

DAVIDO

Nearing the close of 2019, it's hard for many to say they haven't heard the name **Davido**, born David Adedeji Adeleke. The year marks another fete of huge achievements, from opening the year with a sold out date at London's O2 Arena – making him the first solo African artist to do this – to creating mass hysteria across America with his 2018 single "Fall" which has gone on to have the longest run of an Afrobeats single on the *Billboard* charts, and saw it peak across Shazam as one of the most searched songs in the United States, and now gears up to release his second album **A Good Time**, all before a circuit of Christmas shows across Africa.

If anything has framed where Davido currently is, it would be his "childhood." The youngest of five, growing up with his parents in Lagos, Nigeria, he was "exposed" to the world. Across summer breaks he would travel to visit his siblings in London and Atlanta, the latter being home to some of the artists that he today he can call his good friends – **YoungThug, Gunna, Lil Baby** – and the home to some of his favorite rappers growing up – Ludacris, Nelly – the sounds of noughties Hip Hop that he "loved." It was most likely these trips that would drive a love for music that reflected global ambition. This exposure to the world, would in turn give Davido the opportunity to share with his University of Alabama friends music from Nigeria, that he knew if "given a chance" would go global. This notion was actualized for him in hearing the "classic" album **The Entertainer** from Afrobeats maverick D'Banj that made Davido fall "in love with Afrobeats." Spurred on further by watching his cousin and now hype-man Special work alongside the Mo' Hits crew, the idea of becoming a musician became more an attainable feat, and more attractive than an atypical route in academics.

Starting out releasing singles in a less conventional approach, that would probably leave most labels in doubt, Davido amassed a cult following across Nigeria, and in turn Africa. Despite being young his music was "stuff the older people could like" and so bridged the generational gap of those who enjoyed the classic sounds of Shina Peters but also the new take on Afrobeats from the likes of Davido and Wizkid who would go "back to back" releasing singles. From his debut single "Back When" to "Dami Duro," it was not long before Davido struck gold with "Skelewu," now boasting to over 50 million streams and views. At the time admittedly labels were still "understanding" the Afrobeats resurgence, but the intrigue of the sound that was quickly spreading worldwide pricked the ears of A&Rs across the globe, and it was not long before Sony Music signed the Nigerian star. Nevertheless, David's approach remained the same working with his go-to producers Shizzi and Kiddominant, who've also produced his upcoming album, to release enough music across the past 7 years to make 4 albums.

A faultless methodology catapulted David's profile globally, as he knew was possible. Lauded as the 'King of Afrobeats' by his "30 Billion Gang," who have made him the most-followed Afrobeats artist. He now holds a discography now attesting to over 251 million global streams and 400 million video views, earning over 30 awards internationally including the MOBO for Best African Act, the MTV EMA for Best International Act, two MTV Africa Music Awards, a 2014 BET Award for "Best African Act," two Nigerian Teen Choice Awards for "Top Featured Artist" and "Choice Male Artist." Successive hit singles "If," "Fall" and "Fia" has seen recognition and support from all around the world.

A Good Time seemingly marks a new chapter in Davido's journey. With free time in LA, it gave the perfect chance for Davido to take his time to create his next body of work that would "be more about [me]... to show the world [my] music" and the genres that have shaped him. When looking at the

international A-List of collaborations on the album, one may think this is a label move. However, in reality, “the collaborations just happened” David admits, referring to a network of friends he has developed over the years. Features that bring together the sounds of Dancehall – **Popcaan** – to Atlanta’s gritty hip hop – **Gunna** – to contemporary R&B – **Summer Walker** and **Chris Brown** – melding with the sound of Afrobeats. Naming the album, **A Good Time** because he feels that “this is a good time right now for everybody, for the culture, I had a good time making the album, it was just fun, there’s no sad music there. You’ll have a good time listening to it.”

It might not be surprising that as he nears his tenth year of making music, he feels like in five years’ time, at the tender age of 31, he might be ready to retire. Leave music? No that would not be an option but finding a salve in mentoring the younger generations of musicians coming through the scene, in the same way the likes of D’Banj and 2Face did for him. Mentorship and the familial approach taken to music, is something Davido attributes to the burgeoning Latin music scene -- they “collaborate, tour together and the streams grow” and something he feels could be a great addition to the African scene, as he feels that not “one person could do it on their own.”

With the birth of his first son ahead of the new album, Davido will release a project he predicts will be “on replay for a while,” possibly hinting a time for the star to rest, but before then they’ll be a 2020 tour with Davido taking his music further than before.