

THE LAST POETS

RESOURCE

GUIDE



IN CELEBRATION OF THE 50TH
ANNIVERSARY OF THEIR DEBUT
SELF-TITLED ALBUM, *THE LAST POETS*

TO THE LAST POETS,

It's AMAZING, timely and fully deserved, to celebrate The Last Poets and the 50th Anniversary of the CLASSIC debut album The Last Poets!! Their DYNAMIC album, with its syncopated African drum rhythms and powerful, political and yet humorous poetry, spoken with an urgency that rings true today, created the blueprint for Rap music and spoken word-poetry and has influenced many artists across genres! Their work adds to the rich legacy of people using their WORDS to speak to, speak for and EMPOWER people around the WORLD!!

I have always loved words, especially rhymes, I was about 10 years old when first heard The Last Poets album, my older sister Sherri played it one day when our mom was out the house! The drums got my attention first, then the rhymes, then cuss words!! I was too young to truly understand what they were saying, but it FELT sooo powerful, I LOVED it!! Throughout my teenage years, there were MANY times I would sneak to listen to The Last Poets albums without my sister even knowing about it, I couldn't get enough!

By the time I went to an HBCU, Wilberforce University (WU) in 1982, I was already a poet/rapper, who considered myself a disciple of The Last Poets!! I listened to their albums regularly and even memorized most of their debut album! After a long day of classes, me and my boys would chill in the dorms listening to and rappin' along with The Last Poets albums to get re-energized, re focused and re-fired up to continue our part the struggle to liberate Black people!

In my junior year at WU, word got around our campus that me and my brothers of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity-Upsilon Chapter, we're performing The Last Poets' poem, "Wake Up, Niggers!", during the WU's Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday celebration! Ms. Welch, the Director of Student Affairs, called us into her office and said, "I love The Last Poets, I heard y'all are planning to perform one of their poems at the Wilberforce King Day event, which one are you going to do?" I said, "Wake Up, Niggers," she said, "I don't think I remember that one, would y'all let me hear it now?" We said ok and performed it, I did the lead vocals, my Frat brothers were doing all the ad-libs! After we finished, she clapped her hands, smiled, said it was great, however, we had to take out the profanity! We told her that was censorship and our "freedom of speech" gave us the right to say the poem as it was written by The Last Poets! She told us we did have the freedom of speech, however there are consequences too and performing that particular poem could get us expelled from school, then she said, "I guess y'all have decide if it's worth taking that risk or not!"

The night of the King Day event, there was a buzz in the air about whether we would censor ourselves to avoid the possibility of getting kicked out of college or do it uncensored! In the "spirit" of The Last Poets, me and my Frat brothers FELT like we had to do THEIR poem uncensored, it was the right thing! Of course, we ROCKED the house, we even got a standing ovation by the students, staff and the President of Wilberforce University too, in fact, I got my picture in the WU Yearbook performing that poem!

The influence of The Last Poets can still be FELT today in the lives of young people around the world who are looking for artist who enlighten, inspire and empower them, especially now during these times of political, cultural and social change happening around the world, this is a DOPE time to study or re-study The Last Poets! I could write for DAYS about my LOVE, respect and admiration to The Last Poets and their influence on me with their intelligent, timeless, powerful and FEARLESS spoken word-poetry! It has been my blessing to meet and later work with them, it's rare to meet your HEROES and have them exceed your expectations! There are not enough words to measure their INFLUENCE, their LEGACY will last FOREVER!! We give thanks to The Last Poets and pray for their continued SUCCESS in all their endeavors as they keep SHININ', Word!!

SINCERELY YOURS,

MINISTER SERVER TAVARES

TABLE OF CONTENTS



ABOUT	PAGE 2
INTRODUCTION BY BILL ADLER	PAGE 3
"TOWARDS A WALK IN THE SUN"	PAGE 4
THE LAST POETS MEMBERS BIOS	PAGES 5-6
DISCOGRAPHY	PAGES 7-8
LESSON PLANS	PAGES 9-12
INFOGRAPHIC	PAGE 13
MORE INFLUENTIAL POETS	PAGES 14-16
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES	PAGES 17-18
REFERENCES	PAGE 19
EDUCATION CENTER	PAGE 20



ABOUT

This resource guide is intended for use in educational settings to learn, discover and explore the work of the legendary The Last Poets. The Last Poets serve as a powerful voice from 1968 to today, leaving a legacy heard and carried by hip hop artists today. Their art is to be engaged, discussed and studied. This guide consists of more than 10 lessons that can be used supplementary to science, ELA, History or Humanities curriculum or serve as its own unit. To maximize the outcome of lessons, we encourage grades 9+ to engage with material. Please note that some of the content matter of The Last Poets are explicit and may not be suitable for all students, discretion is advised.

Grades:

9-12

Common Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.5

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8



THE LAST POETS

INTRODUCTION BY BILL ADLER

Why study the work of The Last Poets 50 years after the release of their first album? For the same reason we continue to study Martin Luther King -- their outsized impact when they emerged and their enduring relevance today.

