

# Chuck D, Herbie Hancock Jelly Roll & More Named Global Music Ambassadors By State Department & YouTube

Chuck D, Herbie Hancock, Jelly Roll, and more were named Global Music Ambassadors by Secretary of State Antony Blinken and YouTube Global Head of Music Lyor Cohen. They are part of the inaugural roster of U.S. Global Music Ambassadors as part of a U.S. Department of State-YouTube Global Music Diplomacy Partnership. Their job is to use music to promote world peace on behalf of the United States just like jazz greats Louis Armstrong, Dizzy Gillespie, Dave Brubeck, Benny Goodman, and Duke Ellington did in the 1950s. The American artists chosen have a history of public service and have made significant strides in their creative work. The Department and YouTube will announce additional ambassadors in future months. Check out the video of Secretary Blinken's launch of the U.S. Department of State and YouTube partnership with the artists in attendance earlier this week and the other video of each artist acknowledging their new role. Kane Brown, BRELAND, Grace Bowers, Lainey Wilson, Justin Tranter, Denyce Graves, and Armani White were also on the list of music ambassadors.

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# Throwback: Herbie Hancock-Rockit



Herbie Hancock's "Rockit" marked his move into a new sound with his *Future Sound* album. His previous album, *Lite Me Up*, set upon a core of R&B and jazz thanks to the influence of his friend Quincy Jones. In his quest for a new direction his much younger manager approached producer Bill Laswell to write a new song for Hancock. The two eventually met and Bill Laswell took Hancock to a New York City nightclub to see hip-hop pioneers Afrika Bambaataa and Grand Mixer DXT perform DJ sets.

This inspiration led to Hancock, Laswell, DXT and synthesizer player Michael Beinhorn recording "Rockit" in multiple studios at different locations before finishing it. The name of the song came from a sample of Bambaataa's hit single "Planet Rock." The results were a hard-hitting funk and hip-hop hybrid matched with an equally innovative video. The vision of Hancock playing keyboards surrounded by robotic mannequins was a defining moment of the MTV era. He had an epic performance of "Rockit" at the 1985 Grammys with Stevie Wonder, Thomas Dolby and Howard Jones.

"Rockit" was one of the earliest examples of a high-profile hip-hop collaboration. Hancock's single came out in 1983 one year before Chaka Khan's "I Feel For You" which was another great partnership that found her singing with an intro by rapper Melle Mel. *Future Shock* was a hit and most critics understood the new direction. The title came from a Curtis Mayfield composition he also covered for the project. The video for "Rockit" won five MTV awards, two Billboard Video Music Awards and the song won the Grammy for Best R&B Instrumental Performance. Hancock proved to be forward-

thinking like his mentor Miles Davis who also acknowledged hip-hop by working with producer Easy Mo Bee. Hancock's last album was *The Imagine Project* from 2010. His forthcoming album will pair him with rap music again in addition to jazz and R&b. Terrace Martin is producing the album and there will be appearances from Flying Lotus, Thundercat, Wayne Shorter, Snoop Dogg, Zakir Hussein, Kendrick Lamar, Kamasi Washington and Lionel Loueke.Â

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## Herbie Hancock Working With Thundercat, Kendrick Lamar, Snoop Dogg And More On New Album



Herbie Hancock recently spoke with the [San Diego Tribune](#) and shared details about his new album that's currently underway. Snoop Dogg, Flying Lotus, Thundercat and Kendrick Lamar are a few of the artists making contributions to the project. Terrace Martin is producing the untitled album and he is performing with Hancock's current band.Â

Hancock's first exploration into hip-hop happened in the '80s when he released the Grammy-winning "Rockit" which was a collaboration with famed DJ GrandMixer DXT. "Rockit" was the first hip-hop jazz song and gave jazz purists another reason to criticize his musical progression into contemporary styles. He was well respected as a member of Miles Davis's second

quintet and as his own bandleader. He became a star in the '60's because of his Blue Note recordings that included his famous albums *Empyrean Isles* and *Maiden Voyage*. In the '70's he formed his jazz-funk band that released three influential albums that became known as the Mwandishi era because that was the title of the first album.Â

Hancock's persistent eye for the futureÂ is alwaysÂ at the front ofÂ whatever he chooses to create and the newÂ album isÂ another step in that direction. In the interviewÂ with the San Diego Tribune, he talks about people becoming global citizens to unite and change the world as the inspiration behind the new music. There is no release date for the project that will be his first sinceÂ Â 2010's *The Imagine Project*.Â

[youtube id="GHhD4PD75zY"]

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## Throwback: Herbie Hancock-Thieves In The Temple



[youtube id="zqj2Z3gm-gI"] In 1995 Herbie Hancock's *The New Standard* found him being adventurous again but this time with it was an album of pop covers. The band of all-stars including John Scofield, Michael Brecker, Dave Holland, Jack DeJohnette and Don Alias worked with Hancock to take the contemporary pop and mold it into jazz.Â Hancock's inventive arrangement of Prince's "Thieves In The Temple" turned the pop/R&B song into warm jazz underscored by Brecker's tenor solo riding throughÂ the band's playing with the buoyancy of a wave. Â The

outcome is a song respectful of the original but infused with Hancock's style that really does make "Thieves In The Temple" a new standard for a jazz player's fake book. Hancock felt Prince's influence just like his former bandleader Miles Davis who believed that the Minneapolis artist was the future of music.