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COVERAGE OF RHYTHM AND BLUES AND POP
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AND CASHBOX MAGAZINES,
1988-1992

By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

General

Over the years, black musicians have complained how the mass media have separated their music from the music of white artists with different record charts and musical programs.¹ During the 1960s, possibly because of racial segregation, there were radio stations that played music mostly by black artists and there were stations that played music mostly by artists like The Beatles or Elvis Presley. The only place blacks could play their music live was in small clubs in black communities, while white musicians could play their music in larger clubs in the more exclusive sections of town. In his 1985 book Where Did Our Love Go: The Rise & Fall of the Motown Sound music columnist Nelson George wrote:

In the spirit of the Eisenhower era, the major labels dismissed real black music as curiosity, recording the gutsier styles first as "race music," then as "blues," and by the 1960 as "rhythm and blues," all on subsidiary lines, such as Columbia's Okeh Records which were not pushed in the white market place. Like a bastard child, this music was shunted to a corner and left to fend for itself. Blacks simply weren't considered good enough to sit in the front of the record industry bus with the Sinatras, Comos, and other white angels that men such as Columbia A & R Director Mitch Miller steadfastly supported.²

This difference in the treatment of black music has not been limited to radio stations and concert halls. Many artists still complain about how unfair the industry publications' recording chart systems are.

Background

In fact, the labeling and charting system that industry magazines like Billboard use to separate the various music sounds of artists may be based on color according to some in the music business. Author Frederic Dannen explained the magazine labeling system in his 1990 book Hit Man:

Pop in the record industry is a euphemism for white: R & B means black. Until 1949 Billboard listed music by black artists as "race" records, but then a staffer named Jerry Wexler coined the term rhythm and blues. This is about all that has changed (though the industry has found other euphemisms, including "soul" and "urban"). A rock record by a black act is automatically R & B regardless of its sound — unless white radio plays it and white people buy it, at which point it is said to crossover to the pop charts.³

An artist who has complained about the labeling system is former Motown Records artist Smokey Robinson. In his 1989 autobiography Robinson wrote:

After three decades of hits, I resent having to work my way to the top of the black chart before being allowed to crossover. That's like having to work your way from back of the bus.⁴

Former Motown artist Gladys Knight agreed with Robinson's statement. Knight said the trade magazines' chart system is used to keep black people in their place no matter what they do. She said that is one reason why she has not gained a mainstream listening audience.⁵

Another artist who has complained about the industry's chart system is Columbia Records artist Regina Belle. She said, "It's insulting to me when somebody says you're number one on the black charts. It suggests that nobody appreciates my music but black people."⁶

Nevertheless, when black artists' music began appealing to white audiences the media began labeling them a crossover success. With this crossover success came the criticism that the artists were losing touch with their black heritage because of their musical sound and image. One critic who felt this way about black artist crossover success was journalist Nelson George. In his book the Death of Rhythm & Blues, George wrote:

Sometimes it seems really funny, but it's also quite sad that in surveying black America through its music in the eighties, much of the discussion revolves not around music but skin color, cosmetic surgery, and the rejection of Negroid features. Compare current photographs of George Benson with pictures from early in his career. You will be confronted with facial alterations that have nothing to do with age. Surgery has reshaped him into a commercial product for mass consumption. It's a simple and, I think, as frightening as that. Change your face to sell a hundred thousand more units.⁷

In a 1991 Entertainment Weekly magazine article James Miller, manager of South Central Los Angeles Tempo Records, wrote the following on Michael Jackson's Black and White video, "The feedback I'm getting from people who've seen the video is that Michael Jackson is getting whiter and whiter. I think discerning buyers in the black community will be turned off by it."⁸

Another artist who has faced such labeling and criticism is Whitney Houston. She has often been criticized for not being black enough and

forsaking her ethnic identity by changing her musical sound in order to appeal to a wider listening audience. As a result of this criticism Houston has had problems getting airplay on black radio. In fact, Tony Anderson, an executive at Houston's record company, Arista, wrote in a 1987 Billboard commentary:

I can't count the number of times I have had to convince black radio programmers to play a new Whitney single over the objections that the record was "too pop" or worse, "too white."⁹

On a similar topic, Black Beat Magazine reporter Steven Ivory wrote in a 1990 article:

Aside from rap, black music for the sake of appealing to pop radio, which often means mega sales, has seen an increasing dilution of its sound and influence. Unfortunately, not many soul veterans can get radio airplay these days.¹⁰

In February of 1990 Jackson's single "Escape" was added at more pop radio stations than black stations during the same week. It was even labeled a "hot debut" on the pop charts but not on the black charts.¹¹

Older and established artists aren't the only ones who have had problems getting airplay. In a 1991 Black Radio Exclusive Magazine article also on airplay, a reporter wrote:

In recent years, fewer and fewer slots are available for unknown acts to be added to stations whose main concern is to maintain ratings numbers. It is the rationale of many stations that new acts with an unproven track record have less of a chance of keeping listeners' attention.¹²

An artist who also recognized the problem with getting airplay is recording artist Nile Rogers. In a 1983 Billboard commentary on getting airplay Rogers wrote:

Black artists must go a different route if they must break on black stations first. If "Yum Yum" had been a tune on the Bowie album it would have been added all over the place and I wouldn't be embroiled in this pointless controversy today. Black stations would play it because white stations were already doing so.¹³

Statement of Problem

Nevertheless, the fact that black artists like Jackson and Houston gaining more exposure on Music Television and in magazines it raises the question of whether black artists are receiving equal coverage in the media. The difference in the coverage may be related to race or some other factor.

Purpose of the Study

Although many studies have been done on the treatment of black actors in the mass media, few have been done on the coverage of black artists in music industry magazines. The purpose of this study is to identify the actual differences in certain print media coverage of black and white artists to determine if the black artists' claims that they received different coverage were warranted.

Research Hypothesis

The hypothesis this study will address is:

There are no significant differences in the treatment of black and white artists in Cash Box or Billboard magazines overall nor individually.

Methodology

The plan for this research project is a comparison of the space and content devoted to rhythm and blues and pop recording artists in Billboard and Cash Box magazines. To supplement the analysis, information on the kind of media coverage black artists and record company executives said they have received over the past 30 years is included in the review of literature. The sources that will be used to gather this information include artist biographies, magazine interviews, books about black music and other research on the issue.

Objective

The major objective of this study was to see if the rhythm and blues artists are treated differently by Cash Box and Billboard magazines in terms of the news coverage they receive. Also, the researcher wanted to find out if any of the differences that were found were race related since the majority of the artists associated with the rhythm and blues chart are black.