At the birth of their group, these African-American men were very much products of their time. Revolutionaries inspired by the Black Power movement of the sixties, they also happened to be poets. So they expressed their politics artfully and set it to spare but funky drum-powered music. Their intention was to speak to and inspire other black folks -- and they succeeded. The poet and novelist Darius James, writing in 1995, remembered the moment well:

"In 1970 The Last Poets released their first album and dropped a bomb on black Amerikkka's turntables. Nobody was ready. Had em scared o' revolution. Scared o' the whyte man's god complex. Scared o' subways. Scared o' each other. Scared o' themselves... Most importantly, they made you think and kept you "correct" on a revolutionary level. We all connected. 'Cause it was a Black communal thing, like the good vibes and paper plate of red-peppered potato salad at a neighborhood barbecue...We joined together around the peace pipe and the drum."

But The Last Poets' records also quickly inspired listeners beyond the Black Community, which is why their debut album was positively reviewed in Life magazine in 1970 and why one of its most scathing tracks, "Niggers Are Scared of Revolution," ended up on the soundtrack to "Performance," a very popular movie starring the Rolling Stones' Mick Jagger, that same year.

Fifteen years later, the new generation of African American poets who had begun calling themselves rappers happily claimed The Last Poets as their godfathers. By the late eighties and early nineties, The Last Poets recordings were being sampled by rappers as various as Brand Nubian and the NWA. Predictably, perhaps, The Last Poets themselves weren't always happy with the new uses made of their classic work, which is why Abiodun Oyewole sued the estate of the Notorious B.I.G. for the manner in which the rapper sampled "When the Revolution Comes" on "Party and Bullshit" in 1993.

But the internal history of The Last Poets is itself "a tangled story," as the writer David Mills once noted. "Seven men in all have recorded as The Last Poets, though never at the same moment.

They have feuded among themselves almost from the beginning." This is a curious fact for a group that always sought to radiate black solidarity. But perhaps even that disconnect is worth studying.

There's a case to be made that if The Last Poets had succeeded in their revolutionary mission—if America's endemic racism had finally been vanquished—there would be no reason to study their work today. Unfortunately, racial violence in this country remains as virulent as ever. For better and worse, then, The Last Poets, half-a-century after their fiery debut, remain as relevant as ever.



"TOWARDS A WALK IN THE SUN"

KEORAPETSE KGOSITSILE

The wind is caressing
the eve of a new dawn
a dream: the birth
of memory
Who are we? Who
were we? Things cannot go on much as
before. All night long we shall laugh
behind Time's new masks. When the moment
hatches in Time's womb we shall not complain

Where oh where are the mento matches the fuse to burn
to snow that freezes some
would-be skyward desire
You who swallowed your balls for a piece
of gold beautiful from afar but far from
beautiful because it is coloured with the pus
from your brother's callouses. You who creep
lower than snake's belly because you swallowed
your conscience and sold your sister to soulless
vipers. You who bleached the womb of your daughter's
mind to bear pale-brained freaks. You who bleached
your son's genitals to slobber in the slime of missionary
-eyed faggotry. You who hide behind the shadow of your master's
institutionalized hypocrisy the knees of your soul numbed
by endless kneeling to catch the crumbs from your master's table
before you run to poison your own mother. You too
deballing grin you who forever tell your masters
I have a glorious past I have rhythm I have this
I have that. Don't you know I know all your lies?
The only past I know is hunger unsatisfied
and a kick in the empty belly
from your fat-bellied master
And rhythm don't fill an empty stomach

Who are we? All night long
I listen to the dream soaring
like the tide. I yearn
to slit throats and colour
the wave with the blood of the villain
to make a sacrifice to the gods. Yea,
there is pain in the coil around things.

Where are we? The memory...
and all these years all these lies!
You too over there misplaced nightmare
forever foaming at the mouth forever
proclaiming your anger ... a mere
formality because your sight is coloured
with snow. What does my hunger
have to do with a gawdamm poem?
The wind you hear is the birth of memory
when the moment hatches in time's womb
there will be no art talk. The only poem
you will hear will be the spearpoint pivoted
in the punctured marrow of the villain; the
timeless native son dancing like crazy to
the retrieved rhythms of desire
fading
in-
to
memory.



MEMBERS

The Last Poets were founded in 1968 by Davheed Nelson (then David Nelson), Gylan Kain, and Abiodun Oyewole in Marcus Garvey Park. There have been six different iterations of the group with various members including poets, Umar Bin Hassan, Felipe Luciano, Raymond "Nilaja" Hurrey, Jalal Mansur Nuriddin, Baba Donn Babatunde and Suliaman El-Hadi.



