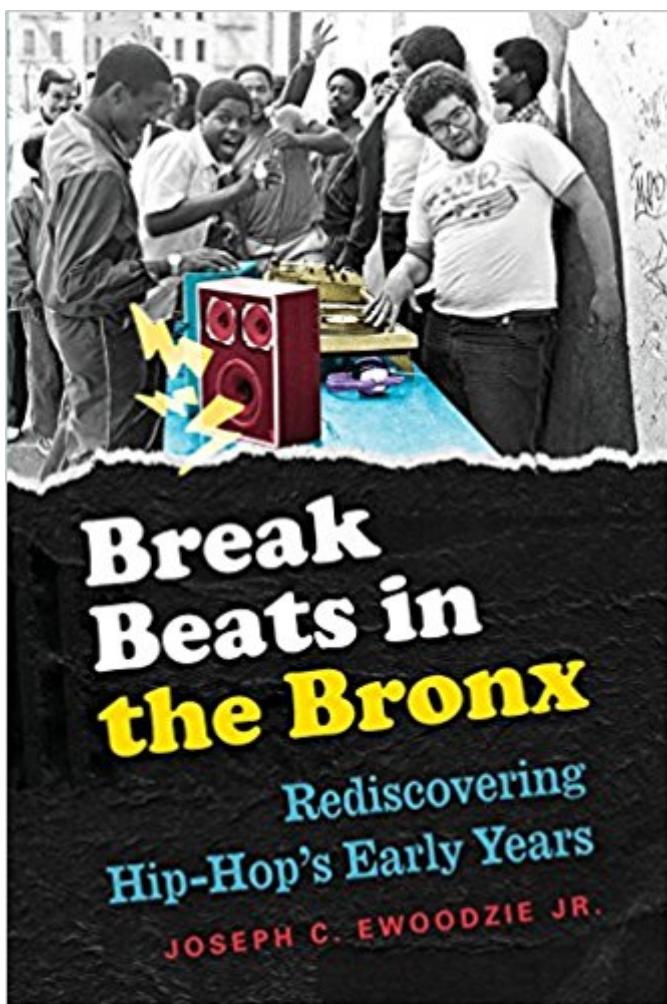


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Break Beats In The Bronx: Rediscovering Hip-Hop's Early Years



Synopsis

The origin story of hip-hop—“one that involves Kool Herc DJing a house party on Sedgwick Avenue in the Bronx”—has become received wisdom. But Joseph C. Ewoodzie Jr. argues that the full story remains to be told. In vibrant prose, he combines never-before-used archival material with searching questions about the symbolic boundaries that have divided our understanding of the music. In *Break Beats in the Bronx*, Ewoodzie portrays the creative process that brought about what we now know as hip-hop and shows that the art form was a result of serendipitous events, accidents, calculated successes, and failures that, almost magically, came together. In doing so, he questions the unexamined assumptions about hip-hop’s beginnings, including why there are just four traditional elements—DJing, MCing, breaking, and graffiti writing—and not others, why the South Bronx and not any other borough or city is considered the cradle of the form, and which artists besides Kool Herc, Afrika Bambaataa, and Grandmaster Flash founded the genre. Ewoodzie answers these and many other questions about hip-hop’s beginnings. Unearthing new evidence, he shows what occurred during the crucial but surprisingly underexamined years between 1975 and 1979 and argues that it was during this period that the internal logic and conventions of the scene were formed.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Break Beats in the Bronx will make a significant mark on how we think about the history of race, urban space, and popular culture in New York and, more broadly, on hip-hop studies.--Gaye

Theresa Johnson, author of *Spaces of Conflict, Sounds of Solidarity* In language that neither talks down to colleagues in the academy nor prevents educated laypeople from understanding his ideas and concepts, Joseph Ewoodzie contributes to a broader tradition of pop culture research in sociology and fills a surprising vacuum in the history of hip-hop, telling the untold story about its early days in the 1970s." --Oliver Wang, California State University, Long Beach
Break Beats in the Bronx promises to be an important contribution to the social and cultural history of hip-hop. With zeal, rigor, and no small amount of style, Joseph Ewoodzie illuminates the defining moments and key personalities of hip-hop's early years before they recede into shadow.--Adam Bradley, author of *Book of Rhymes* and coeditor of *The Anthology of Rap*

Joseph C. Ewoodzie Jr. is Malcolm O. Partin Assistant Professor of Sociology and Africana Studies at Davidson College.

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