

Amittai Blakk - Bio

Amittai Blakk has just created a soulful brand new project that at times sounds like a far more R&B Lenny Kravitz, mixed with the utter smoothness of Al Green and a much rawer CeeLo Green. It's a direction with deep roots, but also outstretched branches. "This is the music I grew up with," Blakk explains, matter-of-factly. "I grew up singing professional quartet gospel, so it's music I've always done." It's as much about sound, however, as it is about style. "This music has a very strong tone to it. It makes the speakers move. And one thing I've found is that people love bass; particularly women. Women love bass! And I like bass. I make sure *that tone* is real strong in my music."

The upcoming project's first single, from Fulton Yard Unlimited Presents, is titled "Walk Away." It's a song about having enough presence of mind, willpower and divine intervention to step away from doing the wrong thing. "It's a song where I'm really talking about when I could have made the wrong turn," Blakk explains, "but something spoke to me and said, 'No, don't destroy your life like that.'"

The unique stage name of Amittai Blakk "made sense for what I was doing," Blakk explains, "because I was being very honest and raw with my music." This raw sound comes through loud and clear, the moment you hear these songs. "Amittai" stands for 'my truth,'" Blakk elaborates on his name.

There's wide variety in this music to enjoy, as "Only One" is stripped-down reggae, while both "When I Touch" and "Play The Game" feature pounding drums, with the latter highlighted by gospel vocal harmonies atop its R&B groove. The stripped down "Dope Like That" includes both spoken and sung lyrics, as Blakk opens his heart about the relationship he has with his mother.

Veteran producer Neal Pogue has much to do with the high quality sound of these new recordings. Before working with Blakk, Pogue took home a Grammy for engineering and mixing Outkast's *Speakerboxxx/The Love Below* release in 2004. His A-list credits also include past work with M.I.A., Nelly Furtado, Earth, Wind & Fire, TLC, Pink, Nicki Minaj and Janelle Monae.

The new recordings – although powerful -- are ultimately best served live. This is because Blakk prides himself on being a powerful concert performer, and any time he plays live, you can put money on it that there will be a lot of energy in the house. Ah, but there is so much more than that. "I definitely want to make that emotional connection," Blakk clarifies. "There's no facade. Just being real. When I leave that stage, I'm wet from head to toe." Blakk looks to a few big musical heroes for his going-all-out approach. "Think about the James Browns and the Jackie Wilsons," he says. Women loved those two men, and they also dig Blakk. "It's dedicated to the women, but in a very respectful way," he adds. And at the end of the day, it's all about the fans. "We can give a performance all day long," Blakk explains, "but if the fans are not involved, then it's not a show. The fans are what make it a show."

Blakk is able to make this unique "emotional connection" with his audience because he also has a message in his music; one particularly directed at the way humans behave with each other. "I wanted to talk about love and the way we treat our women," he says, "with all this disrespect and calling names. I just wanted to change it up. I'm not using any profanity in my songs. If a rapper does it, that's something different. But I don't use any profanity in any of my music. You'll never hear me call a woman a 'B' word and you're not going to hear the 'N' word coming from me."

There's clearly a higher power behind Blakk's high ideals. In one case, Blakk addresses his higher power directly. "There's the song "Only One," where I talk about how there's one god," Blakk says.

“There's no need to be fighting over it, like, what to call him. There's more important things going on in the world than to be fighting over that. I try to stay off the religious thing because that requires too many denominations. But I'm definitely trying to make an emotional/spiritual connection with people. It works for me. I think that's the only way for people to understand how to treat each other.”

Ultimately, the divine makes everything come together. It's a mystical experience whenever the music, a message and an audience become connected together in one place. “You can sing with all the emotion you want to, but it takes a 'god-space' for people to connect with you,” says Blakk. “That's beyond your control.”

“Life is so simple/Yet man complicates it for his own greed,” Blakk announces, to begin the song “Only One.” Thankfully, Blakk is doing his part to bring life back to its beautiful simplicity through the powerfully comforting language of music. That's his truth, yes, but it's our truth, too.

-Dan MacIntosh