ABIODUN OYEWOLE

Abiodun Oyewole was born Charles Davis on February 25, 1948 in Cincinnati, Ohio. At the age of three, he moved to Queens, New York. He was greatly influenced by Jazz and Gospel music and by poets like Langston Hughes. He is one of the founding members of The Last Poets, joining Davheed Nelson and Gylan King in 1968. After being sentenced to four years in a North Carolina prison and was forced to leave The Last Poets. He went on to earn his Ph.D. from Columbia University in New York City, where he has served as a faculty member. Oyewole rejoined The Last Poets, during its 1990s resurgence.

Baba Donn Babatunde is the percussionist of the group, who joined The Last Poets in 1991. He was 11 years old when his mother first introduced him to the group and as the percussionist he tries to summon, "the spirit, the anger I felt when I first heard those poems. What I do is the dramatisation of those words, carrying them rather than fighting them."



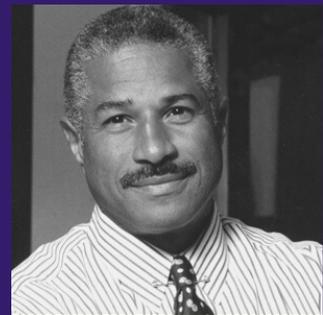
**BABA DONN
BABATUNDE**



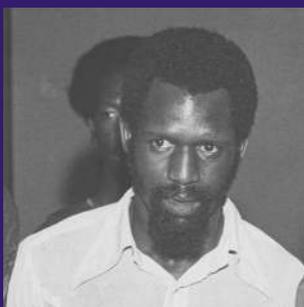
DAHVEED NELSON

Davheed Nelson was one of the founding Last Poets, he is credited with coming up with the name of the group. He was inspired by a poem by South African-born K. William Kgositsile. Nelson was the first of The Last Poets to leave the group. Nelson founded the Langston Hughes Black Poetry Festival in St. Louis, one of the largest Black Poetry Celebrations in the United States.

Born in New York City in 1947 and joined The Last Poets in 1969, Felipe Luciano helped found the New York chapter of the Young Lords, a political activist group inspired by the Black Panther Party that served as an important voice for the Puerto Rican community. A reformed gang member, Luciano—known during this period as "the Magnet"—emerged as a charismatic orator, leading numerous demonstrations and advocating for the social empowerment of his community. He is still an active media personality who speaks on issues affecting the Latino community.



FELIPE LUCIANO



GYLAN KAIN

Gylan Kain, who was a founding member, is a playwright, poet, actor, and musician born and raised in New York. He was a forerunner in a style of poetry that eventually evolved into what is now called rap. Kain was also a director of the East Wind Cultural Center, a writer's workshop. He is known for his role in the 1971 film *Right On*. Kain wrote two plays, one in 1968, epitaph to a *Coagulated Trinity*, and in 1973, *The Urination of Gylan Kain*. Kain currently lives abroad.



MEMBERS

Jalal Mansur Nuriddin was born in Fort Greene, Brooklyn in 1944. Nuriddin was part of the lineup that had the most commercial impact. Appearing on The Last Poets' first 9 albums (aka Alafia Pudim), with the exception of *'Right On.'* Nuriddin branched out on Hustlers Convention. In the years since, Nuriddin continued to record intermittently and made a cameo with the Last Poets in the Tupac starring film "Poetic Justice" in 1993. He passed away on June 4th 2018.



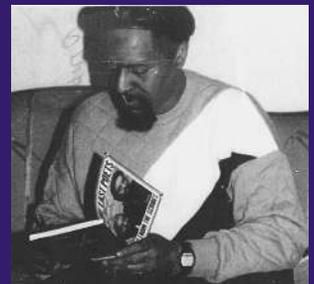
**JALAL MANSUR
NURIDDIN**



**RAYMOND
"NILAJA" HURREY**

Raymond Macarthur Hurrey (Obabi/Nilaja) was born in Evergreen, Alabama, and raised in Queens, New York. After years of conga training and performances all over the five-boroughs, Hurrey began to frequent the East Wind loft in Harlem, where he met Gylan Kain, Dahveed Nelson, Omar Bin-Hassan, and Abiodun Oyewole. Providing conga-slaps and other forms of percussion, Hurrey collaboratively composed the orchestration for the first three albums for *The Poets; The Last Poets, This is Madness, and Chastisement.* After the group disbanded in 1971, Hurrey and his family moved to Goldsboro, North Carolina where he opened The Cultural Movement, a dance company which would be used to spread the truth about African culture.

Suliaman El-Hadi joined The Last Poets with their 1972 album, *Chastisement* after Hassan left the group. The Jalal- El-Hadi version of The Last Poets are known for developing a sound called "jazzoetry" a blend of jazz and funk instrumentation with poetry. El-Hadi was vocal of his critiques on rising Hip Hop music in the early 80s naming it an ego trip that encourages violence and madness as opposed to sanity and progress. In a 1986, Dutch documentary titled *Big Fun in the Big Town*, El-Hadi called young rappers to address the real issues such as poverty, lack of political power, economic depravity. El-Hadi passed away in October 1995.



