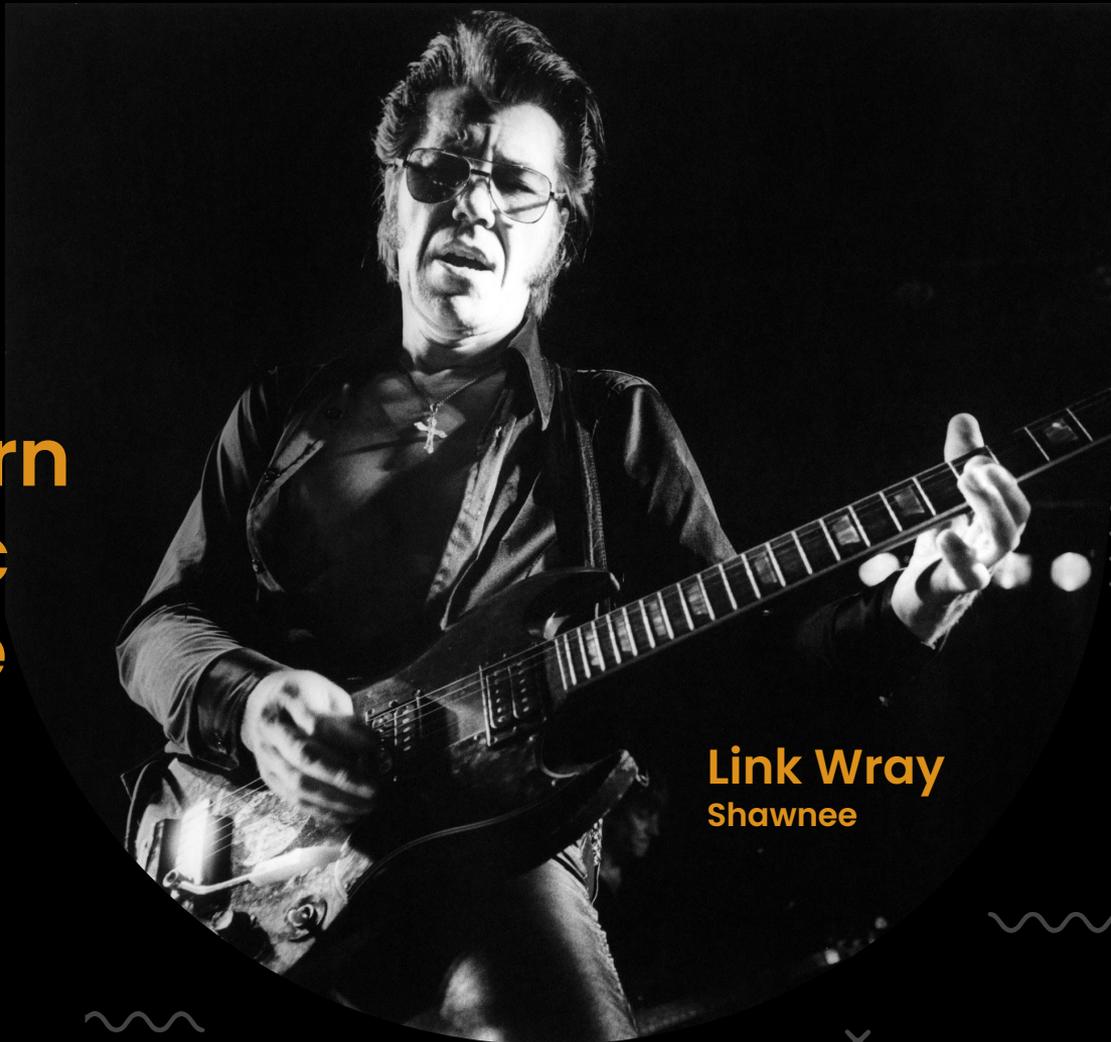
