



Trip-Hop and Massive Attack at The Montreux Jazz Festival

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Introduction

Unless one is deeply interested in music, Trip-Hop is not a term that an average music listener will be familiar with, not to mention have the ability to describe it. As it turns out, this is also a tricky task even for people who are active music listeners or may have even consciously listened to the genre. Usually a hand-wavy description based on allusions to more approachable music is the best one can get. This is the reason for which studying this genre is even more intriguing: since one can't usually pinpoint clear elements of characterization, we need to make use of other methods to understand the genre.

Luckily, one tool provides us with a particularly original take on the matter. Those are the archives of the Montreux Jazz Festival. Since the festival have been held, it has been a deep tradition to record whenever possible all the concerts that come through. This gave birth to an incredible collection of archives that can be viewed and studied extensively. More pertinently to our topic however, those archives include concerts labeled as Trip-Hop. As a result, Trip-Hop will be studied in the entailing sections through the lens of those archives.

To begin with an attempt will be made at the characterization of the genre, which involves a dive into the musical contribution to the matter, as well as political engagement which also contributes greatly to the genre.

This will be followed by an analysis of the presence of Trip-Hop at the Montreux Jazz Festival, and an introduction to Massive Attack, a band which is perhaps most closely associated with Trip-Hop. This finally gives us the tools to analyze the way in which Trip-Hop and the Montreux Jazz Festival come together, and more specifically how Massive Attack manages to portray it on the iconic stages of Montreux.

Chapter 1: A brief overview of Trip-Hop

Trip-Hop as a musical genre

To analyze the presence of Trip-Hop at the Montreux jazz festival, it is first and foremost necessary to understand what is truly meant by the term, and the characteristic musical elements that lead to classification of musical pieces as such. This is central to the topic, because it becomes very difficult to pinpoint exactly what Trip-Hop is, and this may be due to it generally being associated more with a vibe rather than a well-defined musical framework. Perhaps the simplest contrasting example is Blues, where the 12-bars, 3-chords and their respective arrangements are all the necessary cues for genre identification and classification. Despite all of this, there exist some attempts at characterizing it, for instance from Rick Snoman who describes Trip-Hop as an “eclectic mix of acoustic and electronic instruments, combining ideas from RnB, hip-hop, dub, ambient, industrial, and jazz”¹. Others may think of it as the British response to American Hip-Hop, which at the time in the early 90s was experiencing immense popularity. The complexity of Trip-Hop and its origins requires a rather more thorough analysis, and while this paper is not a reiteration of facts about the genre, an overview of both the atmospheric and technical elements is provided for better context.

From an atmospheric point of view, many of the Trip-Hop albums and songs that came out in the 90s were attributed with a slow, dark, nostalgic, and depressing ambience. It has been described as “Music dug up from under the earth or heard in the pouring rain on your walk home at night”². Some such examples lie in the albums *Dummy* by Portishead, or *Mezzanine* by Massive Attack wherein *Mysterons* and *Angel*, the opening tracks respectively, make for excellent introductions to the atmosphere the genre exhibits. We can give credit to several musical techniques that allow for this ambience to come forward.

It was very common to use old records to sample both melodies and drum parts. While those samples required some sound processing to fit the new song, no effort was usually made to clean up the sound of the recording, which allowed a spirit of rawness to be maintained. Additionally, it was common to sample records at a lower rate, and bit resolution, to deliberately worsen the quality of sound, purposefully introducing distortion, and even in some cases making no effort to remove the underlying vinyl ‘crackle’³. Furthermore, speeding up the recording and sampling it at a lower bit rate (8 or 12-bit) only to slow it down again, alters the

¹ Snoman, 2009, p.214

² Muggs, 2021

³ Snoman, 2009, p.214

nature of the sound significantly and depending on the parameters of speed, sampling rate and sampling resolution, can change both the pitch and the tempo, disrupting the recording's quality in the process. Extreme time stretching and compression was also used. In some cases, the recording could be played through speakers and re-recorded using a low-quality microphone or pre-amp. Vast amounts of compression were also often employed to make beats as heavy as possible⁴.

Coming back to the previous examples, this grunge feel is much more present on the Portishead album, while Massive Attack manages to express the broodiness in a more orderly manner, although breaks away from this cleanness are often experienced.

