

INTERVIEW

Artist: Drunken Monk

Date: 11/22/2013

Questions:

Introduce yourself to the people and give us a little background info about Drunken Monk.

I was raised in the deep south, around Shreveport Louisiana to be exact. I grew up singing in church like most southerners and continued to study music in high school and in college. I remember winning poetry contest in the 8th grade which was around the same time i started listening to rap. I also remember skipping class at times in college to try to produce beats on my computer. The first beat i ever chopped up was Sade's song Couldn't Love You More. After that i was hooked.

How did you get the name Drunken Monk?

In college I and Eli Watts, son of late saxophonist and painter Marzette Watts had a funk group and my rap name then was Drunken Monkey. Also I was raised in a family where martial arts study was mandatory. When i became buddhist i changed it to Drunken Monk. The funny part is that as a buddhist i do not consume alcohol.

Who were your Hip-Hop idols when you were growing up and why?

I was able to see Nas in concert once at the House of Blues in New Orleans. I have always liked his smooth, lyrical delivery and will always be a fan. Oddly enough i didn't get into southern rap until i moved to New Orleans and started listening to the music of Cash Money artist like Juvenile, Master P, Little Wayne. The first artist i probably listened to and really paid attention were Run Dmc and LL Cool J. I just loved their hard in your face delivery over rock and roll instrumentals. Of course I'm a huge Tupac fan which is one of the reasons i currently live in Oakland Ca.

Major artist wise, who would you say your style is comparable to?

I have been told by more than one fan i sound a lot like Jay Z and by others Two Chains. Most likely i am a hybrid of many different artist since i listen to pretty much everything there is out there worth listening to. Personally i feel i have a style similar to Guru on his Jazzmatazz albums but i honestly don't think i sound like anyone except myself because i use different combinations of jazz rap, trap, trip hop, and house music and came from poetry and spoken word to hiphop.

Musically, who do you look up to? Who's that one recording artist and/or mogul you look up to and say, "I want a career similar to his?" That would be a jazz musician honestly like Miles Davis who despite criticism did his own thing and conquered as best he could his personal demons. Real people like that not

figure heads. I have a hard time separating music because i just hear styles. Quincy Jones is my idol as far as a musician who mastered the business of music as well.

Let's now focus on your overall swagger. As far as sound, style, delivery and appearance what makes yours so different from the rest? I don't have anything to prove with music. For me it is a life journey where i slowly learn about myself and the world around me and improve at each turn. If you listen to my music from the Nashville Session album, to The Rude Boy hiphop album and soon the Ghost Flow Ep you can hear me revealing layers of myself and choosing different sounds and combinations of sounds to do that with. Hiphop is the most powerful for me because poetry was my first art form. I am different because i realize i am different than all the other creations in the universe and i honestly try to approach the music that way while paying respect to the tradition. Also i am a real southern B-Boy. 100 percent.

What artists are you listening to at the moment and why? Hmmmm. Moment of truth huh? Haha. Ghostpoet from europe and Mia have been getting a lot of time on my playlist. US artist wise i listen to a lot of mixtapes but Drake, Dizzy Wright, and artist named Giftz. I could go on but mainly i go for lyricism and rhythm. I listen to rap and hiphop the same way i listen to jazz. I go for an overall sound first then i listen closer and enjoy individual elements. If some of the elements aren't perfect it doesn't bother me if the overall sound and delivery are solid and innovative. Joey Badass is probably my favorite new artist of 2013 because i love that retro style and sound updated.

Nowadays, a lot of musicians are operating independently. Are you currently seeking a record deal? I would be open to a distribution deal but i want to remain independent so as to maintain creative freedom. I also enjoy working with the artist i choose and reach out to such as the collab i recently did with two female emcees Imyounik and Honey Cocaine. Being independent allows me the ability to try creative non traditional things that i know people will love.

What are your plans for 2014? More hiphop but with more acoustic elements to fully use my skills as an instrumentalist as well as my voice. Also shows in the Bay and possibly other cities if my schedule permits. I definitely love shooting music videos. I have been able to shoot videos in other countries because i travel so much and i have to admit i see how videography becomes a passion for some because its so much freakin fun,, haha.

Being so young in the game pursuing the music industry can at times become discouraging. Where do you see your career as a recording artist in 5 to 10 years from now? I see people recognizing me as an alternative hiphop artist who carved out a niche by combining elements from different genres like jazz and trip hop and creating my own sound. I want to share with people so that they see we all have the capacity to create and share those creations with the world thereby connecting with each other.

Finally, is there anything else you would like to share with our readers? Hmm. If you are reading this right now and you have something challenging or hard going on in your life don't give in to the desire to use destructive element for a fast fix. I've been there and survived to be able to say if you wait long enough all bad things pass and good is always there waiting for us if we are just true to ourselves and patient enough to try that path.

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