned as one of the founding members of the hip-hop collective known as the Diplomats, or Dipset, alongside his longtime friend and fellow Harlem native, Cam'ron.

In 2004, he introduced his debut solo album titled "On My Way to Church." Following this, in 2005, Jones released his second album, "Harlem: Diary of a Summer," coinciding with his appointment to an executive position in A&R at the independent record label Entertainment One Music (formerly known as Koch Records). The subsequent year marked the release of his highly successful single, "We Fly High," which soared to number five on the Billboard Hot 100 chart. This track preceded the launch of his third album, "Hustler's P.O.M.E. (Product of My Environment)" in 2006. It's worth noting that "We Fly High" also gave rise to a remix featuring T.I., Diddy, Birdman, and Young Dro and achieved platinum certification from the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA).

PHOTO/CPX Interactive

Ermias Joseph Asghedom

August 15, 1985 – March 31, 2019

Nipsey Hussle, an American rapper, entrepreneur, and activist, rose to prominence in the West Coast hip hop scene in the mid-2000s. His first mixtape, "Slauson Boy Volume 1," garnered local success and led to his signing with Cinematic Music Group and Epic Records. Hussle was recognized for his array of mixtapes, including the "Bullets Ain't Got No Name" series, "The Marathon," "The Marathon Continues," and "Crenshaw," the latter of which caught the attention of Jay-Z, who purchased 100 copies for $100 each. After several delays, his debut studio album "Victory Lap" was released in 2018, earning critical acclaim, commercial success, and a nomination for Best Rap Album at the 61st Grammy Awards in 2019. Hussle posthumously won two Grammy Awards at the 62nd Grammy Awards in 2020 for "Racks in the Middle" and "Higher" in the Best Rap Performance and Best Rap/Sung Performance categories, respectively.



NIPSEY HUSSLE

The Game



Jayceon Terrell Taylor
November 29, 1979

The Game, an American rapper from Compton, California, began his career releasing mixtapes with the guidance of fellow West Coast rapper JT the Bigga Figga. His independent debut album, "Untold Story," was released in 2004. He then caught the attention of record producer Dr. Dre and was signed to Aftermath Records. The Game gained widespread fame in 2005 with his major-label debut, "The Documentary," which was followed by the successful "Doctor's Advocate" in 2006. "The Documentary" achieved double platinum certification from the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA).



Rapsody

debut

2012

Marlanna Evans

January 21, 1983

Rapsody, an American rapper, began her musical journey by signing with the music producer 9th Wonder's label, It's a Wonderful World Music Group. She introduced herself to the scene through a series of mixtapes and notable collaborations with artists like Erykah Badu and Talib Kweli. Following this, Rapsody released her debut album, "The Idea of Beautiful," in 2012.