We will now look a little bit further at a selection of musical elements that help exhibit the ambience of Trip-Hop. Two aspects which are central to the musical analysis are the natures of the drum rhythms and bass lines. One can characterize their co-existence to be minimalistic bass lines and clear percussive sounds tied together to form a very united and bound together underlying rhythm, but this of course is not universal across all works. As mentioned above, these sounds are often sampled from old jazz records⁵, but it was also very common to use drum machines and sequencers, such as the Roland TR-808 and TR-909, in the production process. Figure 1 below demonstrates what such a rhythm may look like if one was to program it. It represents a computer software involving a grid, where the rows correspond to the various types of percussive instruments/sounds (Bass Drum, Hi-Hat, Clap etc.) and the vertical lines represent the beats, among which the darker lines separate the grid into 4 measures (indexed in the top-most row). This representation is more applicable to this study, particularly due to the

⁴ Snoman, 2009, p. 319

⁵ Reynolds, 2007

common use of drum-machines in Trip-Hop, the programming of which is made simple given the use of such a schema.

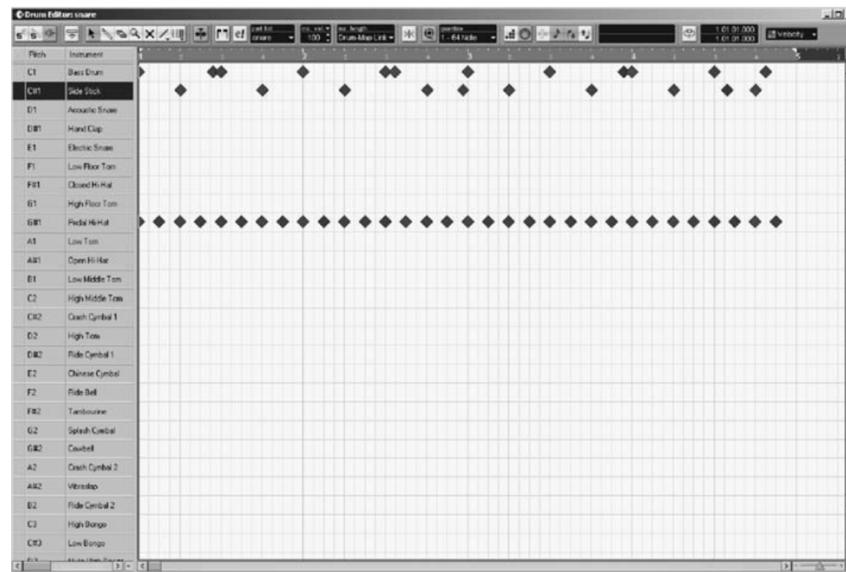


Figure 1: A typical Trip-Hop rhythm⁶

The Trip-Hop bass/kick drum varies from being low and boomy to bright and snappy, with the fundamental idea of keeping the timbre very basic. For the snare drums, sound processing techniques are also employed on raw drum samples with the aim of producing a click rather than a thwack⁷. Since jazz and Hip-Hop are two pillars of Trip-Hop, the drum rhythms are more complex than a simple 4 bar rock drum rhythm. An example lies in the song *Pumpkin* by Tricky from his album *Maxinquaye* which not only uses a less common 6/8 rhythm, but also experiments with different drum timbres through gentle playing of the instrument and extensive use of toms and shakers throughout the track.

The ultimate characteristic remains however to keep the bass and the drum tracks quite reserved in terms of spectral complexity, and to give as much space as possible for subtle clean melodies coming from lead instruments and vocals. This large atmospheric contrast between the bass/drum tracks on one side and the melodic vocals and lead instrumentation, technically speaking, originates from the reluctance to fill too much of the frequency spectrum with low frequency sounds. Sung melodies, and in particular female vocals, are sometimes treated with chorus effects and reverberation to add richness and layers to the sound. Keeping the low end of the spectrum very separate from the high end amplifies the contrast between the usually rhythmic bass and melodic treble. We credit Trip-Hop's dub influence, with the heavy bass

⁶ Snoman, 2009, p. 317

⁷ Snoman, 2009, p. 316

sounds, but this is employed with care, as to not overpower the high-end⁸. For this reason, very little effects are used for the bass line.

