

Throwback: Curtis Mayfield- Move On Up



Curtis Mayfield introduced a funk-oriented sound on his 1970 debut album *Curtis*. He moved away from the melodic sound he had with The Impressions but continued the awareness of Black American politics that began with “Keep On Pushing” in 1964. “Move On Up” sought to inspire Black Americans in their dreams despite the obstacles presented by racism. Mayfield’s syrupy falsetto made some music critics misinterpret him for being an accommodationist but his lyrics tell the listener to “Do not obey, you must keep your say.” “Move On Up” was one of the two songs released as a single from *Curtis*. It was not a commercial hit but became much more important for its role in innovating pop music and becoming one with the heartbeat of the people across generations. “Move On Up” has been prodigiously covered and sampled with the most famous usage being Kanye West’s “Touch The Sky.” Mayfield passed in 1999 but his music is still everywhere and in 2017 Rolling Stone

announced that Lionel Richie was working with his estate on a biographical film about Mayfield's life.Â

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