

Kickmag Interview With Opio



Three years ago [Opio](#) released his first album [Triangulation Station](#) to an audience of hip-hop connoisseurs familiar with his beginnings as a member of the Souls Of Mischief. His disarming dedication on the mic spit words in the style of a boxer like Sugar Ray Leonard; light on his feet but strong in his delivery. Fifteen years of rhyming with Souls, the Hieroglyphics crew and offering his individual flow has produced a brand of funky hip-hop heard by too few people. On July 15th he is releasing his new CD Vulture's Wisdom done up in his lyrics and production credits by fellow Bay Area native The Architect. Three videos from the album for ["Stop The Press"](#) ["Some Superfly Shit"](#) and ["Don Julio"](#) are entertaining the hip-hop junkies, ensnaring new fans and adding another level of credibility to Oakland's longstanding scene. Opio spoke with Kickmag about his upcoming album release, longevity and the maintenance of his muse.

What is Vulture's Wisdom? How is it different from your first solo album Triangulation Station?

It's different from the first record because my man Architect he's a producer from out this way and I've been a fan of his for years he worked with a lot of cats, Planet Asia, hardcore he did a lot of stuff the early style pro. On the first record I basically tried to produce the whole thing, this is a different look with him tackling all the production aspect. The title Vulture's Wisdom came about from conversations me and Architect was having about the game was about hip-hop we felt we have a lot of experience years in the game we always had a lot of love for the music and not the commercial side of things with that experience comes wisdom. We just sat back with a bird's eye view and watched the game and we could see

everyone saying, "There's nothing there it's done" we saw food we saw potential to eat so we just kind of swooped in with the Vulture's Wisdom and bought this music.

Your band was one of the last ones to emerge in the Golden Era your new album has that same sound updated. How would you describe that sound?

I spoke about this before it's really about the fact that from that Golden Era which for me was more like '88 but for the next generation or whatever cats was really looking at the early '90s like the Golden Era of hip-hop. I grew-up on hip-hop and it brought me the values of hip-hop; to stay consistent, try to be original, don't bite other people's styles all these rules and regulations people throw out the doors nowadays. You know some people try to tap into that energy of the '90s. You see it like with Kanye, Pharrell and was successful at it I got respect for them. If you like at me and who I am you wonder how I am maintaining the sound you know my pedigree I'm from Souls Of Mischief I'm from Hieroglyphics we was at the forefront of some of that style people is looking for I represent that energy it flows through me so it's not really like it's effortless this is what we do this is our style where as other cats be trying to do it we just are that. For me it's just more like it's always about trying to elevate your style and be original. Souls Of Mischief the way we came during the time we was out people had a ton of categories to put us in East Coast, yall sound like Native Tongues or whatever they couldn't really classify it, it was like West Coast underground hip-hop it was like an unknown thing. Its just West Coast hip-hop underground on some real shit. A lot of stuff nowadays is kind of geared for a pop audience or radio where as this album is actually constructed as an album a lot of people don't do that anymore they make singles



So you don't think hip-hop is dead?

When you say hip-hop is dead people automatically think of Nas I got nothing but respect for Nas he is one of the rawest cats in the game so I'm definitely not talking about him. We don't see it as being dead but other people do. I still love hip-hop I'm still down with it. I still listen to stuff that comes out I buy records all that me and Architect both. I hear people say hip-hop is so terrible it sucks blah blah blah they was saying that when J.Dilla was alive. MF Doom and Madlib are giving you bars and people are still saying that I don't feel hip-hop is dead at all.

With that being said who do you listen to?

Richie Slick, Beeda Weeda, Guilty Simpson, Black Milk, Madlib, Kurupt.

I see where you and The Architect came together from working in the same studio space, you two obviously have musical chemistry how was the creative process for you two?

See for me always being around a working environment even if I'm not at the time working me and Architect was both like studio rats like workaholics. He's always be in the lab working a lot that's how we kind of got together and met each other. We met at Hyde St. studios where Hieroglyphics had a studio that's where we recorded all our albums ['93 To Infinity](#) and all that. When we would get together we were already chilling kind of hard because he's cool like that. But when it comes time for us to do music he has so much material he's got so many beats like for days and he's always working always making new stuff. He's never so caught-up in the beats where he's like "Man you gotta rap on this and it gotta be like this he was just providing me with the background like 'yo here peep this peep this.'" He was just always exciting me with new hot beats. I would get a CD say that got 20 beats on it and I maybe like write to 3 of them or something even though I

like them all 3 of them catch my attention and I'm just like I don't want to use this CD anymore send me another one. He would send me another one with 50 beats on it. He made it easy for me in that way and that's why we worked so easy together and on top of that that's why we got so much material done you know like because the dude is like a beast. He's like talented you listen to the beats and everything on there is hot.

