

Narration: Music is, without a doubt, a large part of Black culture. In the Black community, it serves a tangible purpose. Yes, it's true - we make incredible music. But, more often than not, it also doubles as a political statement, or an act of resistance. Looking at both the creative and production side of things, it is clear to see that Black folks have taken their rightful place in the world of musical innovation.

My name is Gloria Essien, and I'm taking a look at how Black students at Brown navigate the music sphere on campus. Over the course of my time here, I've seen music serve as both a unifying force within Black community and as a healing mechanism during rougher times. I sat down with a few of my friends to talk about how they use and create music.

B: My name is Britt, AKA yung_proton. And I host OJ on Brown Student Radio. I play mostly Black artists, rap, hip-hop, R&B, Soundcloud stuff. Current things that are coming off. And sometimes, I play some student music that's, you know, happening at Brown.

Narration: Britt, AKA yung_proton, used to host the show OJ for Brown student radio on Fridays evenings: it was my perfect end-of-the-week wind down.

G: So, why'd you choose radio?

B: Radio is a good way of connecting people. A lot of times I would have my show and my friends and family in like Philly and Atlanta would, like, tune in which was really cool.

B: Um. When I'm on air, it feels like I'm talking to myself sometimes, which is sort of therapeutic. Just like, talking off the top of my head, which is pretty nice. And then, posing questions to like no one, and then answering them myself. *[laughter]* It's nice.

G: Do you have a lot of following?

B: I don't know, honestly, because I don't think there's a way to tell how many people are tuning in. But my sister listens. *[laughter]* Ben Koatz used to listen OD. Ben is a homie.

G: Shoutout to Ben.

G: How do you feel about orange juice? Like, why'd you choose that as your name?

B: Um, OJ is very refreshing, and it makes me feel...

G: Oo.

B: Feel really good. Like I like the taste and smell of citrus. Um, like I have Dr. Bronner's citrus soap, so I feel like an orange. *[laughter]* But, orange juice is really lit, like if you're not drinking OJ in the morning, something is wrong. *[laughter]*

G: What does music mean to you as a Brittany Hodges, AKA, what was it?

B: yung_proton.

G: yung_proton *[laughter]*.

B: Follow me, Y-U-N-G_proton. That's my IG.

B: Um, I really, really appreciate, I mean recently, Frank Ocean's album, Blonde. Super personal to me. So, yeah, a way of understanding myself. Um. As a black woman. I feel like that can get tricky because I'm a huge fan of like rap, and rappers can be trash and they know they're trash. *[laughter]* One of Future's like recent albums, he has a line that's like, "I grab that pussy like Trump" or something. And I'm just like, "Whaaaaat the heck?" But we all know that, like, rappers can be, like, misogynistic and homophobic and so can like the rest of society, so it's really hard navigating when rappers say these ridiculous things, but you're still vibing with the beat, you know. So I guess it's kind of like a cognitive dissonance type of thing. But I also think you can be really critical about lyrics and stuff at the same time. And then, Syd's new album, I been really relating and resonating with. I feel like she's been helping me, like, navigate a lot of identities and stuff. I really like, uh, what's his face. Steve Lacy's new album?

G: Oo.

B: Have you listened?

G: Mhm.

B: He's, like, my heart. Like he's only 17, and I wanna go to prom with him or something. *[laughter]* He's great.

G: When you're listening to music, what are you looking for, like what pulls you in most?

B: I feel like, initially, it's probably just the overall vibe? Right? Depending on the kind of mood I'm in. Like, I was listening to Nick Hakim the other day, and he's very, like, somber and sad. And so listening to that at night. And, I mean, then in the morning, I'm like listening to, like, Stevie Wonder and stuff. *[laughter]* To get me energized. So, I think it's all about the vibe.

G: Wow, so shout out to you. I remember one day you let me sit in that studio on a Friday afternoon, that was a dope experience. Let's wrap it up, do you have, like, social media?

B: Uh, yes. I don't use Twitter anymore because I think Twitter died in 2016 [*laughter*] in my opinion. No one else thinks that, but I just stopped using it. My Instagram handle, @yung_proton. [*spells it out*] like, hydrogen atom. And then I have a Soundcloud.

G: "What's the Soundcloud?"

B: I should change my Soundcloud handle because it's not as cool. But it's just @qu33nbritty, the E's are 3's.

Narration: yung_proton is no longer on the air, but you can still keep up with her on Soundcloud where she always keeps her followers up to date with good vibes and new music.