Significance of the Study

The information from this study can be used in journalism ethics classes when analyzing the media treatment of public figures. Also, this information can be used by broadcasting students to gain a better understanding of the content of major broadcasting trade publications.

Limitations

One of the problems faced by this study and others like it is the many books and interviews available on the coverage black artists have received in the media. There is not enough time to study all of them. Also, the study is valid only for the magazines examined and for the time period examined.

Outline of the Study

Chapter II of this study will present a more detailed discussion of what industry executives, artists, researchers and journalists have had to say about the practice of artist and record promotion and media treatment. Chapter III will discuss the research methods used to gather the necessary data. Chapter IV will report the research findings and Chapter V will summarize the study, present conclusions and include suggestions for other studies that can be done.

Endnotes

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2. George Love Go 50-51.
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4. Smokey Robinson, Smokey: Inside My Life. (New York: McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, 1989) 215.
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7. George, Death, 174.
8. David Browne, "Michael Jackson's Black or White Blues," Entertainment Weekly, 29 November 1991: 44.
9. Tony Anderson, "Houston's Mass Appeal Is No Sin," Billboard 5 June 1987: 9.
10. Steven, Ivory, "Johnny Gill, I'm Not Leaving New Edition!" Black Beat Magazine September 1990: 78.
11. Terri Rossi, "Rhythm Section," Billboard 20 January 1990: 26.
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13. Nile Rogers, "The Black Side of Censorship," Billboard 9 April 1983: 8.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

General

Chapter I presented an introduction to the criticism and treatment black recording artists said they have received from music critics and the media when promoting their music. This chapter will present a more detailed discussion of what journalism scholars, artists, industry executives, and researchers have had to say about the media treatment black artists have received. The subjects that were examined included media labeling of black artists, treatment of blacks on television, artist mistreatment of the media, how critics view artists, and the major goal of each artist.

Media Labeling of Black Artists

One of the media treatments that has been the subject of complaints by black artists is the charting system used by Billboard and Cash Box magazines. While the charting system has been changed several times over the years many artists and industry experts have believed it to be race related.

In 1949 the music trade magazine Billboard introduced a new chart called "Rhythm and Blues" that listed the most popular records intended for distribution in the black community. However, as many records were listed on both the rhythm and blues chart and pop chart, the Billboard editors thought the list was superfluous. So from November 1963 to January 1965 no best seller rhythm and blues charts were published. But with a revival of rhythm and blues songs in January 1965 the charts were published again.¹

In March 1960 the trade magazine Cash Box also noted that there was no major difference between pop and rhythm and blues singles charts and substituted the pop "Hot 100" chart for the rhythm and blues sector chart. Nevertheless, the editors had second thoughts about their decision and reinstated the rhythm and blues listing in December 1960.²

An artist who has complained about the system is Smokey Robinson.

In his autobiography Robinson wrote:

I do, though, accuse the music business of a sort of racism. I hate the way the trade magazines organize the charts according to category--pop, black, etc. To my mind that's segregation. I'd like to see one encompassing chart.³

Apparently Robinson is not the only one who recognized the problem blacks have had crossing over to the pop charts. In a 1989 Ebony article reporter Dalton Narine wrote:

In the past black r&b artists' quest to cross over to white-dominated pop radio has been an up hill struggle. Generally, that still is the case. By contrast, however, since the industry's convenient renaming of black music to the all-encompassing urban contemporary format about eight years ago, whites have

found it easier than ever before to cross music tracks, tradition notwithstanding.⁴

Columnist Nelson George also noticed that many artists felt the same way Robinson and Narine did. In a 1992 Village Voice article he wrote:

At Billboard Magazine in 1982, I pushed to update the title of the "Soul" chart. Prince wasn't soul, nor was Kurtis Blow or Run-D.M.C. The direction of black music, one of the truest reflectors of our culture, had changed profoundly, as it always does. After much discussion the chart was renamed "Black," which outraged many white retailers and black musicmakers. Too ethnic. Too limiting. Too damn black.⁵

Another person noticing the media's segregation of black music through its charting system was Billboard Magazine's columnist Terri Rossi. In her 1990 year-end column Rossi wrote:

Unfortunately, the music business is segregated--separate and rarely equal. Now R&B music usually must be proven, by sales to African-Americans, before it can be presented to pop radio. The previous name of the charts implied that the music was a "black thang." It was, and has always been, an R&B thang. Now that we identify the product by its proper name, the entire industry should be able to recognize that the same executives that can successfully market one kind of music should be allowed to market others, based on their business acumen and not on the color of their skins.⁶

The segregation of black music Rossi and George discussed is nothing new. According to historians similar segregation dates back to slavery when black Americans demonstrated their talent for improvisation in the songs they played and sang.⁷

According to author Eileen Southern, for every avenue open to blacks to show their talents, twice as many barriers were thrown up to prevent their advance.⁸ Also, she said that beginning in the 1940's some of the

music created by blacks was gradually becoming popular. Eventually white and black musicians began to play together and exchange ideas.⁹

In the 1950's, artists like Sam Cooke began appearing on the Tonight Show and playing in white concert halls like the Copacabana Club. Nevertheless, not everyone was Sam Cooke. For most black artists, performing in small clubs in black neighborhoods was the only way they had to promote their music.¹⁰

The Problem of Getting Airplay

Another form of media treatment many artists have experienced during their careers is difficulty in obtaining television and radio outlets to showcase their performing talents. Some executives say while more outlets are becoming available the competition for airtime is stiff.

In a 1990 Billboard article, Linda Haynes, director of Rhythm and Blues publicity for Virgin Records said there are not many outlets to showcase black artists on television and, until Arsenio Hall became a talk show host, there really was no other place on nationally syndicated television for black artists to perform but the teen rhythm and blues dance show "Soul Train."¹¹ She said while Hall's show delivered a prime late-night audience, it was difficult for record companies to arrange for rhythm and blues acts to be on the show because of competition from a wider range of pop, rock, and country performers.¹²

In a 1983 Billboard article columnist Nelson George said there are still very few national shows programming urban videos, although all but

the most rock-oriented included a small percentage. And for those few shows that do exist there are not many black videos to select from.¹³

According to author Ann Kaplan when Music Television first started most black bands were censored because programmers were wary of the objections they would receive from racist white audiences. But after receiving objections from established stars like David Bowie it started playing well-known black artists like Prince and Michael Jackson periodically.¹⁴

Another complaint that some artists and executives have made about getting television airplay has to do with Music Television's policy of being the only one having the right to air an artist's video for a certain length of time. In a 1992 Billboard commentary, former VH-1 Vice President of Programming Les Garland wrote:

Exclusivity is not a good deal for anyone. The fans don't understand why "their" groups disappear from their favorite channel when the artist's new video is released. The artists miss the promotional exposure the other channels no longer are able to provide, and the record companies, all too often, find their new release "ghettoized to "Headbangers," Yo!," "Hanging'," or the overnights."¹⁵

The problems that George and Garland discussed were also noticed by researchers J.D. Brown and Campbell in their 1986 study "Music Videos: The Same Beat But a Different Drummer." In the study the researchers concluded that more than 83 percent of all the videos shown on Music Television featured white male singers or bands led by white males. Nonwhites accounted for only 5 percent of the leaders of the groups shown.¹⁶

Treatment of Blacks in Other Media

The problems recording artists faced getting airplay is similar to the problems black actors had getting roles on certain television shows during the 1960's and 1970's. In their book Blacks On Television authors George and Sylvia Hill wrote:

There is one genre of TV programs from which blacks were glaringly absent--westerns. In the late 1950's and early 60's, this was one of the most popular programs, but not one black had a main role in a western. Several did, however, make an occasional appearance.¹⁷

The Hills also said that the number of blacks on television in the 1970's did increase. In their book they wrote:

From 1970 to 1979 blacks had starring or strong supporting roles in at least fifteen shows. Many of these had predominantly black casts. But looks can often be deceiving, and in this case they were. Although blacks had numerous roles on many shows, there was one glaring problem, the majority of these shows were comedies. Detectives shows ran a distant second.¹⁸

Researcher Paula Matabane came to the same conclusion as the Hills did in their book. In her 1984 study on television and black audiences she stated that blacks tend to be cast either in all-black setting or as lone black persons in a otherwise all-white setting.¹⁹

Obtaining television airtime is not the only concern of most artists and executives. Many artists have mentioned having problems getting radio airtime. In a 1990 Black Radio Exclusive article reporter Steven Ivory wrote:

The true black artist is locked in a stranglehold unable to express himself for fear of no airplay — and ultimately it is the audience that suffers.²⁰

Also, in a December 1991 Black Radio Exclusive Magazine article radio and record label executives stated that in today's industry some newer acts have it hard, and programmers are somewhat guilty of playing things conservatively. They believe an extra effort should be made to fit the new talent in somehow.²¹

The opinions of radio and label executives have been supported by researcher E.W. Rothenbular. In his study "Programming Decision Making in Popular Music Radio" Rothenbular wrote:

The universe of records is defined for the station programmer, the record distribution promoters, industry aggregate data reported to the trade sheets, and the playlists of similar stations all tend to influence programming decisions in favor of already popular records and away from risky, unpromoted ones.²²

A 1971 Harvard business school study gave the same importance to radio. The study's authors wrote the following on getting a wider listening audience for black artists' music.

In sum, soul radio is of strategic importance to the record companies for two principal reasons: first, it provides access to a large and growing record-buying public, namely, the black consumer. Second, and for some of the record companies more important, it is perhaps the most effective way of getting a record to a Top 40 playlist.²³

In an 1990 Black Radio Exclusive article Soul Records executive Lindsey Williams discussed a similar problem with getting airplay:

I have been in a position where I've tried to get a rap act played on black radio and they were unwilling or reluctant to put it on. The thing which really troubles me about the

situation is that white stations are playing the music faster than the brothers.²⁴

Recording artist Vanessa Williams also has mentioned having problems with getting program directors at pop stations to play her records. She said the directors would act as if they didn't know who she was.²⁵

Benny Medina, an executive at Warner Brothers Records, had the same opinions about airplay. In a 1991 Black Radio Exclusive Magazine article he stated, "how can you tell someone that they can only listen to something based on skin color? It just doesn't work. Tastes are broader than that."²⁶

In their book Responsibility in Mass Communication authors Rivers, Schramm, and Christians made a similar statement:

Furthermore, there is a very real question whether the public can know what it wants. It knows what it prefers among alternatives it has already experienced: it can decide, that is, whether it prefers the concert it heard Tuesday or the concert it heard Thursday. But the very essence of art is newness. And the public can't know whether it wants what it hasn't experienced. They cannot be sure that they would or would not like what they have not seen or read.²⁷

An artist who has the same opinion as Medina is Pebo Bryson. In a 1991 Black Radio Exclusive magazine article he stated:

It's time for black artists to stop reaching for just one piece of the pie. It's just another form of segregation. There are economic reasons, and everyone wants to be successful. The culture deserves it and I deserve it. You have to maintain a healthy sense of self. The music business is often racist by omission. Black people and black culture are left out. We have to try to maintain a sense of balance in the industry without selling out. Otherwise, you can end up trading in the person you know for some trumped up version of yourself, creatively and personally.²⁸

Mistreatment of the Media

While there are many black artists who believe they are being mistreated by the media, there are some editors who felt that the black media is also mistreated by artists and record companies when they try to obtain interviews. In a 1992 Billboard commentary journalist Gerrie Summers wrote:

As Black Music Month draws to a close, it seems ironic that, while the black music press is being recognized for its help in the exposure and support of black artists, it is usually forgotten during the other 11 months of the year. When it comes to major events and exclusives, R&B magazines, as well as smaller publications, are usually the last in line.²⁹

Also, reporters like Steven Ivory felt some reporters are expected to write a certain way because they are black. In a July 1992 Black Radio Exclusive article he wrote:

Ah, the old we're-all-black-so-the-"black press"-shouldn't-write-"bad"-things-about-black-people vibe. Which really translates into the thought that black journalists, when it comes to black folks, shouldn't be objective. It's a double standard that black journalists, reporters and authors have been dealing with for years, and as do most journalists we get it from all ends.³⁰

The Critic's View

Another problem black artists have faced is the critic's view that they do not sound and act as black artists should. During the 1960's and 1970's Motown made international superstars out of young people from the Detroit ghetto based on the philosophy of mass appeal.³¹ Motown was a company aimed specifically at reaching the white radio listening audience through an

artist's sound and dress, a promotion plan the company was often criticized for in the press.³² Journalist Nelson George wrote in his book Where Did Our Love Go: The Rise & Fall of the Motown Sound:

In an environment where integration was quickly being replaced in the mouths of trendsetters by nationalism, Black Panther, and black power, it wasn't just the glib who looked at the Temptation's tuxedos and said "Uncle Tom."³³

The Temptations and other Motown artists were not the only ones who have been criticized about their looks or their need to appeal to a wider listening audience. In his book The Death of Rhythm and Blues George made similar statements about Michael Jackson and Prince:

The two greatest black stars of the decade, Michael Jackson and Prince, ran fast and far, both from blackness and conventional images of male sexuality. Michael Jackson's nose job, often ill-conceived makeup, and artificially curled hair, is, in the eyes of many blacks, a denial of his color that constitutes an act of racial treason. Add to that a disquieting androgyny and you have an alarmingly unblack, unmasculine figure as the most popular black man in America.³⁴

