

Rise of the Protester is my latest artistic take on humanity. Recorded on December 28, 2018, at Divine Order Studios, the album features Brian Settles on tenor sax, Herman Burney on bass, Lenny Robinson on drums, and Reginald Cyntje on trombone/compositions.

Artist notes...

What does it mean to be human? If we are all human beings, are we guaranteed the same rights? Are we all free to live and love? Does hue play a role in my right to be free?

When faced with crippling adversity, people will find a way to rise. My ancestors fought for freedom. Harriet Tubman (Araminta) found a way to lead us to safety. Traveling at night, we followed her song.

Women like Queen Mary (aka Mary Thomas) chanted during revolts (Chant of the Revolt). The call to action came from drums and horns. The response echoed throughout the community.

Whether on small islands known as emeralds in the sea or large land masses (Green) in the Western Hemisphere, Africans did not settle for bondage. They used music to communicate. The rhythms slightly changed but powerful messages were still passed down through generations.

Freedom was not easy. Greedy crooked individuals and countries found ways to create laws and use economic power to delay freedom (Dance of the Crooked Heads).

Adversity gave rise to the protester (Rise of the Protester). Adults and children, risking their lives, marched in the streets for human

rights. First one, then two, then more joined in, demanding justice.

Those comfortable in a space of privilege did not want to see justice for the underprivileged. Without justice, there was no peace. Caught in a space between hope and anger people chanted “No justice, no peace. No justice, no peace.”

Ida B. Wells, the Women’s Political Council, Dr. Dorothy Height, Winnie Mandela, Patrice Lumumba, Dr. King, and many others spoke out for justice. They were protesters. Folks like Malcolm X were able to break the shackles of mental slavery. From Malcolm Little to El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz, his life captured the duality of a black man awakening to the spiritual and social atrocities of his people (Duality of Malcolm).

Amiri Baraka called African Americans Blues People. He connected the rise of African Americans socially with the development of their music. Although African Americans have continuously contributed to the growth of humanity, deplorable individuals continue to defend racist ideologies (Blues People Vs the Deplorables).

Today, activists are using their gifts to tell the truth. People are still marching for justice. Traditional media is being revamped. Social media is the new mobilizing tool. People of color are telling their stories. Movies played a critical role in painting people of color in a negative light. Directors, like Ava DuVernay, are currently using film to show the nuanced narrative of the African diaspora (DuVernay’s Direction).

The crooked still want to see the demise of those with brown skin (The Return). They dance around the truth and don’t believe that black lives matter too. With political and economic power, they work to eradicate humanity. Fortunately, Ta-Nehisi Coates uses

his books to examine black life (See Ta-Nehesy). The rhythm of his words inspires minds to see the world in bold color.

Protesting comes in many forms...Music, film, books, marching, teaching, and voting. As long as society is unjust, we will have those seeking equity and equality. When justice is for everyone, all shades of humanity can enjoy life and love (Brown) under the sun (Yellow).

Reginald Cyntje  
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