SULIAMAN EL-HADI



UMAR BIN HASSAN

Umar Bin Hassan was born in Akron, Ohio in 1948, the son of a journeyman trumpeter. Umar was a black-nationalist militant visiting Antioch College Campus when he first encountered a performance by The Last Poets. He joined in 1969, and with the help of Abiodun his poems became more explosive, leading to "Niggers are Scared of the Revolution." Umar continues to troubadour the world with The Last Poets as well as performing spoken word. In mid-1993, he released his first solo album, *Be Bop or Be Dead*, which combined rap, house, and jazz elements. He later went on to record *To the Last.*

Honorable recognition to the members of The Last Poets who've transitioned and not referenced above, including Abu Mustapha, Kenyatte Abdur-Rahman and Jamal Abdus Sabur.

Thank you for your service.



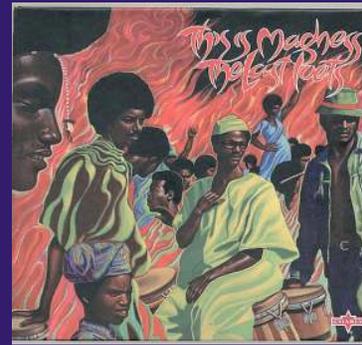
DISCOGRAPHY



THE LAST POETS
(1970)



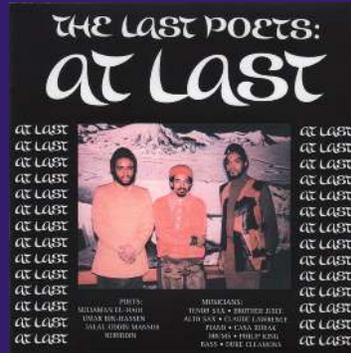
RIGHT ON!
(1971)



THIS IS MADNESS
(1971)



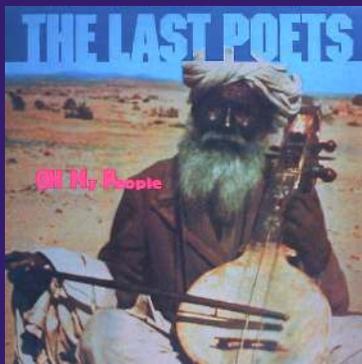
CHASTISEMENT
(1972)



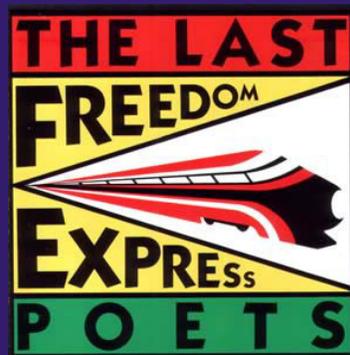
AT LAST
(1973)



DELIGHTS OF THE GARDEN
(1977)



OH MY PEOPLE
(1985)



FREEDOM EXPRESS
(1985)



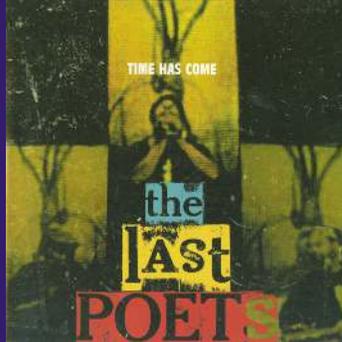
HOLY TERROR
(1993)



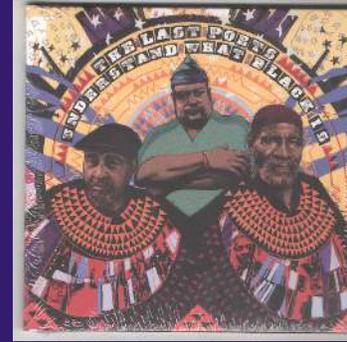
DISCOGRAPHY



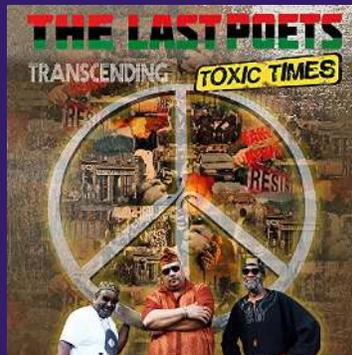
SCATTERAP/HOME
(1994)



TIME HAS COME
(1997)



**UNDERSTAND
WHAT BLACK IS**
(2018)



**TRANSCENDING
TOXIC TIMES**
(2019)



LESSON PLANS



ANALYZING THE SONG

I. Listen to, "When the Revolution Comes" by The Last Poets to answer the following questions.

- 1) *What is the theme of this song?*
- 2) *What are some specific examples of how this song is or is not relevant to today's world?*
- 3) *What purpose or agenda do you think The Last Poets had in writing this song? Do you think it was achieved it? Use social, political and historical events for your answer.*
- 4) *What connections do you see between the political, social and economic climate in the '60s/'70s and today?*
- 5) *What is "the revolution" referenced by The Last Poets?*
- 6) *How has "the revolution" evolved? Explain.*
- 7) *Do you think young people today would be influenced by this song? Why or why not.*
- 8) *Identify literary devices used in this song: similes, personification, symbolism, etc. Explain how the figurative language adds a deeper level of meaning to the song.*