A perfect example is the first track of Massive Attack's 1991 debut album *Blue Lines* titled *Safe from Harm*. Not only do we hear elements of sampling through regular vinyl scratches and vocal cues, but the clear regular bassline and drum sequence playing in a loop leaves space for the beautifully contrasting organs/strings, seemingly played through a digital synthesizer, that slowly hover into the song around the 23rd second. Along with the magnificently sung gospel-like female vocals, it produces a misty atmosphere. This also happens to represent the fact that lead instrumentation rarely uses complicated riffs and is more a tool for setting the right ambience. Rap influences are also clearly observable through the male vocal hooks spoken by Massive Attack member Robert Del Naja (a.k.a. "3D"), alluding to what many people may refer to as slam poetry.

Much more sound techniques can be listed, each of which contributes to the nature of Trip-Hop; however, this is not central to the topic at hand. As it can be seen, no concrete framework can be defined for producing songs of this genre, hence a large emphasis on the atmosphere that songs induce and techniques through which this is achieved, as opposed to concrete musical properties. Nonetheless, these points open the door for a better discussion in the entailing sections and provide the context and tools necessary to investigate its presence at the Montreux Jazz Festival.

Trip-Hop as a platform for political engagement

When observing how Trip-Hop has come into existence in the early 90s we can spot a recurring feature in the form of political messages. One may argue that Trip-Hop is an appropriate genre for such political discourse: it is after all a form of alternative music that doesn't conform to pleasing norms of music listened in the popular context. In fact, it contrasts with the general notion of what popular music is: when asking the question of why popular music is so successful, we will commonly get answers saying that pop songs are upbeat, with catchy tunes and simple lyrics that are easy to sing along too. The simplicity in this is reason for which pop music is capable of appealing to an array of emotions that are most likely shared by a wide range of individuals. This is not the case for Trip-Hop.

Perhaps this is an aspect in which Trip-Hop is most closely associated with its American sibling Hip-Hop, which has a deep history, rooted all the way at the very origins of jazz music,

⁸ Snoman, 2009, p. 325

of manifesting freedom, providing a voice for the weak, and criticizing the cruel realities of the political systems.

Massive Attack's song *Hymn of the Big Wheel* is an early example of the band's interest in geopolitical issues. A fragment of the 3rd verse reads as follows:

*As a child's silent prayer, my hope hides in disguise
While satellites and cameras watch from the skies
An acid drop of rain recycled from the sea
It washed away my shadow, burnt a hole in me*

The Hymn of the Big Wheel, Massive Attack, 1991

While the intention of those words is subtle, and the purpose of this text is not a lyrical analysis, we do indeed observe a certain critique. We could interpret the acid drop of rain as a representation of the damage that humanity has done so far to our planet, and its portrayal as a weapon, burning a hole in the narrator, could symbolize the death of what it means to be human in general.

Some other examples exist as well. Tricky, widely considered one of the pioneers of Trip-Hop, and an early member of Massive Attack tackles such issues in his album *Maxinquaye*, tying those with personal and interpersonal issues of different sorts. Lyrically, the album is drenched with drug-induced pessimism and 'whispered odes to decadence', with lyrics referencing 'cultural decline, failed sexual intimacy and psychological fatigue'.⁹

The list goes on, and this demonstrates to what extent the messages transmitted through the lyrics of Trip-Hop songs complement the musical aspects, and both equally encapsulate what the genre is.

⁹ TV TROPES, 2022

Chapter 2: Trip-Hop at the Montreux Jazz Festival and Massive Attack

Presence of Trip-Hop at the MJF

The Montreux Jazz Festival, since the late 1960's is one of the most iconic and emblematic festivals in the world, not only for Jazz but also for many of the genres that descended from Jazz. It is one of the longest running jazz festivals of all time and is held annually for two weeks during the summer at the charming lakeside town of Montreux in Switzerland. In present times, over 200'000 spectators attend the festival each year.

Trip-Hop is not an alien term to Montreux. For as long as the event has been held, the variety of artists that have graced the stages of the festival has been immense. When exploring the line-ups from the past several years, and seeing what artists performed there, we may be surprised by the fact that those may not exactly represent what the widespread notion of Jazz is. However, when we dig more into the history of jazz and modern culture, we can often find that most of the music genres of today do indeed have jazz as a common ancestor, and the Montreux Jazz Festival is a celebration of exactly that: a ceremony and an homage to jazz, all its forms and the entirety of the ways in which it is capable to so beautifully manifest itself in music of so many kinds.

