

J HUS

In just over a year J Hus has become one of the most talked about new talents at the forefront of the current Grime resurgence. A nomination for Best Newcomer at last year's MOBO Awards and his inclusion on the prestigious long-list for the 2016 BBC Sound Poll are both prime examples of the recognition Hus has received from fans and media alike. With the release of new track 'Friendly', which leaked late last year and amassed over 700k plays on his Sound Cloud, Hus is just getting started.

J Hus can't be defined or confined by genre. Boasting an ebullient blend of Dancehall, Afrobeat, Grime and R&B, his *15th Day* mixtape is a musical revelation, an emotional rollercoaster ride into the inner musings of an inner city teen and a startling debut offering. A deftly delivered offering, the mixtape is filled with street rhymes streaked with an irrepressible sense of humour and lyrics laced with references to the likes of 50 Cent, Outkast, Beanie Man, TLC, JME and I-Wayne. "I'm everything you've heard before, and nothing you've ever heard before," grins the charismatic J Hus, who manages to be simultaneously shy and self-assured.

There are reflections on his earlier illegal endeavors to be found within Hus' oeuvre, but they're deceptively delivered; the soundtrack is so joyous that the suggestion of darkness, conveyed mostly through Hus' persuasive flow, is a mere shadow lurking behind the upbeat beats. It makes Hus a dichotomous proposition, but also an infinitely interesting one. His wordplay demonstrates a unpredictable sense of imagination which he pairs with an innate talent for crafting completely contagious hooks, particularly on tracks like *Bangers & Mash* – about dating white girls – and *Guns & Butter*, an alternate perspective on crime that is intently serious, yet still manages to include mention of the Chuckle Brothers.

Released completely independently with no mainstream media or marketing, *15th Day* reached over a million plays in its first one month, while the videos for street anthems *No Lie*, *Lean & Bop* and *Dem Boy Paigon* have so far collectively amassed over 10 million plays on YouTube. His freestyles for Link Up TV, Charlie Sloth's Fire in the Booth, Westwood's Crib Sessions, #StreetHeat and the one that made him his name – Fli5star – have clocked up over 5m plays to date.

As well as building an ever-growing online audience, Hus has also garnered support from Tim Westwood, Krept & Konan and Jamal Edwards, all of who feature in the video for *Lean & Bop*, J's first official release on Black Butter. An unabashed Afrobeat-accentuated party anthem, *Lean & Bop* shows off Hus's more pop inflected persuasions. "Initially I made it for my mum and my four year-old brother, it's a song that they can actually listen to," he says of the J-Five produced single. "But I actually want to be commercial," he insists.

“I made *Lean & Bop* before I was offered a deal. I’ll still make commercial music by myself, on my own terms, whether I’m signed or not because I love that sound. I’m tired of the road and the music that reflects that. I want to show that I’m capable of being diverse.”

Born Momodou Jallow and brought up in Stratford, East London by his single parent mother, Hus first started rapping in Primary School after hearing 50 Cent. “I was shy – I still can be – but it’s weird, when I rap my shyness disappears.” He continued to write rhymes throughout Senior School, inspired by the likes of Skepta and, later on, South London rappers Krept & Konan, but towards the end of school he found himself increasingly in trouble. Kicked out for misbehavior, Hus was arrested when he was 16 after a fight with another gang and sentenced to a year in prison. “It was cool to be bad,” he says with a heavy sigh. “I knew what I was doing was wrong, but it’s just how we were in Stratford; it was the life we led. Everyone wanted to be bad.”

It would be a further two years before Hus realised road life was leading to two possible outcomes – neither of which were particularly appealing. It was September 2014 when he decided to quit road life. “I thought deeply about what I wanted to do. I said I’d give music three months and if I wasn’t up there by December 2014, I’d quit. Luckily...” he stops to laugh. “I could see, almost immediately, that music was helping me to figure out who I am. I used to think I was useless, just a road guy. But music has shown me I have potential, that I can do something with my life, that I have a talent. Who I was last year, that’s not me. I’m fun, I’m happy, I’m creative. That’s who I want to be.”

Since making that decision, Hus has seen an exponential increase in popularity; as well as viral freestyles and street heaters like *Dem Boys Paigon* and *Calling Me*, supporting Young Thug on his debut London show, while Krept & Konan invited him to join them onstage at last year’s Wireless, after his own set earlier in the day. His own debut mixtape won critical acclaim from the likes of Noisey, Complex and i-D and Hus secured a single deal with Black Butter, known as the incubator of talent of everyone from Rudimental to Jess Glynne and MNEK. He ended 2015 featuring on Tinie Tempah’s Junk Food mixtape and is set to appear on Katy B’s forthcoming album.

An ambitious and impatient young man, Hus – the J after his surname, the Hus short for Hustle - is also a strategist, a planner, a chess player in many ways. “I go for walks a lot,” he says of his approach to formulating ideas for music. “I like anywhere green; it allows me to clear my mind and consider what I want to do next.” Clearly incredibly clued up, he doesn’t just head to the studio to see what comes out; his creativity is much more considered. “I looked at what people were doing and what was successful and added my own spice to it. I put lots of ideas into the pot and what comes out is my own creation. Rather than trying to be like someone, or pretending to be someone else, you have to be yourself. No one can be a better J Hus than J Hus.”

He’s right; this utterly unique individual is one of the most exciting new names making music in 2016. And while J Hus has just got going, the possibilities appear endless.

“People haven’t heard the best of me yet – far from it. I’ve been doing music for just over a year now and the way I’ve seen myself advance makes me realise how much further I can advance in another year. Achieving what I have has given me so much more encouragement and confidence. I feel like I can do anything now. My story’s not finished yet; I’ve got a lot more to show people.”

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