REVOLUTION COLLAGE/POEM

I. What does the revolution look like in 2020 taking into account the current social, political and economic climate?

- 1) *Create your own collage giving your perspective.*
- 2) *Create your own poem giving your perspective.*



ELECTROMAGNETIC WAVES

Prior knowledge of electromagnetic waves is essential to engage in following discussions. Resources can be found on page 10.

I. BRAIN WAVES & FREQUENCIES

Define the brain waves listed below and answer the following questions.

- | | |
|----------|---|
| 1) Beta | 1) What is the relationship between frequencies & wavelengths? |
| 2) Alpha | |
| 3) Theta | 2) What function does each brain wave have on your brain? |
| 4) Delta | |
| 5) Gamma | 3) What is the relationship between Hz measured in brain waves and music? |

II. SOUND & VIBRATIONS

Cymatics is the study of visible sound and vibrations. It illustrates that when sound frequencies move through a particular medium, such as water, air, or sand, they can directly alter the vibration of matter. The 432Hz vs. 440Hz theory states that the natural macrocosm and microcosm of the earth vibrates at a frequency of 432Hz, which is said to resonate with the heart chakra. However, in 1953 the standard for music tone was changed from 432Hz to 440Hz, moving away from the natural tone.

- 1) Based on this theory, how does changing the frequency from 440 to 432 affect the 1970 album, *The Last Poets*?
- 2) How would changing the frequency of the album affect the way the music is heard?
- 3) How do you think changing the frequency of the album would affect the way the message is received?

III. DRUMMING

1) Rhythmic drumming is an essential component to *The Last Poets* sound, how does the rhythm of the drums affect brain activity? Specifically consciousness?

2) A drumming pattern at 8Hz corresponds to what brain wave? Thus affecting what brain functionality?

a) What about a rhythmic drum pattern at 4Hz?

3) The heart beats at a frequency of 1-1.67Hz. How does a rhythmic drum pattern aligned to the heart frequency affect brain activity?



PLAYLISTS

Playlist curated by DJ Reborn and Sway Calloway can be found on page 17 of this guide.

I. Analyze and listen to both playlists to answer the questions below:

1) *What songs do the lists have in common?*

a) *What do you think stood out in these songs that made DJ Reborn and Sway choose them?*

2) *Write your own poem using your answers as a guide.*

3) *Listen to "Own to Now" by The Last Poets feat. Chuck D (Public Enemy). Write a 300 word essay about how this song makes you feel?*

Bonus: *Chuck D and Public Enemy opened the 2020 BET Awards with what song, and who was featured?*

CREATE YOUR OWN PLAYLIST

I. Create your own playlist with 7-12 songs that represent The Last Poets, without using any of their songs. Please answer the following questions after it's completed.

1) *Why did you choose those songs in your playlist? Go through each song and justify your reasoning.*

2) *Why did you sequence the songs in that particular order? Justify your reasoning.*

3) *What themes are represented in your playlist? Justify your answer.*

4) *Describe the mood of your playlist? Why?*



INFOGRAPHIC

The drum in the infographic symbolizes the feelings and messages of The Last Poets. As a member of the legendary group, it assists in carrying energy in particular frequencies that connect to the audience in a different way than voices and words. For the last 50 years, artists of different genres and generations listened, connected and sampled to continue the work of The Last Poets.

I. Use the infographic to analyze the legacy of The Last Poets.

1) What stands out to you? What trends do you see?

2) What connections can you identify between generations of Hip Hop artists who sampled The Last Poets?

3) Predict how the frequencies will look in 2025? 2030? Justify your prediction.

“Others went another route. They beat a different drum, but that drum was a little thin and a little light. But some people put the lion’s skin on, tightened it up and said, ‘Boom! Boom! Boom! We want freedom!’ That was The Last Poets.” - **KRS ONE**

