Grandmaster Flash (1958-) Encyclopedia Article

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Grandmaster Flash (1958—)

Grandmaster Flash (Joseph Saddler) was a hip-hop pioneer. Using his skills as an electronic engineer he perfected the art of punch phasing and mixing by constructing the first twin-deck turntable using a mixer, headphones, and a monitor switch. Flash polished his technique on the "wheels of steel" and took the art of "scratching" to a new level. He has been imitated by rap deejays ever since. His quick mixing and scratching skills can be heard on his *The Adventures of Grandmaster Flash and the Wheels of Steel,* which was the first rap record to use samples. Flash began to add snippets of rhyme and boasting to his deejaying and soon formed The Furious Five, who did the rapping for him. Together they released the seminal track "The Message" (1982), a vivid portrayal of the underside of the American Dream in New York's urban ghettos. Flash's early experimenting with the new hip-hop genre helped to bring it out of abandoned buildings in the South Bronx and into the homes of millions worldwide.

Further Reading:

Fernando, S. H., Jr. *The New Beats: Exploring the Music Culture and Attitudes of Hip-Hop.* Edinburgh, Payback Press, 1995.

Larkin, Colin, editor. *The Guinness Who's Who of Rap, Dance and Techno.* London, Guinness Publishing, 1994.

Toop, David. *Rap Attack 2: African Rap to Global Hip-Hop.* London, Serpent's Tail, 1991.