

London Dubstep

History and Critical Analysis



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Project Background and Goals

- “Dubstep” refers to a genre of Electronic Dance Music (EDM) that emerged from South London, UK in the early 2000’s.
- This project sought to trace the development of this genre of music both in socio-political and musicological terms; for example, the ethnicity of those who collaborated to produce the first Dubstep tracks was as important to this endeavor as the distinct melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, and textural signatures that allow us to distinguish Dubstep as an independent genre.
- This project also aimed to contextualize this music within various currents of critical thought, including Art History, Black British Cultural Studies, and the theorization of the “UK Hardcore Continuum.”
- Specific areas of inquiry included the ability of cultural artifacts to function as catalysts of nationalism and the relationship that Dubstep and other EDMs share with collage-driven artistic movements such as Cubism.

Project Results

- I traveled to London to interview members of the Dubstep community, visit particularly influential record shops, and attend the events that have built the foundation of this club-based genre since its inception in Croydon.
- Then, pulling from both the research that I conducted in London and other sources like popular music journalism, blogs, and critical theory, I composed an essay entitled *Collage: A Defining Characteristic of the UK Underground*, which examines the ways in which Dubstep functions as an aesthetic and socio-cultural collage.