

Future: Beast Mode 2

SC spectrumculture.com/2018/07/17/future-beast-mode-2-review

Daniel Bromfield

July 17, 2018



The first *Beast Mode* was released in 2015, deep in the fallout of Future's ugly breakup with Ciara. That was a tape that crawled from the light. This time around, Future seems to be doing a lot better. Few rappers are better at making a hedonistic lifestyle sound miserable, but most of *Beast Mode 2*'s 31 minutes find Future in the luxury-rap lane, using an underrated eye for detail to sketch out the trappings of a jet-set lifestyle. It'd be a stretch to say the Future we hear here is happy, but at least he'd rather blow off steam by taking a shopping trip to Japan than by hiding deep in drugs.

Beast Mode 2 is almost escapist when it starts out. "Wifi Lit" is a fantasy about shopping trips to Japan, Burberry seats the "color of teriyaki" and the comforts of being able to use the Internet on a plane. There's an ode to diamonds; there's another one where he brags about smoked salmon. He's always talked about his shit, but while the luxe life is usually a backdrop, here it's the focus. For the first time in what seems like forever, we want to be this guy. We see ourselves in his seat, overlooking the world.

The discontent that once lived at the center of the music doesn't come from a pervasive cloud of gloom this time, but in short, sharp bursts. After four tracks of Pateks and plane, the mood

sours on “Red Light,” a paranoid song on which he checks the rearview mirror for assailants and evokes his father as a deadbeat not long after complaining about paying child support. The most wrenching song on the album is the closing “Hate the Real Me,” which has him screaming “*I’m trying to get high as I can*” off-beat as if attempting to discourage festival audiences from singing along to it.

Future’s said most of the drugs-and-demons talk is show, but at least he has drama on his side. He also has Zaytoven, who produced the original and returns with some of the oddest sounds to show up on a Future album. “Hate the Real Me” features a synth bell a lot like what we hear on the *My Neighbor Totoro* soundtrack (another souvenir from Japan?). “Doh Doh” builds tension through a simple, almost classic-soul chord change. There’s little of the classical architecture of his work on the first; this time he works with a few well-placed elements, like a duet for tabla and chipmunk “When I Think About It.”

Future’s a little like Pixar at this point. His classic run is generally seen as over, but he still puts out such consistent work it’s a pain to keep up with all of it. Still, *Beastmode 2* is exciting because it rearranges the familiar elements of the Future schtick. The vulnerability and drugs are no less jarring, but they provide few new insights; the man still keeps us at a distance. But who knew he had such an affinity for smoked salmon?