In addition, George wrote:

Prince' more irksome trait was that, like Jackson, he aided those who saw blackness as a hindrance in the commercial marketplace by running from it. In fact, it can be argued that Prince's consistent use of mulatto and white leading ladies convinced many black male, and some female artists, to use romantic interest of similar shading in their videos, hoping to emulate Prince's success.³⁵

Dr. Alvin Poussaint, an associate professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, agreed with George's statement about artist's images. He said in a March 1990 Ebony article:

Some entertainers may shun being called "Black" for marketing reasons. Sometimes they feel they would do better if marketed as something other than Black. They want to broaden their

appeal internationally, and they don't want to exclude anyone. They have the attitude that race doesn't exist.³⁶

Poussaint and George's observations were also noticed by researchers Sonja Lewis and Shirley Chennault. In their 1986 study "Black Artists' Music Videos: Three Success Strategies," they wrote:

To help "cross over" the physical and social barriers into the lucrative music video market, black musicians have created visual images through mixed casts and rock star associations to appeal to the target audience and the record companies.³⁷

An artist who has received such criticism is Whitney Houston. Tony Anderson, president of promotions for Arista Records, stated in a 1987 Billboard commentary:

Too often when progress is made by one of our own we have a destructive tendency to make what seems to be a concerted effort to pull that person down. Success always breeds resentment takes on an interracial tinge, I find it to be particularly ugly.³⁸

Secondly, Anderson wrote:

I really feel that Whitney is bearing the unfortunate and unfair brunt of what has become much more within the industry than among the public a return to separatism. She is certainly never going to sacrifice her ethnic identity but neither should she change her own creative instincts and goals to fit a few people's notions of what a black artist should be.³⁹

In a 1991 Billboard article columnist Janie McAdams made a similar statement about Houston's image problem. In her article McAdams wrote:

Houston and her record company have had to overcome a perception of Houston, especially among R&B consumers, as a pop princess who had abandoned her gospel/R&B roots. Many of the same R&B fans who made her 1985 debut, "Whitney," a multiplatinum smash seemed alienated by the pop/dance glitz of "Whitney Houston," tracks like "I Wanna Dance With Somebody (Who Loves Me)," "Didn't we Almost Have It All," "So Emotional," and "Where Do Broken Hearts Go?," which

helped establish Houston as pop's reigning female vocalist, eroded her R&B credibility.⁴⁰

According to Nelson George, many persons feel that Houston, through her selection of singles and marketing, avoided identification with black America. Instead of using her gospel roots she sings "ultra bland pop."⁴¹

In response to the critics comments on black artists' looks and sounds, Epic Records artist Luther Vandross said in a 1990 Rolling Stone article that he would like to crossover to the pop record charts. However, he said he was not going to put on a blond wig to do it.⁴²

An actor who spoke out on how blacks are portrayed in the media was Eddie Anderson. During a 1930's interview he said:

"I don't see why certain characters are called stereotypes... the negro characters being presented are not labeling the Negro race any more than "Luigi" is labeling the Italian people as a whole. The same goes for "Beulah," who is not playing the part of thousands of Negroes, but only the part of one person, "Beulah." They're not saying here is the portrait of the Negro, but here is "Beulah."⁴³

Author James Riordan agreed with Vandross and Anderson. In his 1988 book Making It in the Music Business he suggested that when artists like Houston and Vandross develop an image to sell their records they should make sure it is reflective of who they are as persons. He wrote, "It should be as bold and exciting as possible, yet, believable to the fans."⁴⁴

The critics' view of how blacks should be portrayed in the media also exists for television shows. In their 1987 book Ethnic and Racial Images In American Film and Television authors Allen Woll and Randall Miller wrote:

The black characters and circumstances in these and other "black-oriented" comedies have been subjected to sustained criticism. According to one critic, the new comedies distort

"authentic issues in the black community" by suggesting that blacks can solve problems with wisecracks and luck, rather than by hard work and intelligence.⁴⁵

The Goal: Mass Appeal

Regardless of the media treatment and criticism they have received over the years, the goal of most black artists is to appeal to a large audience, not just the black community. During the late 1960's, Stax's recording artist Otis Redding stated in an interview:

"I'd like to say something to the R&B singers who were around ten years ago. They've got to get out of the old bag. Listen to the beat of today and use it on records. Don't say we're gonna go back ten years and use this old swing shuffle. That's not it. I know what the kids want today and I aim all my stuff at them. I watch people when I sing. If they're stompin' their feet or snappin' their fingers, then I know I got something."⁴⁶

Warner Brothers recording artist Al. B. Sure! stated similar feelings to Redding in a 1988 Ebony Man article:

I wanted to appeal to everyone in the world. I just don't direct my music toward white or black or crossover. I direct it toward a wide spectrum, to produce music everyone can enjoy. That's why I try to do my records in other languages.⁴⁷

Columbia Records artist Regina Belle felt the same way as Sure! She said, "I'd like to see a wider variety of people listening to my music and that's why this album covers a few different bases."⁴⁸

Redding, Sure!, and Belle are not the only ones who believe mass appeal is important. Motown Records president Jheryl Busby stated the same feeling in a 1989 Cash Box article by Bud Scoppa:

The world is the market now — 65% of the business is outside the United States. If I'm an intelligent executive and I'm

really serious about my objective for developing this company, I'd be crazy to look at just 35% of the market. More than likely I'd enjoy brisk sales in that market. Without radio exposure, the recording's chances for success are slight. Radio stations are in short, prime targets for the promotional campaign.⁴⁹

The facts notwithstanding, more and more black recording artists want to appeal to a wider listening audience that includes all races, creeds and nationalities. However, there is no foolproof way of doing that. Finding such a way without receiving negative media treatment and criticism has plagued black artists for over 30 years.

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CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter outlines the content analysis used to test the hypothesis developed for this study.

Sources of Information

The two magazines selected for the content analysis were Cash Box and Billboard. The magazines were selected based on the information they furnished on the current trends in music programming at radio stations in the United States. Such information was deemed important to examine since many black artists have criticized the charting system used to report this information.

The older magazine, Billboard was founded in 1894 as a news magazine for carnivals and other outdoor entertainment. It did not become a music entertainment magazine containing information about record play, record sales, and movies until the 1940's. In 1992 the magazine had a circulation of 49,000 in 1992.

The second magazine, Cash Box was founded in 1942 as a coin

machine news magazine for recorded music. It did not start covering the music industry as it does today until the late 40's and early 50's. In 1992 the magazine had a circulation of 49,000 in 1992.

