



*Sonic Gardens, Black Women's Subjectivity,
and the Limits of Genre: Minnie Riperton's
Come to My Garden (1970)*

Released in 1970, at the nexus of the waning popularity of avant-garde jazz and rise of "fusion music," *Come to My Garden* introduced listeners to a 23-year-old Minnie Riperton. A now, blip in her discography, the album fused soul and blues sensibilities to revamp the psychedelic sounds of her former band, Rotary Connection. The following talk critically considers Minnie Riperton's vocal performance on *Come to My Garden* and the role of genre in reproducing theories of value. "Genre," in this talk, names both the taxonomy of black music and a kind of humanity rooted in biocentrism. Drawing upon the geography of the garden and its figurative use throughout the album, the talk uses black feminist theories of embodiment and black Marxist critiques of theories of value to de-legitimize the analytic purchase of "genre." The talk argues, Minnie Riperton's figuration of the garden reveals the built capacity of black womanhood and the limits of genre. At a moment when critical theorists use the syllogism of "black bodies" to name/stand in for black subjectivity, this talk will ask why genre becomes the primary mode of writing about black music and black women's subjectivity?

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