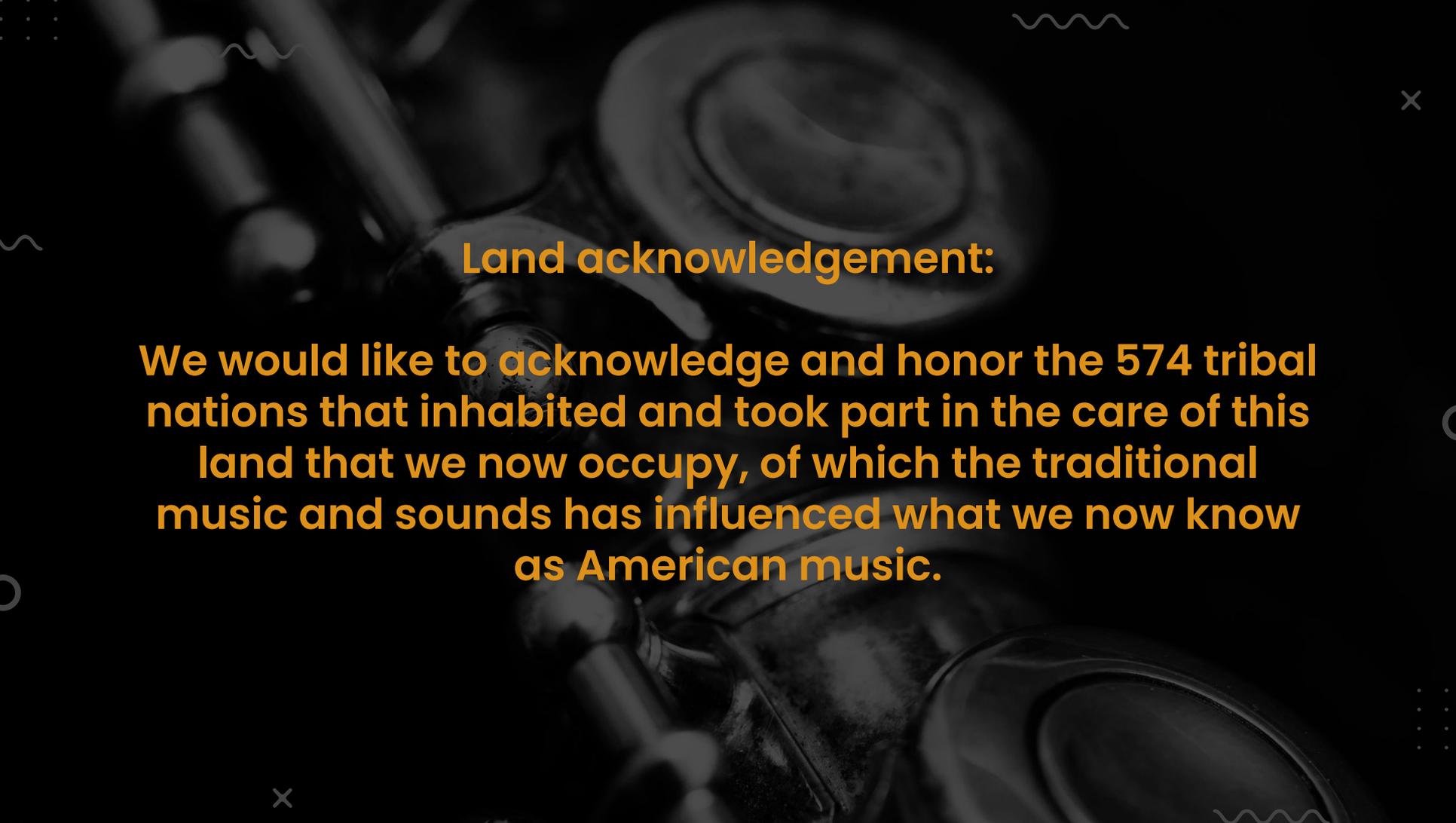