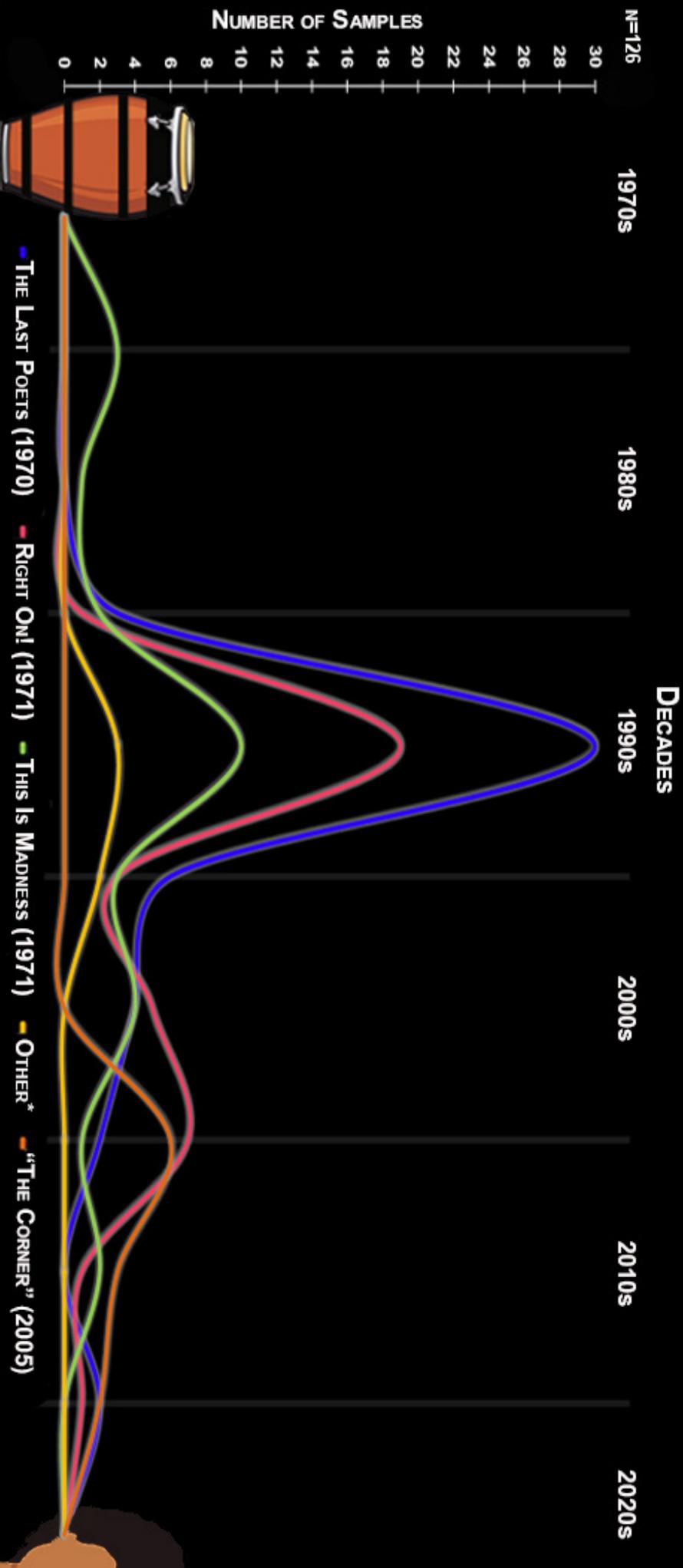
“The drum has to be considered a poet as well because its poetry[sic]...Back in the day, if you had a new poem that you wanted to add to the program, you had to get on stage and do your poem for the rest of the guys in the group...Nilija [Obabi] kept his conga drum very nearby, it was in a duffel bag. Now, if you got on that stage and you started doing your poem and Nilija did not unravel the duffel bag to get to the head so he could play it, you might as well throw that poem out... It was a lesson. Even though Nilija didn’t know anything at all about figurative language, he knew about feelings. If he couldn’t feel you, he couldn’t play.” - **Abiodun Oyewole, The Last Poets**

“Today there’s a habit that has been formed by technology that unfortunately, the masses listen with their eyes too much. What you had back then was everything that was a voice, or a musical note came through and when the voices roll with a note or roll with some rhythm—you couldn’t help, but have it seep inside you.” - **Chuck D, Public Enemy**



INFOGRAPHIC

THE FREQUENCIES OF THE LAST POETS: THE INFLUENCE OF THE LAST POETS OVER THE LAST 50 YEARS VIA SAMPLES



MORE FREQUENCIES:

- MOST SAMPLED SONG: "Die Nigga " (15)
- YEAR WITH THE MOST SAMPLES: 1991 (16)
- ALBUM WITH THE MOST SONGS SAMPLED: *The Last Poets* (10)

RAP GROUP WITH THE MOST SAMPLES: N.W.A. (10)

- SONG THAT USES TWO SAMPLES: "MONTARA" BY MADLUB
- MOST SAMPLED SONG ACROSS GENRES: "MEAN MACHINE (CHAMP)" (RAP, REGGAE, DANCE/ELECTRONIC)

*OTHER ALBUMS SAMPLED:

- CHASTISEMENT (1972)
- JAZZOETRY (1976)
- DELIGHTS OF THE GARDEN (1977)
- Source: whosampled.com

MORE INFLUENTIAL POETS



Amiri Baraka

Poet, writer, teacher, and political activist Amiri Baraka was born Everett LeRoi Jones in 1934 in Newark, New Jersey. Baraka was well known for his strident social criticism, often writing in an incendiary style that made it difficult for some audiences and critics to respond with objectivity to his works. Throughout most of his career his method in poetry, drama, fiction, and essays was confrontational, calculated to shock and awaken audiences to the political concerns of black Americans. For decades, Baraka was one of the most prominent voices in the world of American literature.

