

FUNBI: AN EXPLORATION OF TENDERNESS AND VULNERABILITY

Despite his long hiatus from music since 2021, one thing remains constant with Funbi's music and it's his ability to create music that speaks to the heart and soul of his audience. Enchanting audiences with his velvety voice, captivating lyricism and soul stirring melodies, Funbi brings a unique blend of RnB, Soul and Afrobeats influences, creating a sound that is both contemporary and deeply rooted in tradition.

His latest project "*Love Lust*" is a singular testament to his ever evolving dynamic style; exploring themes of love, desire and passion as he oscillates between the seductive and the delicate intricacies of human emotion.

You've been on a hiatus from music since 2021? Can you share the reason for the break? And what you've been up to?

Yeah. I took a break because I needed to get in the right state of mind to be able to fully focus on music. I was also dealing with some contractual stuff with the people that I was working with which took some time to resolve. I also started a family which required my undivided attention and presence, that's pretty much what's been going on while I was away. Once my contractual issues were resolved and I could find balance on the home front, I was finally in the right state of mind to focus on making music; I knew it was time to pour myself into the music and that's how '*Love Lust*' was birthed.

Tell us about '*Love Lust*'. What was the inspiration behind it? What were you trying to communicate through it?

Hmm, for "*Love Lust*", I was trying to convey that state of uncertainty when you meet someone new you like and are unsure about whether you are in it for the right reasons or just purely driven by emotions; those questions and the need to give it some time to fully process and understand where it stands. It was important for me to put it into the music because I've also been there and know how it feels. The eponymous track "*Love Lust*" on the album perfectly delivers this message; the battle between Love and Lust. The entire project touches on these two themes, that's why I

even went ahead to title it '*Love Lust*'. Some songs on the project touch on love and some are more on the lust side.

One can argue that the alté cultural scene has grown over the years. In what ways do you think the movement has grown? Do you think you've been involved in building the culture?

Hmm, the alté culture. You know, sometimes, I'm not sure I can really call myself Alté. Personally, I see myself more as an R&B artiste. I'll say the alté culture is about being unapologetically true to who you are and that's something that I try to do with my sound and how I create music; I always strive to create music that I'm passionate about.

Yes, authenticity is always the best form of expression. What are the ways you are building an R&B community in Nigeria? Do you think R&B and alternative music have played a role in the evolution of music in the Nigerian soundscape?

Yeah, I was just having a conversation with someone about it today. It is important that artists within the genre collaborate and put on shows to bring our fans together to connect and bond over their shared love of R&B and we can all grow from there. For me right now as I've started putting out the music again, I wanted to organise more shows that grow the community.

The alternative culture was built on similar bases, and I think it's very important to follow through with that, because we do have a lot of people that listen to and appreciate R&B here and one of the best ways to do that is by gathering everyone and amplifying the music, and sound.

True. In what ways are you positioning yourself for success in African music and its mainstream potential?

Well, I would say marketing, marketing in every way possible. Obviously, the product itself has to be good. For me, I like to focus a lot on the product and make sure it is at that place where I am satisfied with it first before putting it out. Putting yourself out there especially on social media is very important and then consistency; you have to be consistent for growth to happen. Once you are consistent, the growth comes.

That's beautiful. Can you share how your experience in music has been so far?

It's been bits of ups and downs. Doing anything always comes with its many ups and downs. I started recording music at an early age.

Over the years, meeting different people; working with different producers and collaborating with some artists, it's been great to see how my music has evolved since the very first time that I recorded and put music out. Behind the scenes, a lot of funding and these connections go into it to make it the way it is today. Despite being away, I've spent time on the sidelines watching and observing how things are moving in the scene and it's beautiful to see how the audience has expanded and people are appreciative of other genres and how they are growing in the global space. It's really been a lot of ups and downs, honestly, my contractual issues being one of the downs, it made me take a step back but all in all, I take it in. And I'm just grateful that I get to do what I love.

Growth is indeed a beautiful thing especially when it's in something you love. Speaking about doing what you love, can you share with us what matters to you most in life and why?

Peace.

Why peace?

Peace of mind. Because as long as I have peace of mind, then I can do whatever I feel like doing as long as I enjoy doing it and that's what's key to me. As much as I would love to be the most famous, the most successful and all that, if I don't have peace, then it means nothing to me. I want to be able to go to sleep at night and be okay with who I am. So yeah, peace of mind is what's most important to me.

That's beautiful. Generally, what's your take on the future of music in Nigeria? How do you see it evolving in years to come?

I think it's limitless. It's incredible to see how our sound has evolved over decades; from the likes of Plantashun Boiz, to the band era, and then to Wiz era, and others, it just keeps going. There are newer sub genres and sounds now, I was talking to someone recently about how Amapiano has such a heavy influence on our music

right now. And before that, there were other sounds influencing our music; it just keeps growing and morphing into newer sounds, infusing different elements into our music, and getting bigger.

It's just exciting to see and I'm glad I get to be a part of it. I also think that Nigerian music has not seen its peak yet; Nigerians are creating and will keep creating because that's who we are, we don't quit, and that's the magic. It brings joy to my heart when I think about how far our music can go.