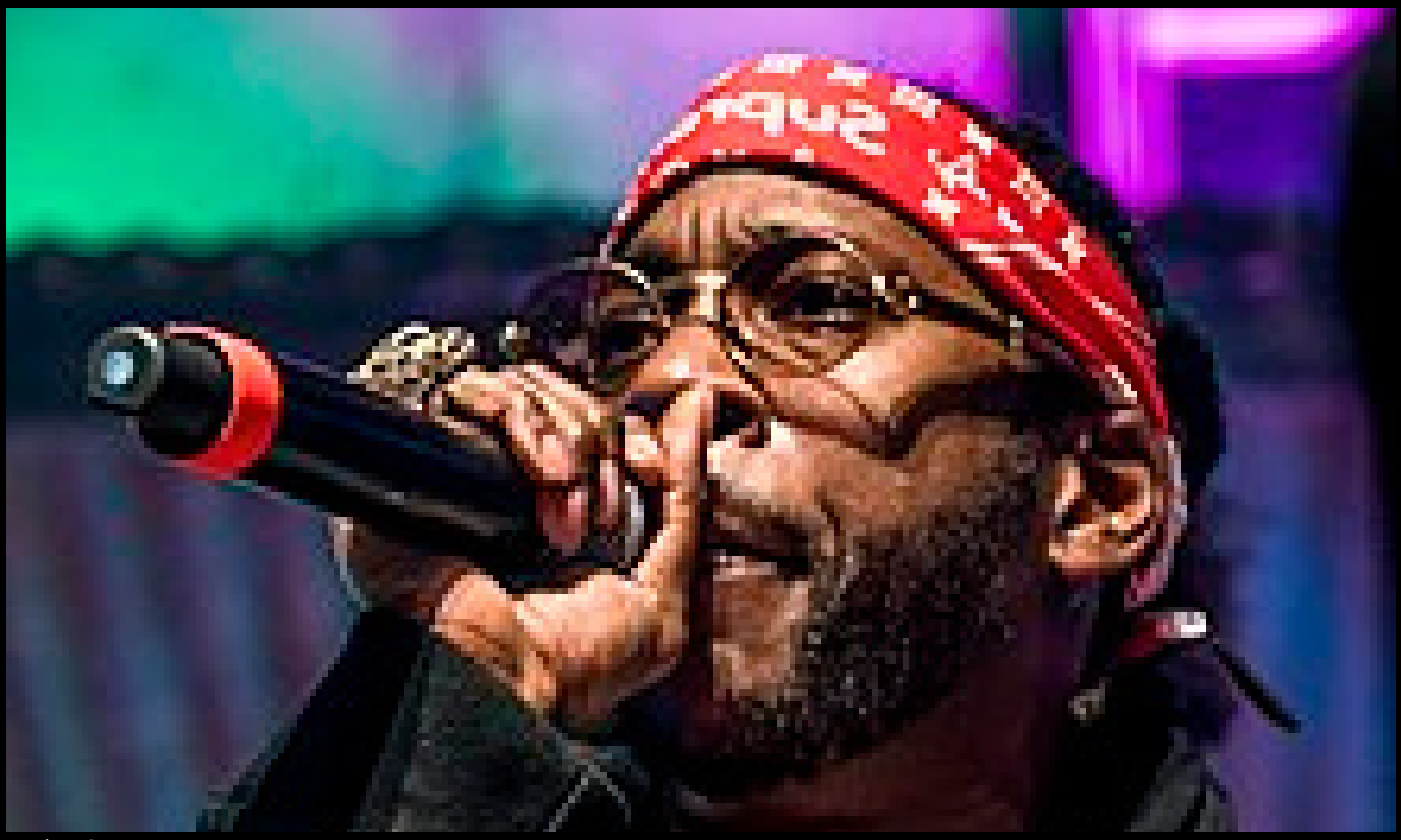
Her breakthrough moment arrived when she featured on Kendrick Lamar's 2015 album, "To Pimp a Butterfly," contributing to the track titled "Complexion (A Zulu Love)." Her second album, "Laila's Wisdom" (2017), garnered critical acclaim and earned nominations at the Grammy Awards for Best Rap Album and Best Rap Song. Rapsody continued her impressive career trajectory with her third studio album, "Eve," released on August 23, 2019, which also received accolades from music critics.

In 2020, Rapsody made a noteworthy appearance alongside Cordae, Chika, and Busta Rhymes on the Stevie Wonder track "Can't Put It in the Hands of Fate."



Lars Niki/Getty Images

2 Chainz



Erin Cazes

Tauheed K. Epps September 12, 1977	2 Chainz, formerly known as Tity Boi, is an American rapper. He was born and raised in College Park, Georgia. His initial claim to fame came as one half of the Southern hip-hop duo Playaz Circle, alongside his fellow hometown rapper, Earl "Dolla Boy" Conyers. The duo inked a deal with Ludacris' Disturbing tha Peace label, a fellow Georgia-based artist. They gained recognition for their 2007 debut single, "Duffle Bag Boy," featuring Lil Wayne, which became their most notable track.	debut 2012



