

More Than Hip Hop Xzibit is The New Renaissance Man

Written by Davey D ID3088

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At Long Last Xzibit Comes Full Circle w/a Vengeance By Davey D

Many are looking at Xzibit and his successful hip hop and rap career coupled with his burgeoning film and TV career, which are topped off by his charisma and they are saying X-Z is the new Renaissance Man.

Everywhere you look Xzibit is seemingly there. He recently caught our attention in the movie *Grid Iron Gang*. He has a new album out called 'Full Circle' which has Keith Shocklee of the Public Enemy Bomb Squad as one of the executive producers. He's also one month into his worldwide tour. If that's not enough, Xzibit has also decided to return to his roots and go the independent route.

For those who don't know, for the past few years Xzibit has been attached to Sony Records. It was a result of the merger between the mega label conglomerate and his original home Loud Records. One would think with all that corporate muscle behind one of the country's more visible hip hop pop icons that Xzibit would be on a whole other level right about now. Unfortunately such was not the case.

In our recent sit down, Xzibit explained that Sony tried to pimp his popularity from the MTV show 'Pimp My Ride'. They figured all they had to do was put out his record and not really promote it since he was on TV everyday. Xzibit noted that it was a shortsighted move and that his TV show had nothing to do with his music career.

He said in order to be successful he would have to be more immersed in the Hip Hop arena. All the TV show does is get you noticed, the rest is up to you. He noted that Sony didn't give him the promotional support that was needed which in turn made him feel like he was trapped. Now that he's off the label, he feels free and comfortable going back to a time when he did slamming classics like 'Paparrazi'. Sony was always looking for the big MTV-like pop jams.

Xzibit talked to us about his tour and his decision to include Bay Area legend San Quinn. He noted that whenever people talk about the West Coast they always forget to include the Bay Area which he feels set the foundation for the independent game that everyone benefits from.

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He says this industry inspired separation of the two regions has prevented people from fully being able to reach their full economic potential. He wants to change that and make sure that when people say Cali, they see the entire state and not just LA. San Quinn is a good representation for the Bay.

During the recent show at SF's Slims Nightclub, San Quinn stopped his set and asked the audience to please show lots of love and gratitude to X for reaching out and giving him a big opportunity. Artists up and down the coast are well aware of the big underlying problems effecting Cali artists which can be attributed to some of the big commercial stations, most notable Clear Channel giant KMEL and their refusal to play many of the independent releases from artists out of LA.

Basically what happened was when E-40 brought attention to the Bay Area's hyphy movement, many of the LA stations begin playing a lot of the independent artists out of the Bay. The deejays who were in position to play music outside the stated playlist wanted to build on the momentum of the Hyphy Movement and show some west coast unity. Hence for a period of time you would hear lots of Bay Area music being bumped in LA.

As the Hyphy thing began to grow many of LA's independent artists began to release their own product and quite naturally approached the Bay stations to see if the love that was being shown to Bay artists in LA could be reciprocated. Sadly, the Clear Channel stations (KMEL) refused to open the doors and make room for the LA artists. A couple of the high profile deejays in LA like Julio G of KDAY reached out to their Bay counterparts like music director Big Von to try and get some traction but to no avail.

This in turn led to a backlash of sorts, because it was made to look like the Bay was hating on LA and not helping grow the movement. The truth of the matter is that the Bay is a one radio company town and if one or two people refuse to open up their playlist and get down it can cause misperceptions. That's one of the downfalls of media consolidation. The reason why this is important is because when one starts to approach other stations outside the state, video outlets, record labels, concert promoters and distribution companies, they look at the amount or lack of airplay one is receiving in neighboring cities as an indicator to their success. So if a Bay Area artist says he's hot and is getting airplay in his hometown, people began to wonder why that success didn't translate down to Los Angeles and vice versa.

It's a dirty little trick commercial stations do which were outlined in last month's FCC Hearings in

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LA when REM bass player Mike Mills testified. It stifles growth or in this case shortchanges and undermines unifying movement efforts put forth by regional artists.

As of late many of the Bay and LA artists have been trying to find ways to build those bridges in spite of radio politics. Xzibit reaching out to San Quinn represents one of those on going efforts.

Xzibit describes himself as a soldier in this west coast movement. He doesn't want to be a king. 'Kings get overthrown', he explained.

Xzibit touched upon another problem plaguing LA and that's the rising Black Brown tensions. He details his feelings in his new song Black and Brown and offers up his insight as to why two major minority groups are at the brink of a major upheaval. Xzibit said it basically boils down to folks fighting over crumbs

During our interview Xzibit gave the full run down as to why he departed from his longtime group Strong Arm Steady. He blamed the breakup on bad business moves by his fellow group members and Talib Kweli not being fully honest about the status of him actually signing to his label. If you recall a couple of months back when we interviewed Talib he talked about how had just signed Strong Arm Steady to his new label. Xzibit says that he had never signed, nor was in agreement with the terms in which he was being asked to sign to. He wished the group and Talib much luck and said there were no hard feelings.

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