

Madlib – WLIB AM: King of the Wigflip



WLIB AM:King of the Wigflip marks the end of an era. “As Dirty Harry said, “a man has to realize his limitations” is how Barely Breaking Even (BBE) co-founder and current label head Peter Adarkwah explains the successful Beat Generation series coming to a close. “Evolution is [the] key to all survival.”

And few artists represent such evolution like Madlib The Beat Konducta. The Oxnard, California native has become what writer Amiri Baraka (nee Leroi Jones) once referred to jazz immortal John Coltrane as “a more fixed traveler; a peace idiom, and time, placement of himself.” Madlib is a fitting piece in the Beat Generation puzzle, which has run the spectrum of top-flight producers with legends (Marley Marl, Pete Rock, Jazzy Jeff), young lions (DJ Spinna, King Britt, Will.I.Am), and the incomparable Jay Dee aka J Dilla, whose Welcome to Detroit was the first artist album to be commissioned by BBE.

But Dilla was not the first artist to be considered by the label for its inaugural Beat Generation release. That distinction would initially go to Kenny Dope of Masters At Work, then to Jazzy Jeff, yet both were hesitant at the time. “It was very different, for the first time in your life, someone giving you the opportunity to basically say who you are as a producer,” Jeff told Wax Poetics magazine in 2006. “Because a lot of us are under the hypnotism of the industry, I had no idea what to do. He [Adarkwah] gave me complete freedom, and as much as I begged for that, I got scared because it’s kind of, like, “What do you do when somebody gives you complete freedom?”

Short answer: You become Madlib “ maverick, prolific, and tirelessly uninhibited. WLIB AM: King of the Wigflip plays like the days when AM radio ruled the airwaves, transmitting a crackling, low-fi mélange of endless sample fodder, vocal snippets, and sonic intuition, turning singles into stars and flipping wigs with each twist of the dial. Starting with the ominous, tribal overtones of “The New Resident,” its spiritual spank followed by the customarily aggressive Guilty Simpson on the brassy, stabbing “Blow the Horns On ~Em,” WLIB AM: King of the Wigflip finds Madlib venturing away from the deconstruction of world rhythms on recent projects and returning to his Western hemisphere roots in hip-hop and R&B.

And in getting back to basics, lyricism is in full effect, courtesy of Cali cohorts such as Defari on the driving, speed-limit bass funk of “Gamble On Ya Boy,” MED and Poke’s ode to home stance with the fury of “The Ox (805),” and Murs doing what Murs do in addressing the “can’t live with ~em, can’t live without ~em” state of male-female relations over the electro-pulse minimalism of “Ratrace.” Beat Konducta The Younger, Oh No, teams up with big brother Madlib as The Professionals on “I Want It Back,” while the maestro himself steps away from his helm at the beat machine and drops into the vocal booth on the audacious “Heat.”

World Famous Beat Junkie J.Rocc heralds the return of the DJ with cuts on “Blindfold Test #10 (He Don’t Play),” before the proceedings venturing eastward with Detroit’s party hearty Frank N’ Dank riding the humming, percussive “Drinks Up!” like Motor City madmen. Another Motown-born MC, former Common and Kanye West sideman, Karriem Riggins, provides a glimpse into the Madlib-Riggins Supreme Team pairing on the melancholy “Life,” while veteran Prince Po provides a standout cameo with the vibrant buoyancy of “The Thang-Thang.”

Talib Kweli, Georgia Anne Muldrow, Roc C, and the songbird styling of Frezna (“Yo-Yo Affair, parts 1 & 2) and Stacy

Epps round out WLIB AM: King of the Wigflip, which is woven together by dusted interludes and instrumentals like few but The Beat Konducta can. “Madlib was not consciously meant to be last in the series,” says BBE’s Adarkwah, but when considering the producer to which he is most often associated “the late J Dilla” it is without question the proper closure. “Blacktronica should be the future,” Adarkwah declares, and he should know best, for it is Blacktronica that has already helped define his storied label’s past and present.

1. The New Resident – The Beat Konducta
2. Blow The Horns On ‘Em – Guilty Simpson
3. The Plan Pt. 1 – Georgia Anne Muldrow
4. Tension – The Beat Konducta
5. Gamble On Ya Boy – Defari
6. The Ox (805) – MED feat. Poke
7. All Virtue – The Beat Konducta
8. Blinfold Test #10 (He Don’t Play) – J-Rocc
9. The Thang-Thang – Prince Po
10. Heat – Madlib
11. Smoke Break – The Beat Konducta
12. The Plan (Reprise) – The Beat Konducta
13. Life – Karriem Riggins
14. Parklight – The Beat Konducta
15. Yo Yo Affair Pt. 1 & 2 – Frezna
16. I Want It Back – The Professionals (Oh No & Madlib)
17. Disco Dance – The Beat Konducta
18. What It Do “Liberation (Talib Kweli & Madlib)
19. Take That Money – Roc C feat. Oh No
20. Drinks Up! – Frank N Dank
21. The Way That I Live – Stacy Epps
22. Ratrace – Murs
23. Go! – Guilty Simpson
24. Stop – The Beat Konducta

For More Info, Check Out:

<http://www.kingofthewigflip.com>