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Pheelz's Turn Is Now And He's Using It To Represent Lagos To The Fullest

The Nigerian producer/singer discusses his major label debut album, smash hit "Finesse" and the growing pressures of world stardom.



Osagie Igunma

If anyone has a reason to call 2023 their year, it's **Pheelz**.

The Lagos, Nigeria native has put in over a decade of work professionally in music, producing for some of Africa's top Afrobeat, hip-hop and soul artists. Presiding behind the boards for megastars like **Fireboy DML**, **Olamide**, **Davido**, and many others, he's also been crafting his own prowess as a front-and-center singer/songwriter.

In March 2022, the 28-year-old, along with Afro-fusion singer **BNXN**, commercially released "Finesse", a global mega hit that debuted at No. 1 on Nigeria's Spotify Top 50 chart and peaked at the top of the charts in ten countries, including Dominica, Benin Republic, Cameroon, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Uganda.



A month later, the infectious song got the visual treatment as he released a music video that capsulated the song's relaying of the lavish lifestyle he now lives due to the hard work he put in for so long, particularly for other artists.

Now though, it's Pheelz's turn.

In November, he dropped a new video for the remix of his 2022 smash hit, which featured a new verse from the Lagos artist as well as one from **French Montana**. It's something Pheelz says he never would have imagined while recording the song via the humblest of means.



“That was an incredible man because making the song in my room in Lagos, me listening to the original recording, I never thought the song was going to get to these heights,” he told BET.com during a recent interview. “I knew it was a banger, like I knew it was going to smack but I had no idea it was going to be on this level. Having French on it was really incredible and I was so excited that I wrote a new verse.”

When it comes to his own music videos, Pheelz says representing himself in the right way is paramount. That especially shines through in visuals like “[Electricity](#)” (featuring Davido), the December-released “[Ballin](#)”, and of course, “[Finesse](#)” as vibrant colors, lush extravagance, and dancing take center stage.

“I take it very personal. I sit down with the directors and try to interpret my message and make them understand where I'm coming from,” he notes. “It's very important for me to be human, especially when I'm getting to these new heights. It's easy to take on the persona of a superhero and show the world like you're untouchable or unbreakable, but I always like to be human in my videos and that you can be like me, literally.”

Pheelz says the experiences of being a producer who studied the greats he's worked with has prepared him for the spotlight he's now accumulating. He's hoping to transform that focus into the form of an EP and debut album in 2023.



"I've made so many albums and I've made so many top chatting songs, but right now it's time for the world to know me and my music and I think the album is going to accomplish that," Pheelz says. "There's a song called 'Flaws' on it that's about accepting your flaws and not being perfect. The lyrics say, '*I cannot pretend I'm not perfect, but I will make my choice / As the day progressed, I don't have regrets I accept my flaws.*' So that's me being completely vulnerable. There's a song called 'Human' as well, talking about apologizing to the world for being human.

"I've had people that didn't believe in me as a producer and also as an artist, and I just had to prove them wrong," he adds. "I also had to prove myself wrong as well because some of this unbelief rubs off on you, especially when it's coming from friends and family."

With success has also come pressure for Pheelz, especially as Afrobeat grows in popularity globally, including in the United States. With his forthcoming EP, titled *Pheelz Good*, and LP, many people on the outside will get their first taste of his culture and the lessons it relays.

"I've got so many strong messages that I want to integrate and communicate to the people, so many things I want to say about what's going on in my life and around me and in my environment and for the kids on the streets in Africa and Nigeria, and also for the rest of the world," he describes. "I feel like now that the music space from Africa has the attention from the rest of the world it's important to talk about really important things. And that's what I want the project to be about – just talking about life changing stuff."

In general, Pheelz says he believes the type of music he makes, as well as that of his peers, is ready for its worldwide commercial close up... And nothing would make him more proud.

“I feel like Nigeria as a whole and Afrobeat as a genre has been ready for this since the days of Fela [Kuti],” he adds. “Now that we are here, I feel like this is the tip of the iceberg because the world doesn't even understand the power that is in Nigeria yet when we talk about creativity and talent and art. So yeah, I feel really grateful to be one of the forerunners of this movement and one of the gatekeepers. It seems like Afrobeat artists are winning Grammys and BET [Awards] and are on charts and around the world literally selling out arenas and stadiums.

“If you visit Lagos these days, you see what I'm talking about. It's a lot of grind and a lot of hustle, but also, we find happiness in the craziest places.”