Selection and Sampling

Since the number of back issues of Cash Box available dated back to 1988 and the researcher wanted to make sure an issue of each magazine was selected from each year, a random sample was not done. Also, to determine if there was a trend or change in the media's treatment during certain times of year three issues from each year from 1988 to 1992 were selected. The issues selected for each magazine were:

Cash Box

March 19, 1988

June 11, 1988

December 31, 1988

February 25, 1989

July 1, 1989

November 4, 1989

March 10, 1990

June 16, 1990

October 13, 1990

May 18, 1991

August 10, 1991

December 28, 1991

Billboard

April 23, 1988

August 20, 1988

November 12, 1988

February 11, 1989

June 17, 1989

October 21, 1989

January 20, 1990

July 21, 1990

December 15, 1990

March 9, 1991

June 2, 1991

September 14, 1991

April 18, 1992

May 16, 1992

July 18, 1992

August 22, 1992

September 5, 1992

September 12, 1992

Criteria for Selection of Information Examined

The main sections that were studied in each magazine were the "rhythm and blues" section, the "talent" section and "pop" section.

The researcher defined "rhythm and blues" as the section of the magazine that contains information about black artists and radio stations whose programming is directed toward a black listening audience. The terms "pop," "top 100," and "talent" were defined as sections in the magazines that discussed music and artists whose sound was not directed to only a black listening audience. For example, a story about a heavy metal band's new album would be considered top 100 in Cash Box and pop in Billboard.

Also for this study, the researcher defined the meaning of unequal coverage as the rhythm and blues section not receiving the same amount of space in square inches devoted to its articles, photographs, and columns as the "pop" section did over the five year period.

Using these definitions the researcher analyzed each section's weekly columns, articles, photographs, and record and album charts. Items such as advertisements, obituaries, and opinion letters were not coded since the study's focus was on the major items that artists have complained about, which were the charting system, articles, and references to an artist's skin

color.

Hypotheses

The hypothesis developed for the study was:

There were no significant differences in the treatment black and white artists received in Cash Box and Billboard magazines overall or individually.

Coding Categories

The differences that were studied in each section during the analysis were:

The size of the photographs in the "top 100," "rhythm and blues," and "talent" sections in square inches and percent of space devoted to the section.

The size of the articles in the "top 100," "rhythm and blues," and "talent" sections in square inches and percent of space devoted to the section.

The length and width of the weekly columns in the "pop," and "rhythm and blues," sections in square inches and percent of space devoted to the section.

The number of album and singles charts presented in each section.

The number of singles and albums listed on each section's charts.

The types of changes that had appeared in the magazine over the years. The changes looked at included chart or column additions and chart names.

Whether color was used to highlight either section.

Once the nominal data from the study were collected a chi-square analysis was conducted to examine whether there was any reference to an

artist's skin color.

Reliability

Since the content analysis conducted required just measuring and counting, only one coder was used. An inter-coder reliability test was not done. Nevertheless, a pretest to outline and test what categories to examine in each section was conducted. Also, a simple and complex chi square were used to determine how real or significant the differences found in the magazine sections were.

Constraints

One of the problems faced by this methodology was the various media that cover black music on a daily basis. There was not enough time to examine how black artists are covered in all of them. Also, the generalizability of the study's conclusions to other magazines is limited because the time frame examined and of the possible differences in editorial styles.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

General

During this 1992 study the researcher examined three issues of Cash Box and Billboard magazines for each year from 1988 to 1992, a total of 15 issues, for any similarities and differences in the pop and rhythm and blues sections. Also, the researcher looked at any changes made in the type of coverage pop and rhythm and blues artists received from both magazines. The purpose of this examination was to see if there was any truth to black artists' claims that they had received different treatment than white artists in the magazines.

The content items that were examined included the number of charts, the types of charts, the length of each chart, and size of each photograph, the size of each article, the title of each section, and the title of each section's charts. Once this information was gathered, a chi square analysis was conducted to see if the differences and relationships were genuine or due to chance.

Analysis of Cash Box Content: Table I lists items that are found in Cash Box's rhythm and blues and pop section, and makes a comparison between the contents of the two.

TABLE I
ITEMS FOUND IN CASH BOX'S
RHYTHM AND BLUES AND POP SECTIONS

Pop	Rhythm and Blues
The section contained a column which discussed what artists were doing career-wise on the east coast each week.	The rhythm and blues section only included one column that appeared periodically.
The section also contained a column which discussed what artists and record companies were doing on the west coast each week.	
The section had an album chart that listed 200 recordings.	The album chart found in this section listed 75 recordings.
Photographs of various rhythm and blues and pop artists were found in this section.	The section did include photographs of various rhythm and blues and pop artists.
The section's singles chart also included photographs of the artists of the three most popular songs.	As in the pop section the singles chart had photographs of the artists of the three most popular songs.
The section's singles chart was highlighted with some color.	The rhythm and blues singles chart did include some color in a few issues.
The section's columns did include photographs.	The column in this section did include photographs.
Rhythm and blues artists were included on the section's album and singles charts.	

Table I (Continued)

Pop	Rhythm and Blues
Rhythm and blues artists were included on the section's album and singles charts.	Pop artists were included on the section's album and singles charts.
The pop album chart did include color and photographs of artists.	The section's album chart did not include color or photographs of artists like the pop album chart did.
Articles about various artists and industry events were found in this section.	No articles were found in the rhythm and blues section.
The section's singles chart listed 100 recordings by various artists.	The rhythm and blues section's singles chart had 100 recordings listed on it.
	Black Music Month was spotlighted in addition to the regular section each summer.

Table I shows that both section's singles chart lists 100 recordings. Also, both sections included photographs, articles and columns. Both pop and rhythm and blues artists can be found on each section's album and singles charts.

Nevertheless, the table shows that the pop section's album chart is longer. Also, the pop section included two more columns than the rhythm and blues section. Finally, no articles were found in the rhythm and blues section.

Table II lists the changes that were made to Cash Box's rhythm and

blues and pop section over the past five years.

TABLE II

CASH BOX
SECTION CHANGES

Rhythm and Blues	Pop
The section's name changed from "Black Contemporary" to "Rhythm and Blues."	The section's album chart had pictures added to it.
A column for rap and dance music was added to the section.	The section's singles chart had pictures added to it.
The section's column name was changed from "The Beat" to "Rhythm and Blues."	The section's album chart had MTV's top 20 videos list added to it.
The section's singles chart had pictures added to it.	

Table II shows that Cash Box changed the name of its "Black Contemporary" section to "Rhythm and Blues." Secondly, a rap and dance music chart was added to the rhythm and blues section. Also, three photographs were added to each section's singles chart.