Naturally, following this mission and philosophy it is not a surprise that Trip-Hop is no exception to the rule, with a plethora of artists associated to the genre that have set foot on the iconic stages of Montreux. In the database of the Montreux Jazz Festival, which contains data about past performances, over 58 concerts have been labeled of the Trip-Hop genre, with artists such as Morcheeba, Portishead, Nightmares on Wax, Lamb and more.

One may argue that the overall emotion that Trip-Hop transmits is the reason for which 'Angel' by Massive Attack was used in the line-up announcement video of the 2018 Montreux Jazz Festival for the Auditorium Stravinsky stage¹⁰. In the video, three different songs are used as background music for a visual presentation of artists playing at three distinct areas of the festival, with the section corresponding to the Auditorium Stravinsky being last. Using Trip-Hop as background music for that section brings forward a captivating feeling of gravity and importance which ties perfectly with the fact that the Auditorium Stravinsky is simultaneously the largest venue at Montreux and the place where historically the biggest artists perform. In

¹⁰ Messieurs.ch, 2018

the given year, including Massive Attack some of the other artists announced were Young Fathers, Jamiroquai, Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds, and Jack White.

Massive Attack

Before we dive into their performances, it is useful to give a brief introduction to the group. The group's roots originate back to 1983 when the Wild Bunch was formed, which in the early 80s ended up being one of the most successful sound system and DJ collectives in the U.K. music scene. Their popularity made their events and parties "can't miss"¹¹ occasions, which was mainly due to their renowned seamless integration of musical styles ranging from punk and reggae to RnB.

After the collective ceased its activities in the late 80s, two members, Andrew "Mushroom" Vowles and Robert "3D" del Naja teamed up to form Massive Attack which initially was intended to be a production team, while another past Wild Bunch member, Nellee Hooper contributed as a part-time collaborator. Their first album *Blue Lines* features some other collaborations with Wild Bunch alums, most notably with Tricky, and while it didn't receive much commercial success, it did experience critical appraisal.

By that time, first mentions of the term 'Trip-Hop' already began to emerge, with releases of albums of the same kind all through the early 90s from among others Portishead, Björk, Tricky and more. This allowed the genre to enter mainstream territory. While the term was not joyfully accepted by most artists, Massive Attack continued to produce music just as if the classification didn't exist. Their debut release was followed by *Protection* in 1994, *Mezzanine* in 1998, *100th Window* in 2003 and *Heligoland* in 2010, all of which contributed to the definition of Trip-Hop, and the consolidation of Massive Attack's position as Trip-Hop pioneers. Their music very often fuses rap, electronica, dub and R&B, a combination that has been described as "ghostly, seductive sounds over sleepy beats."¹²

Over the course of Massive Attack's activities Del Naja's political involvement has also become increasingly present. Towards the beginning of their career, some Massive Attack tracks allude to political issues, such as *The Hymn of the Big Wheel* mentioned in the previous section. Regarding the track Del Naja said, "We ain't got no solutions to the

¹¹ ANKENY

¹² MICHEL, 2006

problems, we're just the same as everyone else living it. We're just pointing things out to ourselves, rather than to everyone else.”¹³

It is Massive Attack that will be the center of our focus moving forward. Because they are so closely associated to the genre, and because they have numerous appearances at Montreux, it is only natural to begin an analysis of Trip-Hop at the festival through their presence, and dive deeper into aspects of their concerts that are a foundation for a link between Trip-Hop and the festival.

¹³ MASSIVEATTACK.IE

Chapter 3: Massive Attack at the Montreux Jazz Festival

One may of course ask, to begin with, how can it possibly be that the festival managed to go so long without having had a performance from Massive Attack at the MJF. The band's debut at the festival in 2006 comes nonetheless over 15 years after the release of their debut album *Blue Lines*. The answer to this question is of course a matter of speculation. Ideas range from an overall lack of overlap between festival dates, and the band's tour plans throughout those years, or perhaps because at that time the band might have been too big (expensive) for the festival to play at the Miles Davis Hall, yet too small to be booked for the Auditorium Stravinsky. One thing however is certain, and it is that their every single appearance has been received with critical acclaim and has left the crowds ecstatic ¹⁴.