Audre Lorde

A self-described “black, lesbian, mother, warrior, poet,” Audre Lorde dedicated both her life and her creative talent to confronting and addressing injustices of racism, sexism, classism, and homophobia. Lorde fought the marginalization of such categories as “lesbian” and “black woman.” She was central to many liberation movements and activist circles, including second-wave feminism, civil rights and Black cultural movements, and struggles for GLBQT equality. In particular, Lorde’s poetry is known for the power of its call for social and racial justice, as well as its depictions of queer experience and sexuality.

Gil Scott-Heron

Poet and musician Gil Scott-Heron was born in Chicago. Scott-Heron moved to Lincoln, Tennessee, to live with his grandmother Lily Scott, a musician and civil rights activist. She bought Scott-Heron his first piano and introduced him to the work of Langston Hughes. In Lincoln, Scott-Heron was one of three black children selected to desegregate his junior high school. After enduring ongoing racism at school, Scott-Heron moved to New York City to live with his mother. During his high school years in the Bronx, he discovered the work of LeRoi Jones (later Amiri Baraka). Scott-Heron was associated with the Last Poets, whose commitment to social justice brought political poetry and musical performance together, which helped pave the way for the emergence of hip-hop.

Gwendolyn Brooks

Gwendolyn Brooks is one of the most highly regarded, influential, and widely read poets of 20th-century American poetry. She was a much-honored poet, even in her lifetime, with the distinction of being the first Black author to win the Pulitzer Prize. Many of Brooks’s works display a political consciousness, especially those from the 1960s and later, with several of her poems reflecting the civil rights activism of that period. Not only has she combined a strong commitment to racial identity and equality with a mastery of poetic techniques, but she has also managed to bridge the gap between the academic poets of her generation in the 1940s and the young Black militant writers of the 1960s.”



MORE INFLUENTIAL POETS



Haki R. Madhubuti

Born Donald Luther Lee in Little Rock, Arkansas, the poet adopted the Swahili name Haki R. Madhubuti after traveling to Africa in 1974. As he shared in a 2006 interview, he sensed that “a new African name would help me in arriving at a final definition of self.” Haki means “justice” and Madhubuti means “precise, accurate, and dependable.” Influenced by Gwendolyn Brooks, Madhubuti writes experimental, free-verse, politically charged poetry with a staccato rhythm. Over the span of his career, his poetry has shifted its focus from the personal to the political. Early work with the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) informs his activist poetics.

Nikki Giovanni

Nikki Giovanni is one of America’s foremost poets. Over the course of a long career, Giovanni has published numerous collections of poetry—from her first self-published volume *Black Feeling Black Talk* (1968) to *New York Times* best-seller *Bicycles: Love Poems* (2009)—several works of nonfiction and children’s literature, and multiple recordings, including the Emmy-award nominated *The Nikki Giovanni Poetry Collection* (2004). Her most recent publications include *Chasing Utopia: A Hybrid* (2013) and, as editor, *The 100 Best African American Poems* (2010). A frequent lecturer and reader, Giovanni has taught at Rutgers University, Ohio State University, and Virginia Tech, where she is a University Distinguished Professor.

Pedro Pietri

Nuyorican poet and playwright Pedro Pietri was born in Ponce, Puerto Rico, and raised in Manhattan. A few years after graduating from high school, he was drafted into the Army and served in the Vietnam War. Upon his return to New York, Pietri joined the Young Lords, a Puerto Rican Civil rights activist group. In the early 1970s, he co-founded the Nuyorican Poets Café with Miguel Piñero, Miguel Algarín, and others. He is the author of *Illusions of a Revolving Door: Plays* (1992), *The Masses are Asses* (1984), *Traffic Violations* (1983), *Lost in the Museum of Natural History* (1980), *Invisible Poetry* (1979), and *Puerto Rican Obituary* (1973), and the recorded performance poetry LPs, *Loose Joints* and *One Is a Crowd*. His work has been widely anthologized. He died in 2004.



MORE INFLUENTIAL POETS



Sonia Sanchez

Poet, playwright, professor, activist and one of the foremost leaders of the Black Studies movement, Sonia Sanchez was born Wilsonia Benita Driver on September 9, 1934, in Birmingham, Alabama. She earned a BA from Hunter College in 1955 and attended graduate school at New York University, where she studied with the poet Louise Bogan. During the early 1960s Sanchez was an integrationist, supporting the ideas of the Congress of Racial Equality. But after listening to the ideas of Malcolm X, her work and ideas took on a separations slant. She began teaching in 1965, first on the staff of the Downtown Community School in New York and later at San Francisco State College. There she was a pioneer in developing Black Studies courses, including a class in African American women's literature.