# Intersectional Origins of Modern American Music and Pop Culture

Micah Forteza, Rene Arana,  
Robert Levi



**Link Wray**  
Shawnee



**Land acknowledgement:**

**We would like to acknowledge and honor the 574 tribal nations that inhabited and took part in the care of this land that we now occupy, of which the traditional music and sounds has influenced what we now know as American music.**

# OF THE AMERICAN INDIANS

From the Smithsonian-Densmore Collection  
of the Archive of Folksong, Library of Congress

19 songs with descriptive notes from 7 tribes  
Edited by Charles Hofmann

Recorded on location by  
Dr. FRANCES DENSMORE  
for the Bureau of American Ethnology,  
Smithsonian Institution

Frances Densmore playing recording for Indian singer, who interprets it in sign language, Washington, D.C., 1914



Elizabeth Cotten (1893–1987)

The first African  
slave ship arrived  
in America in 1619,  
and so did the  
creation of  
American Music.



# What is Rock and Roll?

And what are its origins in people of color?



## Origins and Politics

Native song and dance was outlawed in 1890 to lower morale between Natives, as it was seen as a threat to American culture and control.

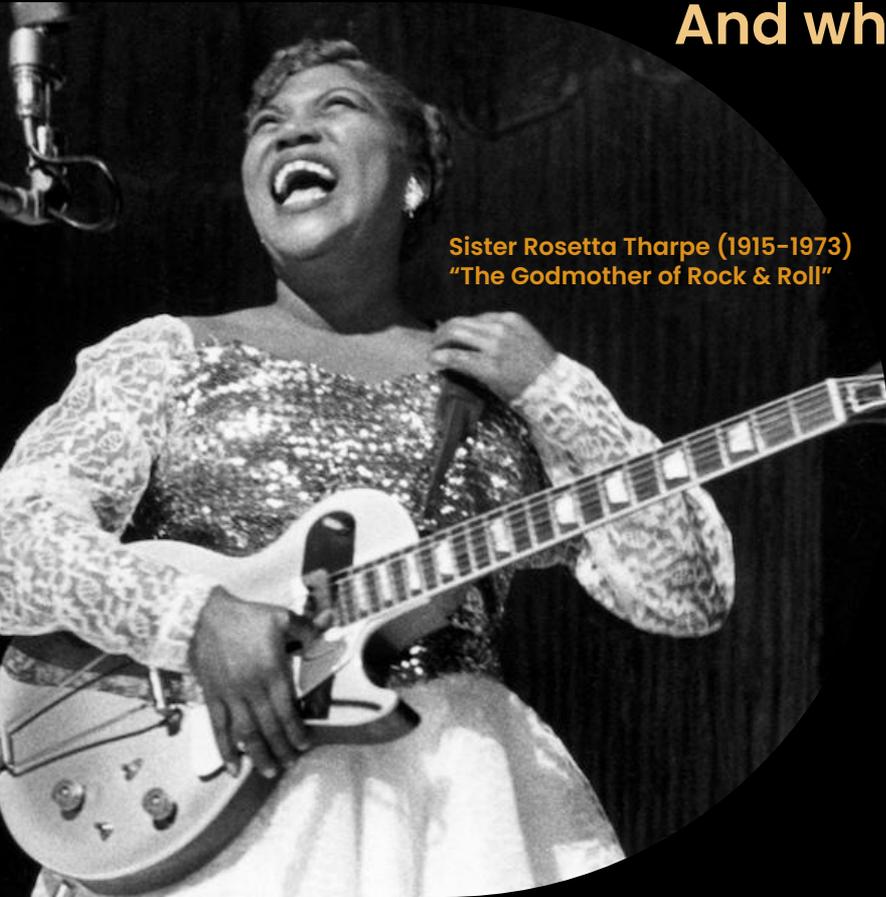
In 1908, the Smithsonian Society records the first recording of Native American healing songs from Chippewa, Sioux, Yuma, Papago, Northern Ute, Makah, and Menominee tribes.

Many of these songs were never recorded again.

Despite this, there is a clear traceable lineage of influence from Native song into Blues and Rock & Roll.

# What is Rock and Roll?

And what are its origins in people of color?



Sister Rosetta Tharpe (1915-1973)  
"The Godmother of Rock & Roll"

## Theory & Development

Rock and Roll is the culmination of generations of Black and Indigenous sound and culture, and has its origins in the South as Native Americans took in escaped slaves. Thus, the "Delta Blues" were born, combining the plantation music of African slaves with the rhythm and melodies of Native American music.

Through generations of Black and Native American children came the pioneers of jazz, blues, and rock and roll.

More oppression led to more anger, which led to louder & faster music.

# What is Rock and Roll?

And what are its origins in people of color?