Table III depicts the total area in square inches and percent devoted to Cash Box's rhythm and blues photographs, articles, and columns.

TABLE III
CASH BOX ARTICLES, COLUMNS, AND PICTURES
 AREA IN SQUARE INCHES AND PERCENT
 "RHYTHM AND BLUES"

Year	Articles	Columns	Photographs	Total
1988	0 (0%)	185.27 (75%)	62.44 (25%)	247.71 (100%)
1989	281.68 (44%)	99.92 (16%)	253.04 (40%)	634.64 (100%)
1990	0 (0%)	120.73 (49%)	123.51 (51%)	244.24 (100%)
1991	14.32 (46%)	193.99 (63%)	99.80 (32%)	308.11 (100%)
1992	60.97 (20%)	22.88 (7%)	222.61 (73%)	306.46 (100%)
Total	356.97 (21%)	622.79 (35%)	761.40 (44%)	1,741.16 (100%)

Table V depicts the total area devoted to Cash Box's articles, and columns in square inches and percent.

TABLE IV
CASH BOX ARTICLES, COLUMNS, AND PICTURES AREA
 IN SQUARE INCHES AND PERCENT "POP"

Year	Articles	Columns	Photographs	Total
1988	792.34	190.33	453.12	1,435.79

TABLE IV (Continued)

Year	Articles	Columns	Photographs	Total
	(55%)	(13%)	(32%)	(100%)
1989	396.48 (28%)	456.41 (32%)	571.57 (40%)	1,424.46 (100%)
1990	0 (0%)	265.83 (62%)	161.45 (38%)	427.28 (100%)
1991	118.54 (19%)	231.58 (38%)	264.49 (43%)	614.61 (100%)
1992	47.29 (11%)	263.45 (60%)	130.27 (29%)	443.01 (100%)
Total	1,354.65 (31%)	1,407.60 (32%)	1,580.90 (36%)	4,343.15 (100%)

Table III and IV shows that more space in square inches and percent was devoted to Cash Box's pop articles, columns, and pictures than was devoted to Cash Box's rhythm and blues pictures, articles, and columns. The item receiving the most space in both sections during the five-year period was photographs.

Also the data showed that the space devoted to articles, columns and pictures changed in the rhythm and blues and pop section from year to year. In fact, in 1989 there was more space devoted to rhythm and blues pictures, columns and articles.

Cash Box Chi Square Analysis

The chi square calculated for Cash Box's pop and rhythm and blues photographs, articles, and columns were so or under. This may indicate that the differences found in the two section's content occurred by chance and not done intentionally by editors.

Analysis of Billboard Content

Table V lists items that were found in Billboard's rhythm and blues and pop section.

TABLE V

BILLBOARD SECTION SIMILARITIES
AND DIFFERENCES

Pop	Rhythm and Blues
The album chart in this section listed 200 recordings.	The rhythm and blues album chart listed 100 recordings.
There were 100 singles listed on the section's singles chart.	The singles chart in this section also listed 100 recordings.
There was a singles spotlight column found in the section.	A singles spotlight column was also in this section.
The section contained two columns for pop news.	There was one column found in the section for rhythm and blues news.
A singles sales and airplay chart was included in this section.	A rhythm and blues singles sales and airplay chart was also included.

TABLE V (Continued)

Pop	Rhythm and Blues
The section included a singles by label chart.	Also included in this section was a singles by label chart.
The section contained a singles action chart.	A singles action chart was contained in the rhythm and blues section.
Articles and pictures were included in the section.	Rhythm and blues articles and pictures were also found in this section.
A pop power pick playlist was contained in the section.	A rhythm and blues power pick playlist was contained in the section.
Rhythm and blues artists were listed on the pop album and singles chart.	Pop artists were listed on the rhythm and blues singles and pop chart.
Color was used on the section's singles chart to spotlight the most popular singles.	Color was not used to highlight the section's singles chart.
The average number of power pick playlist printed in the section was two.	The average number of power picks playlist printed in the section was eight.
The section's album chart was also highlighted with color.	The album chart was not highlighted with any color.
The section was divided into two parts. Part of it was found before the rhythm and blues section and part was found after the rhythm and blues section.	The rhythm and blues section was grouped together and followed part of the pop section.
Rhythm and blues music were spotlighted in a special section each June or July.	Pop music in general was not spotlighted. However, groups and artists like Michael Jackson and New Kids on the Block were spotlighted individually.

Table V shows that both Billboard's rhythm and blues and pop sections contained an album and singles chart. However, while the rhythm and blues singles chart listed the same number of recordings as the pop chart its album chart did not.

The pop album chart listed 200 recordings and the rhythm and blues chart listed 100 recordings. The rhythm and blues singles chart listed 100 singles and the pop singles chart listed 100 singles.

Finally, while the pop album and singles charts were highlighted with color, the rhythm and blues charts were not. Also, rhythm and blues artists were listed on the pop album and singles chart.

Table VI lists the changes that were made to Billboard's rhythm and blues and pop sections over the five year period.

TABLE VI
BILLBOARD SECTION CHANGES

Rhythm and Blues	Pop
The section's name changed from "Black Contemporary" to "Rhythm and Blues" in 1990.	The singles spotlight column was added to the section in 1989.
A "Singles Sales" and "Airplay" charts name changed to "Top Singles Sales" and "Radio Monitor" in 1992.	A rap singles chart was added to the section in 1989.
The section's "The Beat" column changed columnists in 1992.	A picture was added to the singles spotlight column in 1989.
	The singles by label chart was deleted from the section in 1989.

Table VI shows that Billboard editors changed the name of the "Black Contemporary" section to "Rhythm and Blues" in 1990. Also, a singles spotlight column was added to the rhythm and blues section in 1989. Finally, in 1992 the name of the pop and rhythm and blues' singles sales and airplay charts was changed to "Top Single Sales" and "Radio Monitor" respectively.

Table VII depicts the total area devoted to Billboard's rhythm and blues pictures, articles, and columns in square inches and percent.

TABLE VII

BILLBOARD ARTICLES, COLUMNS, AND PICTURES
AREA IN SQUARE INCHES AND PERCENT
"RHYTHM AND BLUES"

Year	Articles	Columns	Photographs	Total
1988	119.21 (33%)	198.81 (54%)	48.77 (13%)	366.82 (100%)
1989	231.65 (41%)	243.75 (43%)	88.92 (16%)	564.32 (100%)
1990	200.06 (37%)	248.14 (45%)	98.72 (18%)	546.92 (100%)
1991	163.74 (41%)	163.12 (41%)	70.41 (18%)	397.27 (100%)
1992	281.61 (53%)	173.13 (32%)	78.66 (15%)	533.40 (100%)
Total	996.27 (41%)	1,026.98 (43%)	385.48 (16%)	2,408.73 (100%)

Table VIII depicts the total area devoted to Billboard's pop, pictures, articles, and columns in square inches and percent.