I really like the Superfly Shit video Justin Herman directed for you how did the concept for it come into being?

The concept was kind of thought of by me and Architect because we was filming videos we basically helped edit and direct the whole DVD. I went into the Raiders Stadium we did some other things it was like Halloween night we gotta get crazy masks we had a few concepts and then Architect was like "Yo we should do it like the greenscreen joint and just like flip it and could do the three-man band." I was kind of like it's going to be kind of hard cuz it was a step up from what we did before but my man Justin Herman is real talented He was "Nah Nah we can do it whatever yall are thinking about as far as the concept of having a three-man band." Basically just throwing up everything behind me with the greenscreen so that every time I say a lyric whatever imagery comes up coincides. Plus you know the name of the song is "Some Superfly Shit" and you know we are children of the '70s we grew-up in the '80s we listen to the music of that time we are still from that soulful time so I wanted to show that in the video and have it. You know everybody loves nostalgia but it's more like highly stylized it gives you this vibe like being timeless instead of trying to be like the '70s it's classic timeless.

What are your favorite songs on the album?

"Don Julio" that's my joint. I like the song called "Vice-versa" it's a story about um you know about you know being in California you see a lot of different people. And I got friends of all walks of life all different getdowns some of my

dudes they get money, party go out and get chicks or whatever then I got other homies they ain't even tripping about going out to the club and they always on a jack move kind of a come-up. One dude is like a crazy gangster and the other guy gives his perspective on his player life or whatever it's kind of like putting those two lifestyles in opposition and showing what would happen if they were to meet up basically showing what they do on the average. I just like the beat Architect came-up with is so crazy that's one of my favorite songs too.

Is there anyone you want to work with that you have not?

There are definitely people I want to work with. Like a lot of cats I be seeing all the time you know what I mean just like my people like The Alchemist that's one person I'd like to work with Madlib I be seeing that cat like a lot of people. I have a lot of MF Doom shit.

You've been in the game for a long time 15 yrs since coming from Souls Of Mischief, what keeps you inspired?

For me in order to like do this for this long and still have energy to do it when you gotta like you gotta like just love it meaning that it's a part of me. It's not just something I do on weekends or whatever if you check my whole life you'll see I've been rapping since I was 8 years old. It's almost like this is what I am the main thing that inspires me is just like life in general my surroundings and just taking it internally whatever little life philosophy I gain from my life experiences translates into the music. It's really not like it would be hard to find one thing that inspires you to stay active in the game for this long. Either I do it for the fans or I do it for whatever the money it could be anything you get boredom unless you really love it and it's just inside you to do it regardless.

Will there be another Souls album?

Yeah definitely Souls Of Mischief is still fam we still down. We've been in it so long being even though we ain't really necessarily recorded hella records we tour like crazy. A lot of people get to see us all the time people be asking for you know they want to hear a Tajae record, they want to hear a Aplus record or Opio or whatever so we've just been trying to appease cats a little more. It has its positives and negatives to working alone you get to do it without any democratic system you just do whatever you want to do at the same time you got to come up with it all by yourself. I'm going to always be a part of Souls Of Mischief and Hieroglyphics as long as we still down we're going to record records we got one that's done right now that's ready to be out later on this year early next year so we're still working we're still fam.

Will "Cabfare" ever be released on CD?

I was talking to somebody about this really at this point and time there's such a demand for that song it probably would come out. I think the nostalgia in the song part of this whole magic of this song is it's hard to find there's a beauty in that. I'd like to see it come out on CD but I know that cats probably they only like the song because you can't find it that got to have something to do with why it's so popular.

When does Vultures Wisdom drop?

The album comes with a DVD and it also has a DVD with cartoons it's this character my homies came up with called Calcula he's like an ill dude I'm always like up late night watching cartoons smoking weed getting high so it's kind of like trying to be along the lines of something that I would watch at night bugging out it's going to intermix with the videos. When the record comes out it's going to be limited edition CD DVD together. It comes out July 15th.