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# STUDIO SESSION: MANTRA CONNECTS WITH FUTURE TO HELP CRAFT BEATS FOR "SELFISH" AND "FRESH AIR"

Sidney Madden | March 20, 2017

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**Future** shocked the game last month by dropping two back-to-back albums: the self-titled **FUTURE** and **HNRXX**.

While both are filled with bangers that every **#FutureHive** member is more than happy to add to their collection, there's one track that's been getting more replay from the rapper's supporters as well as the Rihanna Navy. Future's airy, sensual collab with the bad gyal herself, **Rihanna**, is a clear standout on **HNRXX**. "**Selfish**" marked the second time Future and RiRi collaborated on wax, the first time being 2013's "**Love Song**."

If you're still floating to Future and Rihanna's "Selfish," **Mantra** is partially the reason why. The 26-year-old producer was actually unaware that his first professional placement would be on Future's R&B-inclined **HNRXX** album until a few days before the LP dropped—let alone with a feature from Rihanna tacked on.

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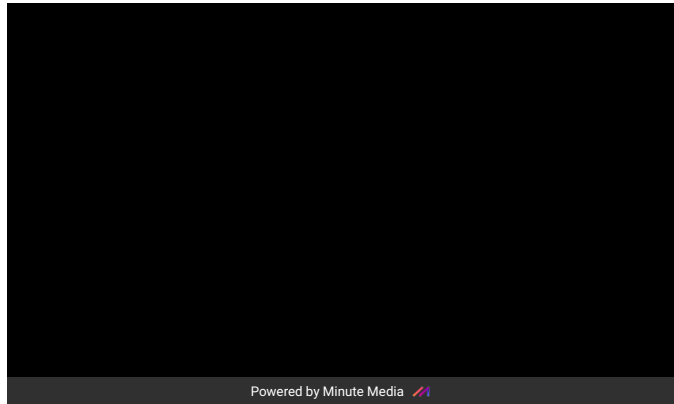
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On the heels of the *HNDRXX* release, *XXL* caught up with the incognito beatsmith from Las Vegas to talk about working with Future to co-produce "Selfish" as well as the Brazilian funk influence found on "Fresh Air" and what's next on his plate.

**XXL: How old were you when you started producing?**

Mantra: I started when I was 20. I'm 26 now. I started pretty late. I wish I had started out at like 15.

**How did you start producing? What inspired you to start?**

I think I just started having melodies in my head just out of nowhere. After I got my iPod, I started creating songs in my head then I got a keyboard, then I found out about SoundClick. Then I realized I can make money off of making music, then it took off from there. I've been selling music online like SoundClick, YouTube, Beatstars.

**How did you meet Future and start working with him?**

I actually haven't met him. I sent a **folder of beats to Major Seven**. He worked on some of them and sent them over to Detail and Detail I guess was working with Future in the studio. So I haven't actually met any of these people. I talk to Major on the phone all the time but I never met him in person.

**So you've never met Major Seven either?**

Not in person, but we do always talk on the phone.

**The power of the Internet, right?**

Yeah, it's crazy. I don't even have to travel to get placements.

**Did you know that by sending your beats to Major Seven that it would be going towards a Future project?**

I had no idea. I knew Major Seven was working on it so I knew that something could potentially happen. I would have never in a million years guessed that those two beats would end up on Future's album featuring Rihanna.

**How did you and Major Seven first link up?**

Actually, a customer of mine who found me on Beatstars liked my music and he's really good friends with Major Seven. I think they lived together. He played my stuff for Major and Major liked my stuff and I think he shot me a text and we talked on the phone.

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**How long ago was that?**

I think it was like seven or eight months ago. Everything happened pretty quick.

**What was your specific role in creating "Selfish"? Was it the track, the drum pattern, any live instrumentation, anything like that?**

I think I had a role of all those elements. I'm not sure what the other, what Major and Detail did but they definitely did stuff. They beefed up the drums for sure. They had a lot of transitional effects. They rearranged it completely. They did an amazing job. I came up with the chord progression and the drums. I guess you can say I came up with it.

**What about "Fresh Air"? Can you break down how you crafted that one?**

I made that like a year ago and it was highly influenced by Brazilian music. It's called funk music, I think it's Brazilian funk. You might be able to hear some of it in the background. That had like a Brazilian funk rhythm section that I was whipping around and then I came up with the chords around that. It was a really simple beat. I just had like some chords and a little bit of drums. Then I sent that to Major. I guess and another guy named [King] Benjamin went crazy on the drums. I can't take too much credit for the drums. The drums, the 808s, that's all them.

**When did you find out that that you were going to have two placements on the album and how did it feel?**

It was surreal. That was the moment that I found out that I had the Rihanna one. That's like one of the craziest moments. That's like the peak of all this, was that moment when I found out. I think that was the day before it came out. Two weeks before this placement happened, I thought I was going to be on the first Future album. So when that dropped and I wasn't on it, I was like kind of depressed because I really thought it was gonna happen. Then I found out a few days later he was dropping a surprise album the next Friday. So it's funny how that turned out.

**Since this is your biggest placement thus far, what other music are you working on this year?**

I don't know what I can say. I am working pretty closely with my manager. He's trying to get me in sessions with a bunch of people, like Diplo. Yeah, I'll say that much for now.

**Who do you really love as a producer right now? Who influences you?**

Oh, Kid Cudi was a huge influence for me growing up. I definitely liked his first three albums. Cashmere Cat pretty big influence on me. The Weeknd. Starrah. I don't know if you know Starrah. Her manager is my manager, so hopefully we can get something working soon. Obviously Drake. All the big names.

**See Photos of Future's Different Looks Over the Years**

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