TABLE VIII
BILLBOARD ARTICLES, COLUMNS AND PICTURES
AREA IN SQUARE INCHES AND PERCENT POP

Year	Articles	Columns	Photographs	Total
1988	515.39 (51%)	419.25 (41%)	79.36 (8%)	1,014.00 (100%)
1989	390.64 (45%)	404.23 (46%)	76.96 (9%)	871.83 (100%)
1990	346.32 (35%)	393.11 (41%)	229.03 (24%)	968.46 (100%)
1991	437.77 (38%)	502.06 (44%)	202.98 (18%)	1,142.81 (100%)
1992	49.55 (8%)	530.78 (82%)	63.32 (10%)	643.65 (100%)
Total	1,739.67 (37%)	2,249.43 (48%)	651.65 (14%)	4,640.75 (100%)

Tables VII and VIII shows that over the five-year period studied more space in square inches was devoted to articles in both sections. The item receiving the smallest amount of space was pictures.

The section receiving the most in terms of overall space was the pop section. Its total space in square inches was 4,640.75. The rhythm and blues section total space was 1,880.66.

Billboard Chi Square Analysis

The individual chi squares calculated between Billboard's pop and rhythm and blues articles, photographs, and columns were .50 or under. This may mean that the differences found were due to chance and not because the majority of the artists discussed in one section are black.

Comparison of Cash Box and Billboard Content

Table IX lists the similarities and differences found between Cash Box and Billboard magazines.

TABLE IX
CASH BOX AND BILLBOARD SIMILARITIES
AND DIFFERENCES

<u>Billboard</u>	<u>Cash Box</u>
The magazine's rhythm and blues and pop singles chart listed 100 recordings but did not include pictures.	The magazine's pop album chart listed 200 recordings and included pictures.
The magazine's rhythm and blues section included an album chart which listed 100 recordings and didn't include pictures.	The magazine's pop and rhythm and blues charts were highlighted with color.
The magazine did change the title of its "Black Contemporary" section to "Rhythm and Blues."	The magazine's rhythm and blues and pop singles charts listed 100 recordings and included pictures.
The magazine included columns in its rhythm and blues and pop section.	The magazine's rhythm and blues section included an album chart which listed 75 recordings.

TABLE IX (Continued)

<u>Billboard</u>	<u>Cash Box</u>
The magazine's pop and rhythm and blues sections did include articles.	The magazine did change the title of its "Black Contemporary" section to "Rhythm and Blues."
The magazine did include single and album reviews.	The magazine did have columns in its rhythm and blues and pop section. The magazine's pop and rhythm and blues section included pictures.
The magazine had a section for country, jazz, and gospel music.	The columns in the magazine's two section included pictures.
The magazine spotlighted black music month once a year.	The magazine had a section for country, jazz, and gospel music.
The magazine did have columns in its rhythm and blues and pop section.	The magazine spotlighted black music month once a year.
The magazine's pop and rhythm and blues section included pictures.	The magazine's record reviews included pictures of all the artist's record covers.
The columns in the magazine's two sections included pictures.	
The magazine's pop album chart listed 200 recordings and did not include pictures.	
The magazine's pop singles charts were highlighted with color.	

Table IX shows that both Cash Box and Billboard magazines included a singles and album chart. Both magazines included columns in other rhythm and blues and pop sections. Finally, both magazines changed the

name of their "Black Contemporary" section to rhythm and blues. In addition, the magazines spotlighted black music month during the summer of each year.

Finally, the table shows that there was a difference in the magazine's rhythm and blues album chart. Cash Box only listed 75 albums and Billboard listed 100. Secondly, Cash Box included color and pictures on its rhythm and blues album and singles charts. Billboard, on the other hand, did not include any pictures or color on its rhythm and blues charts.

While Billboard used a regular columnist for its sections, Cash Box did not. Cash Box used guest columnists for its rhythm and blues section.

Table X depicts the total area in square inches and percent devoted to Cash Box and Billboard's rhythm and blues photographs, articles, and columns over the past five years.

TABLE X

CASH BOX AND BILLBOARD ARTICLES, COLUMNS
AND PHOTOGRAPH AREA IN SQUARE INCHES AND PERCENT
RHYTHM AND BLUES

Section	<u>Cash Box</u>	<u>Billboard</u>
Articles	356.97 (21%)	996.27 (41%)
Columns	622.79 (35%)	1,026.98 (43%)
Photographs	761.4 (44%)	385.48 (16%)

TABLE X (Continued)

Section	<u>Cash Box</u>	<u>Billboard</u>
Articles	356.97	996.27
Total	1,741.16 (100%)	2,408.73 (100%)

Table X shows that Billboard devoted more total space to its rhythm and blues articles, columns, and photographs. However, when examining the categories separately it shows Cash Box devoted more space to photographs.

Table XI depicts the total area in square inches and percent devoted to Cash Box's rhythm and blues section and Billboard's pop section.

TABLE XI

CASH BOX AND BILLBOARD ARTICLES, COLUMNS,
AND PHOTOGRAPH AREA IN SQUARE INCHES
"RHYTHM AND BLUES" VS. "POP"

Section	<u>Cash Box</u> Rhythm and Blues	<u>Billboard</u> Pop
Articles	356.97 (21%)	1,739.67 (38%)

TABLE XI (Continued)

Columns	622.79 (35%)	1,026.98 (43%)
Photographs	761.40 (44%)	385.48 (16%)
Total	1,741.16 (100%)	2,408.73 (100%)

Table XI shows that Billboard's pop section was larger in terms of space and square inches. The area that received the most space was the columns. The photographs received less space than Cash Box photographs.

Table XII depicts the total area in square inches and percent devoted to Cash Box's pop section and Billboard's rhythm and blues section.

TABLE XII

CASH BOX AND BILLBOARD ARTICLES, COLUMNS,
AND PHOTOGRAPH AREA IN SQUARE INCHES AND PERCENT
"RHYTHM AND BLUES" VS. "POP"

Section	<u>Cash Box</u> Pop	<u>Billboard</u> Rhythm and Blues
Articles	1354.65 (31%)	996.27 (41%)
Columns	1407.60 (33%)	1026.98 (43%)
Photographs	1580.90 (36%)	385.48 (16%)

TABLE XII (Continued)

Total	4343.15 (100%)	2408.73 (100%)
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Table XII shows that Cash Box's pop section devoted more space to articles, columns and photographs. The category receiving the most space was photographs.