PHOTO/The 85 South Comedy Show

Rick Ross /Debut 2006

William Leonard Roberts II
January 28, 1976



PHOTO/Sister Circle TV

Young Jeezy /Debut 2006

Jay Wayne Jenkins
September 28, 1977



PHOTO/The Come Up Show

Drake /Debut 2010

Aubrey Drake Graham
October 24, 1986



PHOTO/Fuzheado

Kendrick Lamar /Debut 2010

Kendrick Lamar Duckworth
June 17, 1987



PHOTO/HOTSPOTATL

J. Cole /Debut 2007

Jermaine Lamarr Cole
January 28, 1985



PHOTO/Rickmunrocor

Wiz Khalifa /Debut 2006

Cameron Jibril Thomaz
September 8, 1987



PHOTO/The Heart Truth

Young Dolph /Debut 2008

Adolph Robert Thornton Jr.
July 27, 1985 – November 17, 2021



PHOTO/The Heart Truth

Lil Uzi Vert/Debut 2014

Symere Woods
July 31, 1994



PHOTO/Jonas4537

Big Sean /Debut 2007

Sean Michael-Leonard Anderson
March 25, 1988



PHOTO/DannyB

A$AP Rocky /Debut 2011

Rakim Mayers
October 3, 1988



PHOTO/Chris Sikich

Meek Mill /Debut 2012

Robert Rihmeek Williams
May 6, 1987



PHOTO/Raph_PH

Tyler, The Creator /Debut 2009

Tyler Gregory Okonma
March 6, 1991



PHOTO/The Heart Truth

Migos /Debut 2008

Quavious Keyate Marshall[
April 2, 1991
Kiari Kendrell Cephus
December 14, 1991
Kirsnick Khari Ball
June 18, 1994 – November 1, 2022



PHOTO/Julio Enriquez

Logic /Debut 2010

Sir Robert Bryson Hall II
January 22, 1990



PHOTO/MILLION DOLLAZ WORTH OF GAME

Young Thug /Debut 2011

QJeffery Lamar WilliamS
August 16, 1991



PHOTO/The Come Up Show

A$AP Ferg /Debut 2012

Darold D. Brown
Ferguson Jr.
October 20, 1988



PHOTO/FOX Sports

Chance the Rapper /Debut 2012

Chancelor Johnathan Bennett
April 16, 1993



PHOTO/iNSPIRED SOUND UK

Joey Bada$$/Debut 2012

Jo-Vaughn Virginie Scott
January 20, 1995



PHOTO/Frank Schwichtenberg

Travis Scott/Debut 2012

Jacques Berman Webster II
April 30, 1991



PHOTO/glenjamn

Fetty Wap/Debut 2014

Willie Maxwell II
June 7, 1991



PHOTO/Anthony Kane

Cardi B/Debut 2015

Belcalis Marlenis Almánzar
October 11, 1992



PHOTO/JD Sports

A Boogie wit da Hoodie/Debut 2016

Artist Julius Dubose
December 6, 1995



PHOTO/Flow Television

Roddy Ricch/Debut 2018

Rodrick Wayne Moore, Jr .October 22, 1998



PHOTO/ERIC JOHNSON

City Girls-Yung Miami -JT /Debut 2017

Caresha Romeka Brownlee February 11, 1994 Jatavia Shakara Johnson December 3, 1992



PHOTO/Valerie Albert

Megan Thee Stallion /Debut 2018

Megan Jovon Ruth Pete
February 15, 1995



PHOTO/HOTSPOTATL

DaBaby/Debut 2019

Jonathan Lyndale Kirk
December 22, 1991



PHOTO/Raph_PH

Jack Harlow /Debut 2020

Jackman Thomas Harlow
March 13, 1998



Moneybagg Yo /Debut 2018

DeMario DeWayne White Jr.
September 22, 1991



PHOTO/K Dos

Coi Leray /Debut 2021

Brittany Collins
May 11, 1997



PHOTO/Emma

BIA/Debut 2021

Bianca Miquela Landrau
August 16, 1991



PHOTO/HOTSPOTATL

Toosii/Debut 2021

Nau'Jour Lazier Grainger
January 9, 2000



PHOTO/DOGGTOWN DIGIT4L

Sleepy Hallow/Debut 2021

Tegan Joshua Chambers
December 20, 1999



PHOTO/Nicholassuarezfo5

Sheff G /Debut 2021

Michael Kyle Williams
September 23, 1998



PHOTO/Mitch 3600

42 Dugg/Debut 2021

Dion Marquise Hayes
November 25, 1994

AND WE STILL HAVEN'T SCRATCHED THE SURFACE

HAPPY 50 YEARS

HHHM...

Her Hip-Hop Magazine

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