

Young RJ Hip-Hop's Newest Genius

Written by Robert ID2151

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Detroit (AKA Rock City) is home to many things; most notably the automobile among others. But automobiles are not the only thing its housed, add the current home of the NBA World Champion Detroit Pistons, a certain mega-platinum blonde haired hip-hop rap emcee and more importantly the home that birthed the sound that changed the music landscape as we know it; the Motown sound.

Yes, the Motown Sound made popular by Berry Gordy, former President of Motown Records and the raw talent that he found in Detroit to make it rise to prominence; a sound that has greatly impacted the music Young RJ chooses to create “the Motown era represented soul in general, emotion, and I think that the Motown sound is what people are trying to recapture today. There is a feel good vibe attached to it, you can dance to it and it’s still had a great impact on the way music is made today, especially neo-soul.” Yet, with the emphasis on the former, who’s going to carry the weight of the Detroit tradition? Detroit’s flourishing hip-hop scene of course! The testament to the later statement is production rising star Young RJ.

Straight from the streets of Detroit and at the ripe age of 22, Young RJ is already a studio veteran who brings an impeccably distinct flavor to Hip-Hop. And whether it is a sample, or live instrumentation based track, RJ proves that he is sonically mature beyond his years and he has already displayed an insatiable work ethic; having manned the boards for hip-hop group Slum Village producing the wealth of their last three albums, (Trinity, Detroit Deli and the new Slum Village Self Titled LP).

Considering Young RJ was still in high school when he contributed to Slum Village’s Trinity LP and that he was settling in after Jay Dee as the group’s main sound architect, the pressure of filling in for a beloved producer such as Jay Dee and working on a major label LP with no prior credits to his resume would have been a tremendous undertaking for anyone, especially for someone who had yet to reach the legal drinking age, but Young RJ laments it was merely the next step in his progression “yes, looking back on it now, there was pressure, but it was not overwhelming. I think being so young helped me a great deal, I was just able to focus on making good music and Jay Dee taught me certain things that I used, which just added to what I already brought to the table. I’m young, but I have an old soul and my production has a younger edge to it to where I feel I am able to reach the younger and older fans.”

Yet, aside from his essential contributions to Slum Village, RJ has also worked with Rhian Benson (whose debut also included work from James Poyser, Mike Elizondo and Bob Power) and the man behind Angie Stone’s hit “More Than a Woman” Calvin Richardson and his album

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2:35P.M (where he worked alongside Rapheal Saadiq and Mike City). Most recently Young RJ worked with fellow Detroit native Proof of D12 on his solo-debut Searching for Jerry Garcia and collaborated with fellow producer Black Milk (to form the production duo B.R. Gunna) for a compilation, Dirty District Vol.2, which featured Detroit artists such as Jay Dilla, MC Breed, Slum Village and Phat Kat; BR Gunna's single, "Something Good," featured one of the most renowned Motown era groups, The Dramatics, and quickly took off on college and local radio.

Young RJ's partnership with Black Milk includes a very unique chemistry, as the two share a similar musical vision "When we collaborated on Slum's Detroit Deli and our own project D. District it just showed how alike we were from a musical perspective, as unbeknownst to us we had collected alot of the same records. Even though we have separate studios, we bounce off of each other quite well and we kick around ideas and concepts individually and then get together to finish them.

And while I worked separately on the latest Slum Village LP, we used the same formula on Slum Village's Detroit Deli, the only difference is now were more advanced."

Now after putting in time behind the scenes, Young RJ has begun to show that he has the musical acumen necessary to catapult himself into the elite category of Hip-Hop producers. That quest has already begun with the stellar work he put in on Slum Village's self-titled LP (his production for Slum Village's "EZ Up" is now featured on a national advertising campaign that Slum inked with Chevrolet) and upcoming placements on forthcoming major label projects.

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