## Charley Patton (1891–1934)

- Born in the Mississippi Delta and known as the “Father of the Delta Blues”, Born of Black and Cherokee/Choctaw descent.
- considered to be “one of the most important American musicians of the twentieth century” (Palmer)
- Patton had a unique sound, sometimes almost indistinguishable from Cherokee/Choctaw traditional music.

A black and white photograph of Link Wray playing an electric guitar. He is wearing a dark jacket and is captured in a dynamic pose, leaning forward. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting his hands on the guitar and the texture of his clothing. The background is dark and out of focus.

# Link Wray (1929–2005)

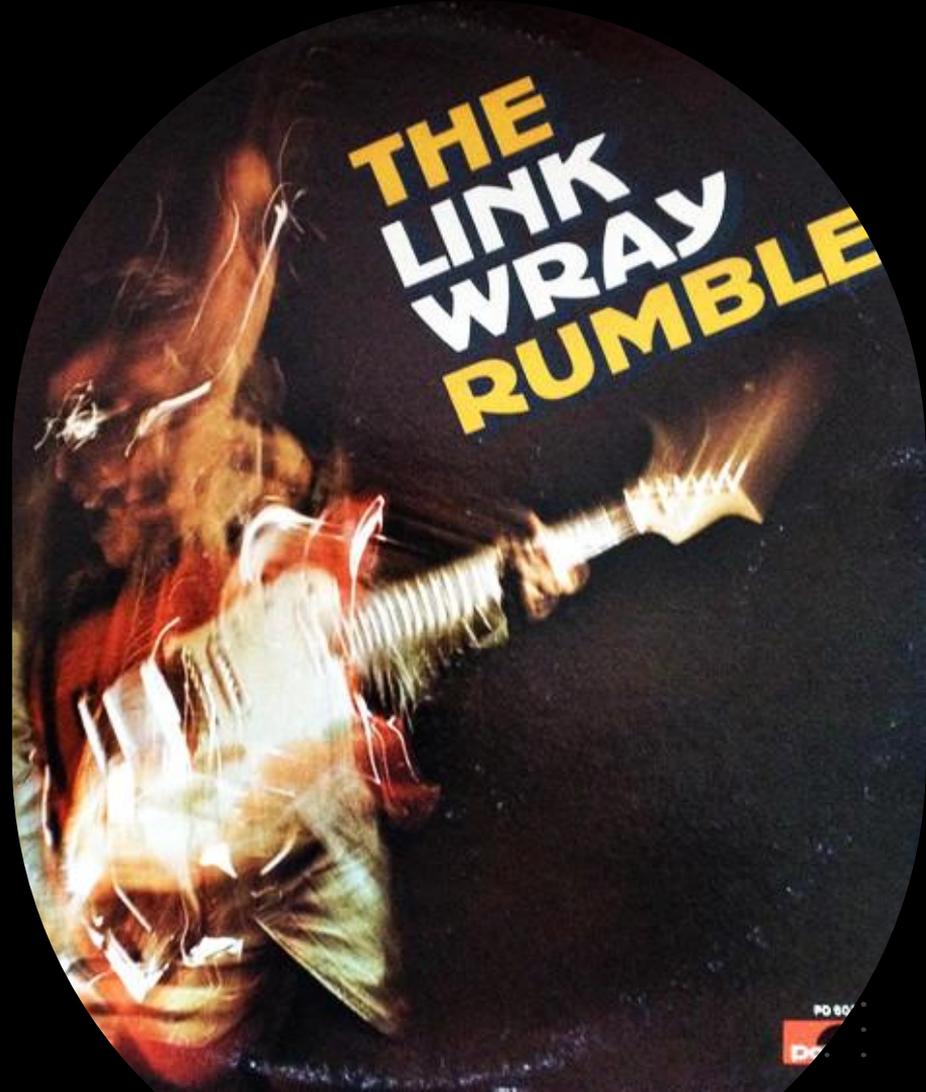
- Shawnee/Cherokee American born and raised in North Carolina.
- Spent his youth poor and kept his Native identity a secret under the constant threat of the KKK.
- His mother, a street preacher, instilled a love of sing-song and music, and Wray began learning the guitar
- Wray's rough childhood living influenced and inspired Wray's musical direction

# Rumble

In 1953, Link wray & his siblings played as the house band at a sock-hop in Fredericksburg, Virginia when the crowd of teenagers asked for "The Stroll", a song by The Diamonds released a month prior.

