

**EMERGE MEDIA FILMS, LLC.**

**PRESENTS**

A FILM BY MICHAEL WANGUHU

# *Hip-Hop Colony*

**A FILM ABOUT THE  
AFRICAN HIP-HOP EXPLOSION!**



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## **Film Overview**

Hip-hop is arguably one of the most influential cultures in the history of the World. It is a connector for youth across race, ethnicity, income, and geographic boundaries. HIP HOP COLONY, the documentary film takes you through a journey into the heart of East Africa, Kenya a former British colony, where hip-hop has firmly established its roots amongst the local citizens. HIP HOP COLONY takes an intimate look at African hip-hop, while establishing its genesis in Kenya.

This film is about the Hip Hop movement in Kenya. "Hip Hop Colony", draws the title from the fact that colonial era in Africa had a critical inspiration in the present African culture. Africa today, despite being free and independent, is still under the influence of a new breed of global colonization by the Hip Hop culture. Parallel to the colonial era in Africa, American mainstream hip-hop continues to invade traditional cultures around the world through its powerful influence.

Hip Hop in Kenya manifests in music and clothing styles that imitate the pattern of growth in the United States. Kenyan Hip Hop is remarkably similar to Hip Hop in the U.S. because countries most connected to the American media are quickly influenced by the culture. Currently, Hip-Hop is found in all corners of the earth. In most cases it starts as a form of imitation of what is heard coming from America, and develops into something that is no longer just Hip Hop, but a hybrid art form incorporating the native cultures.

Hip Hop Colony is a good example of what scholars call 'Mash Culture'. This is the idea that two or more cultures can come together creating a new culture, while retaining distinct elements from each culture.

Drawing from their own cultural traditions, the rappers and producers of Kenya started to develop their own form of music, no longer imitating or copying what was coming from the United States. Artists in Kenya now make their own music in their native tongues, creating an innovative style of music that is completely new to the world. This unique genre of music is what has come to be known as "Genge Music" in Kenya, "Bongo flavor" in Tanzania, "Kwaito" in South Africa among others.

## **Treatment**

Initially regarded as a passing fad, Hip hop was eagerly dismissed by the media outlets and the general public during its shallow inception in the early ninety's in Kenya.

Hip hop has firmly gained its roots in Kenya, while fusing its traditional music and drawing major influence from America. This fusion has led to a new entity-the birth of Genge Music. Filming the documentary in Kenya, producer/director Michael Wanguhu, enjoyed collaborative efforts from top-notch Kenyan producers, and reigning hip-hop acts past and present, seeking to expose a culture they have whole-heartedly embraced and it is also punctuated by footage of engaging live concert events. HIP HOP COLONY richly ties key elements of hip hop, flexibility and talent which continue to increase its dominance around the World.

This documentary chronicles the highlights of Kenyan hip-hop as Kenyan producers and artists, talk about the new phenomenon and the struggles they continue to face. It focuses on them as the embodiment of the Kenyan/U.S. connection, with far reaching insights into the homeland of Kenya.

The film parallels hip-hop's conception in the Bronx, with Kenyan culture and customs. The mixture of traditional culture and American influences are apparent. Kenyan hip-hop artists are featured as they take stage in front of thousands of young adoring fans who sing, and chant along their favorite tunes.

HIP HOP COLONY also focuses on the growth of hip-hop as a music industry. Hip-hop transforms into something relevant to the people, a quality that ensures its longevity. Rappers go from chanting party rhymes to writing about their surroundings and changes that need to be put into effect. With the last general elections in Kenya, politicians detected Hip-hop's influence and channeled a leading hip-hop tune by Gidi Gidi Maji Maji entitled "Unbwogable" as a political party anthem. The tune served to sweep a corrupt regime out of office with a land slide victory.

Hip-hop acts continue to grow as artists and entrepreneurs even though they sign loose-ended contracts that place them at the mercy of their producers and with little or no security, these artists continue to cast their spell to the unknowing public, while asserting their unique influence in different parts of the country.

The labors of these artists are starting to reap rewards as they are rapidly occupying the slots on local radio and TV stations that were formerly the preserve for US artists like Jay Z, Tupac, Snoop Dogg, DMX, LL COOL J, Methodman, Busta Rhymes, R. Kelly, Eve, Beyonce and Eminem amongst others.

The viewer gets the sense of excitement from the success of the artists and from the feeling that they are witnessing the beginning of a new and rejuvenated hip-hop culture.

The African influence on Hip-Hop is deep, and in making this connection, the viewers come to know more about Kenya. The majority of Americans think of Africa as one country, not understanding the history and legacy of the different colonial governments.

The film will show the newer connections that have come about through Hip-Hop music and highlight the issues and politics that affect youth and Hip Hop culture in both countries/continents.

This film expands the knowledge base of its viewers, it make a soul connection to the international Hip-Hop community and inspires the viewers. America has vaguely educated its citizens about Africa, and Kenyans have found a way to spread their own message though their music - "Genge Music" These artists enlighten the world about their life through the style and rhythm of their music so you get to see what the media does not show.

"Kenya is not just about lions, Giraffes and fast running men... it's also about studios and Hip-hop"- Tedd Josiah, Music Producer

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