Cash Box and Billboard Chi Square Analysis

The chi square calculated between the two magazines rhythm and blues articles, columns, and photographs showed that while visual differences were found none were significant. Maybe there were differences because Billboard is a larger magazine and covers more news on a weekly basis.

The chi square calculated between the articles, columns, and photographs in the magazines pop and rhythm and blues sections showed the differences found were not real and probably due to chance. This may mean that the differences found between the two magazines, was due to differences in editorial decisions.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

In this study the researcher wanted to see if the claims that black artists and record company executives have made about the unequal coverage black artists received in music trade publications in comparison to the coverage white artists received were valid.

To conduct this study a content analysis of the rhythm and blues section and pop section and talent section of Cash Box and Billboard magazines was done. The magazines used included 15 Cash Box and 15 Billboard magazines randomly selected from the period January 1988, to September 1992.

The hypothesis that was tested was:

There are no significant differences in the treatment black and white artists received in Cash Box and Billboard magazines overall or individually.

When comparing both magazines the researcher found that Billboard devoted more space to its pop and rhythm and blues sections than Cash Box did. The total square inches devoted to Billboard's pop and rhythm and blues sections was 7,049.48 compared with 6,080.31 square inches in Cash

Box.

Secondly, Billboard included more information about music videos, music retail, and album production. Some things Billboard included that Cash Box did not were a singles spotlight column, a power playlists chart, and a singles action chart in both sections.

Also, while both magazines did not refer to the rhythm and blues section as black contemporary, the term "black music" was still used. Both magazines spotlighted black music month in a special section each summer. In this section, the editors discussed what record companies and artists would be doing during the coming year to promote and sell black music.

Another difference found between Cash Box and Billboard's pop and blues sections was the length of the charts. In both magazines the rhythm and blues album charts were shorter than the pop album charts.

The Billboard rhythm and blues album chart listed 100 albums and its pop album chart listed 200 albums. The Cash Box rhythm and blues chart listed 75 albums and its pop chart listed 200 albums.

When looking at each magazine, the researcher found that the pop section was the largest in both magazines. The total square inches devoted to Cash Box's pop section was 4,345.15. The total square inches devoted to the magazine's rhythm and blues section was 1,735.16.

The total area devoted to pop photographs, columns, and articles in Billboard was 4,640.75 square inches. The area devoted to the magazine's rhythm and blues section was 2,408.73.

The above findings indicate that part of the hypothesis tested during

this study to be unsupported. While there were differences found between both magazine's pop and rhythm and blues sections, individually, the differences were not significant in either Cash Box or Billboard.

As for the magazines overall, there was no statistically significant difference in coverage found between the two. Overall Billboard devoted more area to its pop and rhythm and blues sections combined than Cash Box did.

Also, on an individual basis the greatest difference was found between the two magazines' rhythm and blues sections. While Billboard devoted 2,408.73 square inches to its rhythm and blues section, Cash Box devoted only 1,735.16 square inches.

Conclusions

This chart success by black artists seems to indicate that black artists were not being shut out of the magazines' pop section. While it may have taken artists longer to top the pop chart in the past, this is not the case anymore. In fact, black artists have gained more presence since Billboard editors started basing their charts on "soundscan," an electronic system that measures sales at record stores immediately.

This growth in black artist's popularity was also noted by author Arnold Shaw, when in his 1970 book The World of Soul: Black America's Contribution to the Pop Music Scene he wrote:

Pop music today is like a satellite drawn by the huge

gravitational pull of black sound. Black artists like brash Jimi Hendrix, troubled Aretha Franklin, explosive James Brown, and young Stevie Wonder vaulted to the top of the best seller lists. In the country's plush clubs, hotel rooms, and college concert halls there is a growing demand for the Little Richards, Fats Dominos, Chuck Berrys, and all the black stars of the R&B era. And the number of white cats imitating spades continues to multiply both here and abroad.¹

During the week of March 9, 1993, eight of the top 10 songs on Billboard's pop singles chart were rhythm and blues or rap songs. This followed the week of January 9, 1993, when the entire top 10 was made up of rap or rhythm and blues songs.

Also, while the rhythm and blues charts in both magazines listed fewer albums than the pop charts there were other music sections that did also. In Billboard the country music album chart listed just as many recordings as the rhythm and blues chart did, 100. The Cash Box album chart in both sections listed 75 recordings.

While some artists may have said the rhythm and blues chart length was based on race, that reason could not be given for length of the country chart. The majority of the artists on the country chart are white. Also, a quick look at artists who were on the rhythm and blues charts in both magazines showed that not all of them were black. White British singer George Michael's "Faith" album was named the number one rhythm and blues album in 1989.

Such chart action by various recording artists should show black artists that regardless of their race they can be just as or more successful on the pop chart. In addition, the trade publications are reporting the

information they receive from radio stations. So the publications may not be where the unequal treatment occurred. Maybe the radio stations and record stores are where the unequal treatment occurred. They are sites where the activity happens and where the magazines get their information from.

Recommendations

Examining the space and content devoted to the two magazines pop and blues sections is just one way the magazines could have been examined. Other researchers studying this topic may want to examine the content of the articles in the jazz, country or gospel sections of the magazine to see if any references to an artists' race were made negatively and unrelated to their music.

Secondly, other researchers may want to look at the charting system used by the magazines since that was the major complaint of black artists. Such a study could look at the number of stations monitored for each section and how often the stations were monitored each week. Also, the study could determine why one trade magazine reported a single as number one longer than another magazine.

With regard to the charting system researchers could examine how programmers go about compiling their playlist. It would be interesting to find out why radio stations in the same town will start playing the same record at different times and in different rotations. One radio station may label a record a new release when another station has already played a new

single from the artist's same album.

In addition to studying magazines and radio stations, researchers could examine how pop and rhythm and blues videos are programmed during the day on Music Television (MTV) and Video Hits One (VH1). Although black videos are played on both channels only the most popular get played often. It would be interesting to learn why an artist's video is shown on one channel and not on another.

Concluding Comment

With the wide range of chart success black artists have received for various albums and videos, it is almost safe to say that the rhythm and blues chart could be eliminated. While this may help with chart and industry news redundancy it could lead to more blacks complaining that they are being overlooked again.

However, that is not true with the past and present chart success of so many artists. The artists have to keep competitive and know what type of music the public likes to hear. Success may come more quickly for some than for others.

Also, the fact that an artist has one successful single does not mean all of his other records will be successful. Some artists who were famous during the 1960's and 1970's are no longer recording because of poor record sales.

The thing black artists have to remember is that regardless of when they receive a number one pop hit they are not being overlooked because of

color. There are some white or non-rhythm and blues artists who have not received number one hits also.

Endnotes

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