Massive Attack has since then performed 3 more times in 2010, 2014 and 2018: 4 performances that represent a very solid ground for the analysis of the presence of the genre. Unfortunately, their 2014 appearance has not been recorded, and therefore there are only 3 concerts that we can base ourselves on. The object of this section therefore is to explore how the previously discussed characteristics of Trip-Hop are perfectly captured by Massive Attack's performances at the festival while doing justice the three performances that have been recorded. This is going to be done in two parts: first, we look at the band's MJF performances of *Teardrop* at the 2006 and 2010 festivals, and secondly, we shift out focus to their most recent 2018 performance.

Performances of Teardrop at the 2006 and 2010 Montreux Jazz Festival

It is quite a curious phenomenon as to why this genre reached such popularity. Among the discography of Massive Attack, we often find songs that are incredibly atypical, and fail to conform to any popular norms, which in turn makes them not easily approachable and sometimes difficult to listen to. One song however remains very emblematic of Massive Attack, and it is 'Teardrop' from their 1998 album *Mezzanine*. Not only is this their most popular release, but it has been featured in popular culture, such as for instance in the title sequence for the critically acclaimed television series "House M.D.". The gloominess in Teardrop may be associated with the feeling of loss. Elizabeth Fraser the vocalist on the song, recorded her take not long after her boyfriend at the time, none other than Jeff Buckley, died in a drowning accident ¹⁵.

¹⁴ SWISSINFO, 2006

¹⁵ MASSIVEATTACK.IE

The song has been played every time, except their 2018 performance, and since the 2014 performance wasn't recorded, there are just two recordings of *Teardrop* at the festival that are available to us as an object of study: the 2006¹⁶ and 2010¹⁷ performances. The takes on the song are incredibly different.

In 2006 we observe a version on the song that is much more faithful to the record. A drum pattern begins playing, on what seems to be a primarily acoustic drum kit and is instantly recognized by the crowd. This is accompanied by the recognizable sound of a reverberated impact and guitar, which are very distinct to the song. Then the emblematic acoustic guitar comes in, perpetually playing the same note progression. The choice for the acoustic guitar is somewhat surprising, as on the recording the instrument is a harpsicord. LED lights line the back of the stage and set the mood for when the powerful low piano notes come in, and the groovy bassline. The vocals sung by Elizabeth Fraser sounds as if they have difficulty cutting through the mix, and it is not certain whether this effect is intentional. In any case the vocals provide a gentle envelope to the details of the song. The tension in the performance begins rising when a synthesizer sound comes in with a choir effect, before culminating and going back down to the classic bass and rhythm underlying drumming pattern and finally fading away.

The 2010 version of the song is quite different, and therefore even more interesting. The classic song is also instantly recognized; however, it becomes evident that it's far from its original form. This time, the pattern is played using a drum pad, creating sounds that are much more compressed and containing less timbral complexity. We hear clear clicks and dry thumps. The harpsicord riff is replaced by a synthesizer melody, only vaguely resembling the original. Hints of electric guitar notes are present in the background. The emphasis in this case is certainly on the vocals, because as soon as those appear, the instruments seem to recede. In this tour, Elizabeth Fraser was replaced by Martina Topley-Bird, and the show incorporated more visual elements. This provides a haunting Halloween vibe that is so often associated with Trip-Hop. It seems as if the crowd is eager for some development to take place, such as the entire band suddenly recreating the entirety of *Teardrop*'s structure without the minimalistic approach. However, this kind of development is only teased through more intense playing of the respective instruments and is never pursued fully. Instead, the ending of the song is accompanied by a beautiful solo played by a lone electric guitar.

¹⁶ MASSIVE ATTACK, 2006

¹⁷ MASSIVE ATTACK, 2010

It is important to ask ourselves why such a contrast between the performances was experienced between years. To begin with, for a first performance at Montreux in 2006, it is not surprising that Massive Attack opted for a more classical version of their song. On the other hand, having a stripped-down version, providing a different take on the song, while keeping it recognizable is also a technique many artists use in live performances to make the show more interesting, by going against the audience's expectations. This seems to be a rendition of *Teardrop* that was common to their 2010 tour, with other recordings available on the internet from the same year, portraying the song in the same form.¹⁸

What is amazing about both performances is that they bring forward two different facades of Trip-Hop in their own way, while using only one song to do so, and both performances very recognizably portraying the characteristics touched on in Chapter 1.

In any case, having two such beautifully contrasting performances grace the stages of the Montreux Jazz Festival, while both still preserve the nature of the Trip-Hop sound is remarkable and valuable to the annual celebration of music at Montreux.

