



The best things in life come to those who wait, and that certainly applies to A\$AP Twelvyy's debut album, *12*. Recorded over a three-year period (from 2013 to 2016), the Harlem-born rapper packs 28 years of lived experience in the city he calls home into a sonically expansive and personal document that waxes reflective as much as it does embrace his successes. Thoughtful and considered, it's the type of record that could only be made with the patient deliberation that Twelvyy espouses.

"There's nothing wrong with being patient, experiencing life, and being ready when you're ready," he enthuses on *12*'s central themes. "Most of the time it's just the pressure of everybody else saying 'You gotta do this now or it ain't gonna happen.' Me and my brothers have the luxury to have other brothers in our set to hold you down. I'm grateful to have that—if it wasn't for that, I wouldn't have been able to take so long. I would've had to rush to put it out. Shout out to my family for giving me the comfortability of having time to do this."

Family and personal history loom large over *12*—a record that encapsulates where Twelvyy's been, what he and his A\$AP Mob brethren have gone through during their incredible come-up, and where he's heading next. The title of opening cut "Castle Hell" cleverly references the Castle Hill section of the Bronx that he's called home for the majority of his life, pairing classic NYC bombast with tales of long flights and harrowing high-rise escapades; acting as the perfect bookend is the contemplative "Brothers," a cut that simultaneously toasts the accomplishments of Twelvyy and the Mob while reflecting on the tragic passing of A\$AP Yams in 2015.

Indeed, the experiences Twelvyy drew from for *12* reflects not only what he's seen, but the lessons he's learned—or as he puts it: "The journey of becoming a man. They don't teach you how to be a man. It's something you gotta learn for yourself. You can't just propel that—you gotta live and stick through it."

And Twelvyy's lived through a lot: since a fateful meeting with Yams and A\$AP Rocky at a house party in 2008, he's seen a steady rise with star-making appearances on Rocky's debut mixtape *Live. Love. A\$AP* ("Trilla") and the Mob's *Lords Never Worry* ("Full Metal Jacket," "Gotham City"), the excellent #WavyWednesdays singles series from last year, and a 2016 tour with fellow NYC heatmakers Flatbush Zombies and Remy Banks.

And it's that last life event that had a particular effect on Twelvyy while working on *12*. "Being able to travel, meeting diverse groups of people I've never met—they don't know what New York is, you feel me?" he explains. "They think that New York is SoHo. New York is not SoHo. Shit, I didn't even go to SoHo when I was growing up, until I was 21. It's a world way broader than Broadway. I just want the people to know that New York is bigger than the glitz and glamour that they see."

When it comes to encapsulating the multifaceted nature of NYC, *12* contains multitudes—a pitch-perfect blend of sounds distantly familiar and thrillingly new, from a coterie of top producers ranging from Harry Fraud and THC to P on the Boards. From the melancholic sighs and gleaming melodicism of "Diamonds" to the geeked-up energy of A\$AP Ferg-featuring "Hop Out," to the screwed-down darkness of "Yea Yea Yea (Maps)," there's something for everyone on *12*, and that's just how Twelvyy wants it.

"There might be a few samples here and there, but this record takes from the old, the new, *and* the future—mixing everything together," he exclaims on the album's many sounds. "After this, people are going to change their style to this—but it ain't gonna happen, you dig? You can't microwave this. I had to take 12 years just to live this. Everything is facts. The only thing that's not facts is me hopping out the Porsche and out the Rari—I don't do that too often. I'm the type to hop into an UberX instead." Keeping it real never sounded so satisfying.

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