The Watts Prophets

The Watts Prophets® is a group of poets and musicians from Watts, Los Angeles, California. Like their contemporaries, The Last Poets, the group combined elements of jazz music and spoken word performance, making the trio one that is often seen as a forerunner of contemporary hip hop music. Formed in 1967, the group comprises Richard Dedeaux, Father Amde Hamilton, and Otis O' Solomon. Fusing music with jazz and funk roots with a rapid-fire, spoken word sound, they created a sound that gave them a considerable local following, but little commercial success. They released two albums, 1969's *The Black Voices: On the Streets in Watts* and 1971's *Rappin' Black in a White World*, which established a strong tendency toward social commentary and a reputation for militancy.

Toni Morrison

Toni Morrison is one of the most celebrated authors in the world. In addition to writing plays, and children's books, her novels have earned her countless prestigious awards including the Pulitzer Prize and the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Barack Obama. As the first African-American woman to win the Nobel Prize in Literature, Morrison's work has inspired a generation of writers to follow in her footsteps.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



CURATED PLAYLISTS

By: DJ Reborn

1. "Niggas are Scared of Revolution" - Last Poets
2. "Black Woman" - Jungle Brother
3. "Rebirth of Slick" - Digable Planets
4. "Excursions" - Tribe Called Quest
5. "Discipline 99 Pt. 0" - Quasimoto feat. Mr. Herb
6. "Girls Got a Gun" - YoYo
7. "Black Rage" - Lauryn Hill
8. "Tribute to Obabi" - The Last Poets
9. "When the Revolution Comes" - The Last Poets
10. "Black Is" - The Last Poets

By: Sway Calloway

1. "When the Revolution Comes" - Last poets
2. "Party & Bullshit" - Notorious BIG
3. "This is Madness" - Last Poets
4. "Black Soldier" - X-CLAN- Tribal Jam
5. "Black Woman" - Jungle Brother
6. "The Corner" - Common feat. Last Poets
7. "Amerikkas Most Wanted" - Ice Cube
8. "Sport" - Last poets
9. "Excursions" - Tribe Called Quest
10. -"The Ghetto" - Too Short



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



UHHM X THE LAST POETS 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Universal Hip Hop Museum | Video Music Box | in association with The Seeds of
The Last Poets present The 50th Anniversary of The Last Poets self titled
album.

Special Guests:

KRS-One:	16:13 - 24:55
Poet Aja Monet	58:55 - 1:01
Chuck D	1:01 - 1:21
Poet J Ivy	1:27 - 1:30
Mumu Fresh	1:33 - 1:37
Black Thought	1:37 - 1:38
Sonia Sanchez	1:58 - 2:02
Erykah Badu	2:02 - 2:06
Jessica CARE Moore	2:17 - 2:20
Michael Holman	2:25 - 2:35

ARTICLES

[The Guardian: The Last Poets](#)
[NPR: Spoken Word Pioneers The Last Poets](#)
[The New York Time: Rap's Radical First Act](#)

FILMS & DOCUMENTARIES

Right On! (1971)
Big Fun in the Big Town (1986)
Def Poetry Jam (2002-2007)
The Revolution Will Not Be Televised (2003)
Amiri Baraka: The Power of the Word (2008)
When the Revolution Comes (2008)
The Last Poets: Made in Amerikkka (2009)
Rubble Kings (2010)
The Last Poets: B-Side (2017)



REFERENCES



- Biographies retrieved from the Poetry Foundation Organization & The Last Poets Official Website
- Discography from Discogs.com
- Keorapetse Kgositsile, 79, South African Poet and Activist, Dies
- "Toward a Walk in the Sun by Keorapetse Kgositsile
- The Last Poets: the hip-hop forefathers who gave black America its voice
- Infographic Statistics retrieved from Who Sampled
 - Brain Waves & Frequencies
 - 432 (Hz) vs. 440 (Hz) Theory
 - The Bill Adler Archives
 - The Cultural Movement
 - Big Fun in the Big Town



UNIVERSAL HIP HOP MUSEUM



Executive Director | Rocky Bucano
Chair of Board of Trustees | Nana Ashhurt
Director of Archives and Collection | Adam Silverstein
Director of Hip Hop Education Center & Education Chair | Martha Diaz

RESOURCE CREATED BY

Christina Desnoyers
Kashema Hutchinson
Richard Nice

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Francesca D'Amico-Cuthbert
Christina Desnoyers
Mark "DJ Wiz" Eastmond
Khalid El-Hakim
DeVon Glover
Mark Green
Marq Hawkins
Kashema Hutchinson
Rahman Jamaal
Sommer Regan McCoy
Rich Nice
Marlin Ramos
Minister Server



© 2020 Universal Hip Hop Museum - Hip Hop Education Center.
All rights reserved.