Massive Attack at the 2018 Montreux Jazz Festival

It is certain that Massive Attack appearing at MJF quite late during their career has allowed the band to mature and truly create an image for itself with both their music genre, and the political messages transmitted through their artform.

With Robert Del Naja starting his work in art as a graffiti artist in the Bristol underground scene, he is no stranger to the alternative art scene. Known to be a close friend of Banksy, it is no surprise that his art isn't timid simultaneously with regards to political messages and visual aesthetics that accompany Massive Attack's performances at the MJF and beyond, with both aspects perfectly complementing themselves. Following the release of their 2016 EP titled "Ritual Spirit", Del Naja was touring and developing elements of a live show whose visual aspects would be created in collaboration with a London Based Practice called United Visual Arts (UVA), which specialized in the manipulation of light. His attention towards the visual aspect of the show emphasizes the strong link with his graffiti days. He observes a connection between displaying statements on the wall and displaying them with light and describes resemblance between the two art forms to be stemmed in transience. "Paintings would appear on the sides of trains that were travelling through cities and images would flash before people's eyes and then disappear again, until they were captured by

¹⁸ MASSIVEATTACK.IE, 2011

photographers. With the light show, it travels around, it appears for two hours in someone's hemisphere and then it disappears again.”¹⁹

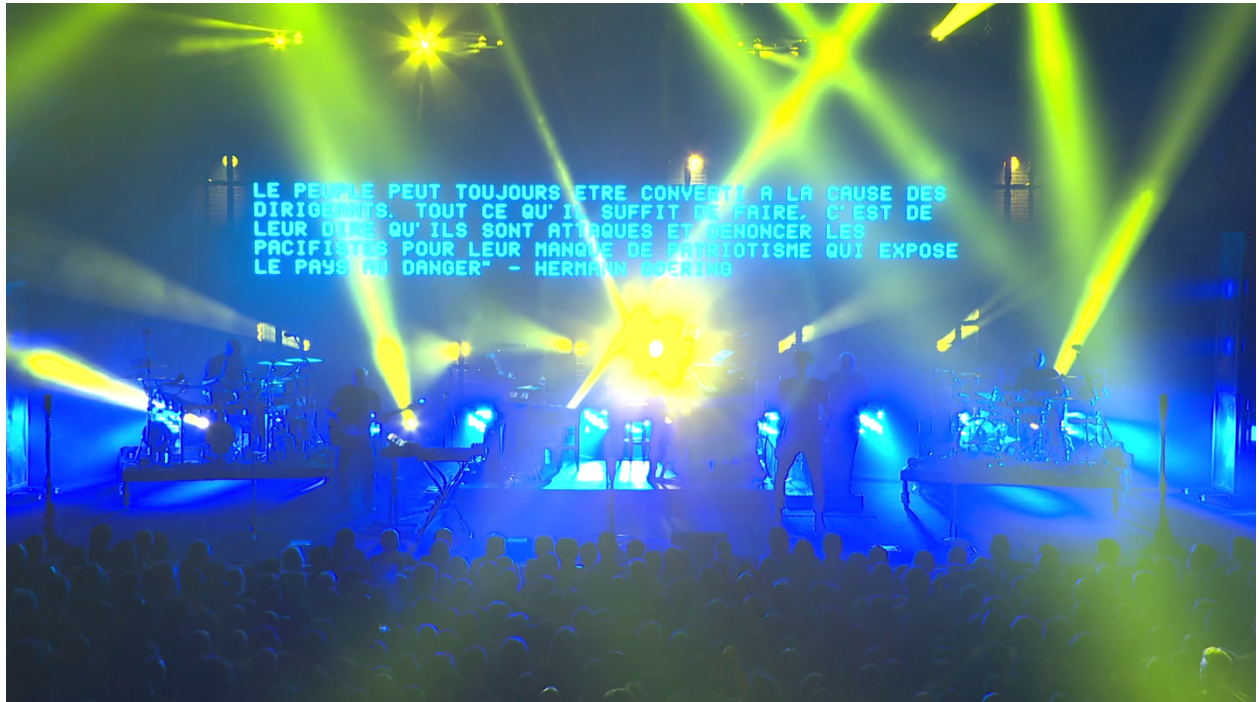


Figure 2: A still from Massive Attack's performance of "Eurochild" at the 2018 Montreux Jazz Festival

The result of this collaboration are visuals which remain very minimalistic and often accompany the show by displaying recent news headlines, and stark facts about the cruelties of the socio-economic situation around the world in our present times. Examples of those can clearly be observed in Figure 2 and Figure 3, both of which make use of a wide rectangle in the middle which strangely gives off a monolithic impression, such as the one famously present in '2001: A Space Odyssey'.

