

The Roots: 'Things Fall Apart'

By Bangi Ofon

The Roots is an iconic hip-hop group that has dominated the rap/hip-hop scene for over 20 years. By infusing jazz and blues into their songs, The Roots have redefined hip-hop as a whole.

Their lyrics raw and poignant, frequently tell the story of the harsh realities of living as a black person in America. Some musical experts define The Roots as a conscious rap group.

Originally from Philadelphia, The Roots formed in 1987 by members Ahmir "Questlove" Thompson and Tariq "Black Thought" Trotter.

More members were added to the group, and today The Roots consist of 10 members.

The album, "Things Fall Apart," sold more than 500,000 copies making it the group's first breakthrough album. The combination of live instruments such as the piano and electric beats mixed in the studio convey a powerful sound.

Although, most of their songs tend to center around issues of racism and black culture, The Roots show a softer side of as artists on the song "You Got Me," a collaboration with artist Eriqah Badu and rapper Eve. The song deals with trust issues in relationships and unwanted

feelings of being vulnerable in relationships.

The only off-putting thing about the album is the songs' hooks. It doesn't seem to go with the rest of the lyrics of the song, especially when dealing with serious themes such as racism and inequality.

The listener might get confused and have a problem of misinterpretation while trying to understand the connotation of the song.

All in all, "Things Fall Apart" is an intelligent, well-written and produced album dealing with issues of racism and discrimination which still resonate today 15 years after the album's release.

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