

A Brief History of Beat-Boxing by DavidX

1980s – Introductions: Beat-boxing emerged in the USA in the 1980s and grew out of hip hop culture. It was created to provide a beat to support MCs when there was no DJ/sound system available. David describes the message of early beat-boxing as;

“peace, love and unity, and have fun and teach some kids in the street”.

Pioneers of beat boxing were Doug E Fresh, Biz Markie and hip hop trio The Fat Boys.



Fat Boys: http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=a65kmDFFl2g

Doug E Fresh 1986 Interview and Human Beatbox:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=2ARBgBeHY1w

1990s – New Innovations: Between the late ‘80s and early ‘90s, beatboxing disappeared as an artform. But when MC and human-beatboxer Rahzel combined singing and beatboxing on his cover of “If Your Mother Only Knew” in 1996, he brought beatboxing to the world’s attention. It had a big impact on people discovering the discipline and making it part of the mainstream as fans tried beat-boxing covers themselves.



Rahzel: http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=GtVONTy6FQ

2000s: At the start of the 21st century, beat-boxing became more technical and the first Human Beatbox Convention happened in London with beatbox artists from all over the world. Scratch from The Roots, and Kenny Muhammad marked this period.



Scratch and Eklips live on Radio France:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=ayALbNqzVfM

Kenny Muhammad wind technique, early 2000:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=D21CNg3Xwbs

New School: as beatboxing became an international discipline, different approaches appeared. New School beatbox was not limited to hip hop, but open to lots of different styles – for instance Dubstep or Drum ‘n’ Bass, or other styles. For some artists, for instance Bobby McFerrin, musicality was the most important consideration. Michael Winslow, who featured in movies such as Police Academy in the 1980s, is one of the most inspiring beatboxers, and many of the sounds you can hear in the clip (link below) are the precursor of sounds that are widespread today. ZeDe invented a new way to practice fast beat (TK technique) and scratch technique; Roxorloops is particularly

known for bongo-technique. Other artists were more interested in technical skill and the beatbox battles. Lots of people around the world got inspiration from Alem, 2015 World Champion from France, Reeps One from the UK and Skiller Fast, 2012 Beatbox Battle World Champion from Bulgaria.



Bobby McFerrin, the legend (interview):

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=ktotbE4rN2g

Michael Winslow:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=61ZEuu0qVT4>

Roxorloops: http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=AOfnPwEfSVM

Reeps One (interview):

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=JbrCfBUzo4Y

Doug E Fresh beat-box battle 2010:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=QHBSEH1JkQI

Skiller-Fast, world champions 2012 (interview):

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&list=SPAF134986ADB1F253&v=-myTJWqkZgQ

Beatbox Battle World Championship 2012, Final, Skiller from Bulgaria vs Alem from France:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=xVAka_y3BC0

Alem, French New School Beatboxer:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=J4IFE9xc5D0

ZeDe and Alem:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=We6xdMds2UI

Learning Beatbox: the discipline is still evolving – on websites like Youtube, Facebook and forum, people can learn all the new techniques and share virtual tutorials. In the past there were not any classes available, but in 2008 Shlomo, a British beatboxing artist, co-founded the Beatbox Academy in South London, so beatbox education is also evolving.

New Innovations: In France, beatbox artist Ezra and L.O.S aka The Bionicologists mix beatbox and interactive digital video-art. Beatbox can be an interesting tool for singers as well, who are experimenting with producing new sounds using beat-boxing techniques. Elsewhere the discipline is mixed with different artforms from theatre, to circus, contemporary dance, jazz etc. David concludes:

“I hope the discipline will soon be recognised as an artform in its own right – it’s on the way!”



Ezra/L.O.S – The Bionicologists:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=ReHwU-3sC6k

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