¹⁹ BLAGBURN, 2016

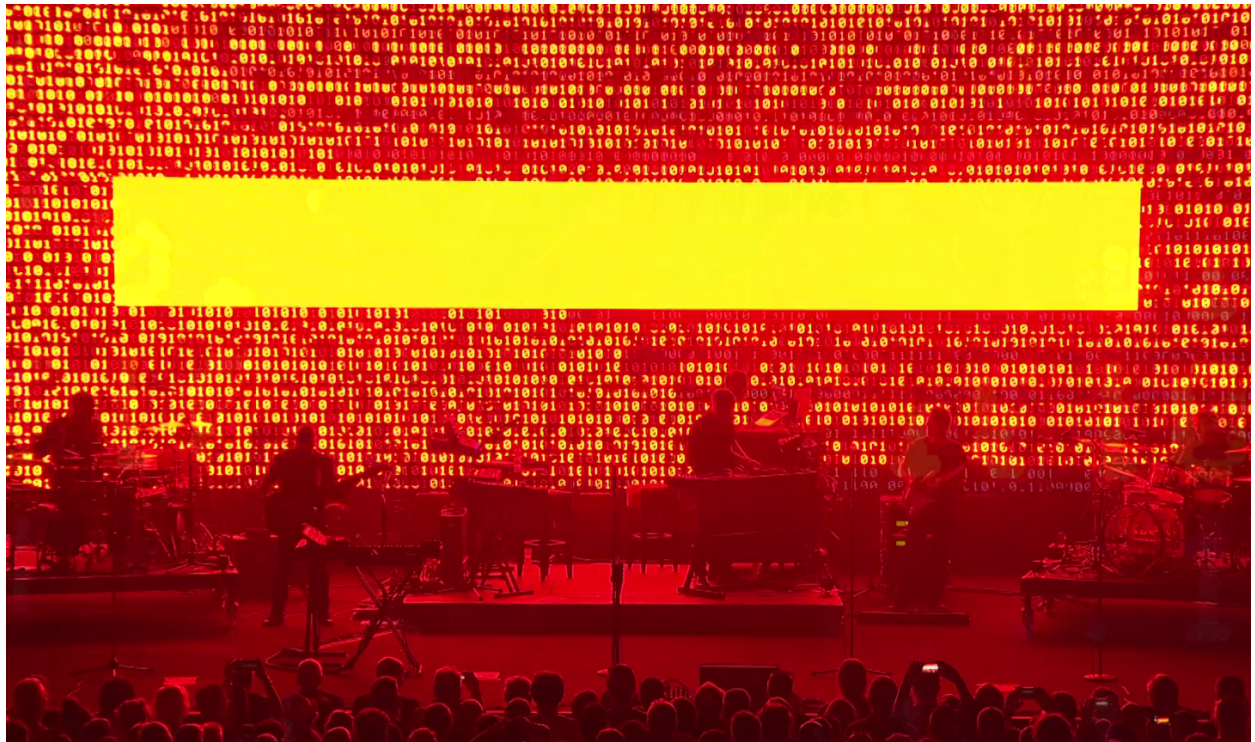


Figure 3: A still from Massive Attack's performance of "Future Proof" at the 2018 Montreux Jazz Festival

Enforcing the performance with visuals, while conveying a political message is clearly seen all throughout their 2018 performance of the song *Inertia Creeps*. The song consists of 3 verses and is neatly divided into three sections in a way that allows each section to contain one verse. Within each section, the verse is either accompanied by a chorus or an interlude/bridge. The ends and beginnings of each section are marked by the repeated strumming of an Eb minor chord on an electric guitar containing a hint of overdrive, which is followed by the sound of three notes (F#-G#-E) played on some oriental string instrument.