Fresh out of the hospital from a Tuberculosis infection, Link did not know The Stroll, but their drummer did.

Link began playing simple chords through a distorted guitar amp. Thus, Rumble was born.



**“Rumble” is the  
only instrumental  
song in the world  
to be banned from  
the radio.**

# Rumble's Influence



D5 (Power Chord)

|   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|   | X |   | X | X |
| 4 |   |   |   |   |
| 5 | 1 |   |   |   |
| 6 |   |   |   |   |
| 7 |   | 3 | 4 |   |
| 8 |   |   |   |   |



"Rumble" was the first song to utilize & popularize the "Power Chord" and guitar distortion

Wray's playing has inspired some of the greatest Rock guitarists of all time including Jimmy Page, Iggy Pop, Slash, and Dave Grohl.

Rumble has been featured in various films, video games, and TV productions such as *Spongebob Squarepants*, *The Sopranos*, *Starcraft II*, *Independence Day*, and Quentin Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction*, who also happens to be part-Native American.

Rumble is sampled by the experimental Hip Hop group *Death Grips* in their song, *Spread Eagle Cross the Block*, further expanding the influence of Native American artistry into the Rap & Hip Hop Genre into the 21st century

# Rap and Hip Hop into the 21st Century



# Origins

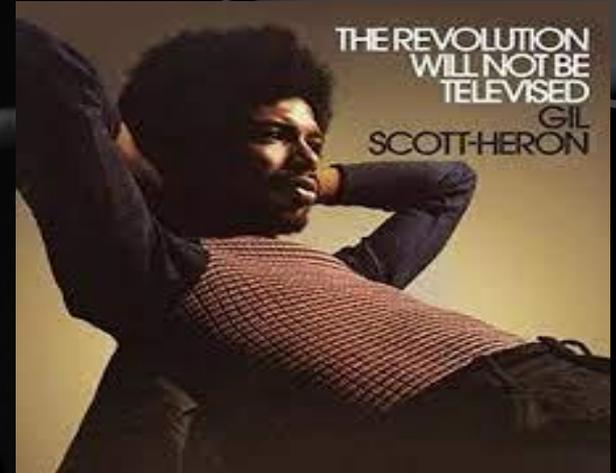
- Emerged in Southern Bronx of NYC, predominantly in African American low income communities (1970s)
- Lack of funding in urban schools led to accessibility issue of instruments
- Accessibility issue connects to the MC/Rap element
- Jaimacan roots in MCing and DJ sound

Dj Kool Herc



# Politics

- Consciousness connects to one of the elements
- Conscious Hip Hop Artist highlight issues affecting African American struggles
- Many of the past struggles can be seen to continue and be relevant now



- Gill Scott Heron - "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised"

# Theory (Four Elements)

DJ/Turntable

Mc/Rap

Consciousness

Graffiti Paint

"B-boying"/  
Dance

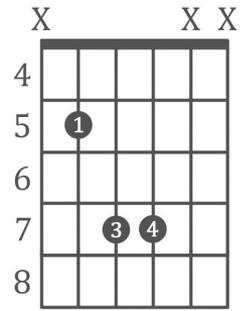
# Impact Now

- Started as a DIY and now plays major role in music industry
- Notoriety- The notoriety of the misogynist, sexist, homophobic, etc. lyrics have been used by white oppressors to discredit and dismantle the rap and hip-hop culture
- Staple of pop culture





D5 (Power Chord)



# Intersectional Origins of Modern American Music and Pop Culture



## HEALING SONGS OF THE AMERICAN INDIANS

From the Smithsonian-Densmore Collection of the Archive of Folk Song, Library of Congress

ETHNIC FOLKWAYS LIBRARY FE 4251  
18 songs with descriptive notes from 7 tribes  
Edited by Charles Hoffmann  
Recorded on location by Dr. FRANCES DENSMORE for the Bureau of American Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution

