

Pheelz writes with passion. Over the past few years, the Lagos producer has made songs that blur the boundaries between Afrobeats, R&B, and mainstream pop—using intense emotion and vibrant melody as a force that bridges diverse sounds and styles. Songs like "Finesse," with fellow Nigerian star BNXXN, have started to resonate—bringing Pheelz' boundary-pushing music and earnest, heartwarming emotion to the top of the charts in the UK and his home country. It's the culmination of a lot of hard work. He's pushed himself to make triumphant, otherworldly pop music, but his sounds are always grounded in a warm humanity—the mark of a producer who knows what makes people tick and which songs might be able to take over the whole world.

"Finesse" begins with gleaming guitar and skittering drums that give BNXXN a colorful backdrop for his sultry vocals. This start, though, is just a tease for the chorus, which is one of the most triumphant in pop this year — the sort of refrain that you can immediately imagine blaring from across soccer stadiums and festival mainstages. The hook feels instantly iconic, which Pheelz says he realized the second the vocals were laid down. "I knew it was a monster," he explains with a laugh, before adding, "I knew the vibe I made was amazing. I knew people were going to love it, but I wasn't prepared for this. I had no idea it was going to be this huge this fast."

In a sense, it's a moment that Pheelz has been working toward since he was a kid. Pheelz, born Phillip Kayode Moses in 1994, grew up singing and playing keyboards in the church run by his father, who is a pastor in their home city of Lagos. "I can still remember being 5 years old and walking into the adult church for the first time and I heard the choir sing," he explains. "I saw the power that it had on people. I saw people tearing up. I'm like, 'Hm. This looks cool. I want this.'"

He held onto that transformative, euphoric feeling as he began producing as a teen, which no doubt helped him land his first hit at 16—"Durosoke" by Olamide, a woozy, electronic hip-hop jam. This early success steeled him against doubters and quickly taught him how to operate in the industry. "It showed me how to survive," he says. Since then, Pheelz has become one of Nigeria's most in-demand, and award-winning, producers, working on records for stars like M.I, Mr Eazi, and more. In 2020, he won Producer of the Year at The Headies—Nigeria's hip-hop awards—and in 2021, he released his breezy, beautiful *Hear Me Out* EP, which earned millions of streams and brought his emotional pop to even more listeners around the world.

Even so, the success of "Finesse" has changed everything for Pheelz, except his mission to put all of himself into his songs. "I want to create fearlessly and to show people that they can create fearlessly as well. I want to show everybody that they all have genius in them and they need to let it out," he explains. "I feel like I'm here to interpret sonics in a way that gives people joy." It's hard to get much more joyful than "Finesse," but Pheelz is sure that this is just the beginning of a meteoric rise now that he's inked a deal with Warner Records. "I've been plotting for years. I was ready," he says. "I *am* ready."