The light display accompanying this song consists mainly of news headlines that have been taken from local news outlets. They flash in plain text on the large LED screen behind the artists, reasonably quickly, but leaving enough time for the spectator to read. The theme of the headlines is different in each section, with regards to the severity of the news. In the first part, we are presented with shocking and unpleasant news, often related to world issues such as death, war and tragedy. Time consistent headlines such “Un accident de bus fait 47 morts en Inde”²⁰ (Bus accident kills 47 in India) or “Au Nicaragua, des milliers de manifestants anti-ortega”²¹ (In Nicaragua, thousands of anti-ortega demonstrators) accompany this section.

The second section takes a somewhat milder tone. The news headlines displayed are not necessarily positive, but certainly not negative. The headline “Le Mont-Blanc Express est

²⁰ LE MONDE AND AFP, 2018, 1

²¹ LE MONDE AND AFP, 2018, 2

sauvé par les Français”²² (The Mont-Blanc Express is saved by the French) appears, which happens to be from a 20min article from June 27th, 2018.

Finally in the final section the irony finally kicks in and the transition into it is accompanied using text such as the one seen in Figure 4 which reads '12 431 likes', alluding to social media where 'liking' a post was for a long time the only method of reacting to it, when in fact there is sometimes nothing to truly like about the post at hand.

The subsequent headlines seem to be taken from People's magazine article. Headlines include “Non, Kate Middleton n'a pas recyclé sa robe au mariage de Meghan et Harry”²³ (No, Kate Middleton did not recycle her dress at Meghan and Harry's wedding) and “La guerre du plus grand croque monsieur au monde est déclarée”²⁴ (The war for the world's biggest sandwich is declared). These clearly are a representation of the type of news that as humans we may blindly be interested with, and that catch the eye.



Figure 4: A still from Massive Attack's performance of "Inertia Creeps" at the 2018 Montreux Jazz Festival

Using such a display of irrelevant celebrity news gossip provides a juxtaposition of information with what was presented in the first section. All the headlines originate from articles published around June/July 2018, adding relevance to the spectator. This induces both guilt and self-reflection in the spectator and takes hits at our content hungry distraction seeking culture. As Francis Blagburn, describes it, those who have been to a Massive Attack show after

²² XFZ, 2018

²³ GIBERT, 2018

²⁴ 20Minutes, 2018

2016 are just as likely to have been made aware that the Japanese military is on alert to shoot down a North Korean rocket as they are that Tiffany from ‘Celebrity Big Brother’ has eyed up her housemate Scotty’s manhood in the shower and described it as ‘luscious’²⁵. The article was written after Blagburn attended the Massive Attack concert at the Downs Festival in Bristol on September 3rd, 2016.

There are many other ways in which the 2018 MJF performance is filled with political statements, and it furthermore shows how Massive Attack decides to inhabit that aspect of Trip-Hop while demonstrating that this aspect is also very much represented at the festival. It is after all a genre of music rooted in the underground art scene, which ultimately serves the purpose of providing the voice for underrepresented members of society.

²⁵ BLAGBURN, 2016

Conclusion

Trip-Hop is a difficult topic to study, specifically because it is part of a niche in musical culture. It by no means reached the popularity of Hip-Hop, and therefore was much less studied. This hasn't prevented it however, from being a well-recognized genre throughout the past 30-40 years. Some even find elements of Trip-Hop influence in music from the most recent years, even in high profile acts such as Billie Eilish, Lorde and Lana Del Rey which according to Joe Muggs bathe in those early 90s references. He also talks about how Alicia Keys' *Best of Me* from 2021 couldn't have been more Trip-Hop 'if it was made in a smoky Bristol basement in 1995.'²⁶

All things considered, Massive Attack represent a fair object of study with regards to Trip-Hop as a genre, and their presence at the festival. Their music ties together many of the Trip-Hop characteristics and has been widely celebrated at the festival.

Montreux's openness to such genres is also clearly demonstrated through how it opens its doors to such artists and allows them to flourish through the festival for two weeks during the summertime. Additionally, while on the notion of summer, the iconic aria 'Summertime' initially composed by George Gershwin, and so closely tied with the festival's history has had the honor of having its own Trip-Hop rendition, when Morcheeba performed their take of the song in their 1998 performance²⁷. As one may predict, it incorporated many of the aforementioned musical elements, and as a result could open the discussion for new topics, such as how a single song such as this could potentially be used as a 'control variable' in the study of comparisons and contrasts between musical genres.

²⁶ MUGGS, 2021

²⁷ GERSHWIN, 1998

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