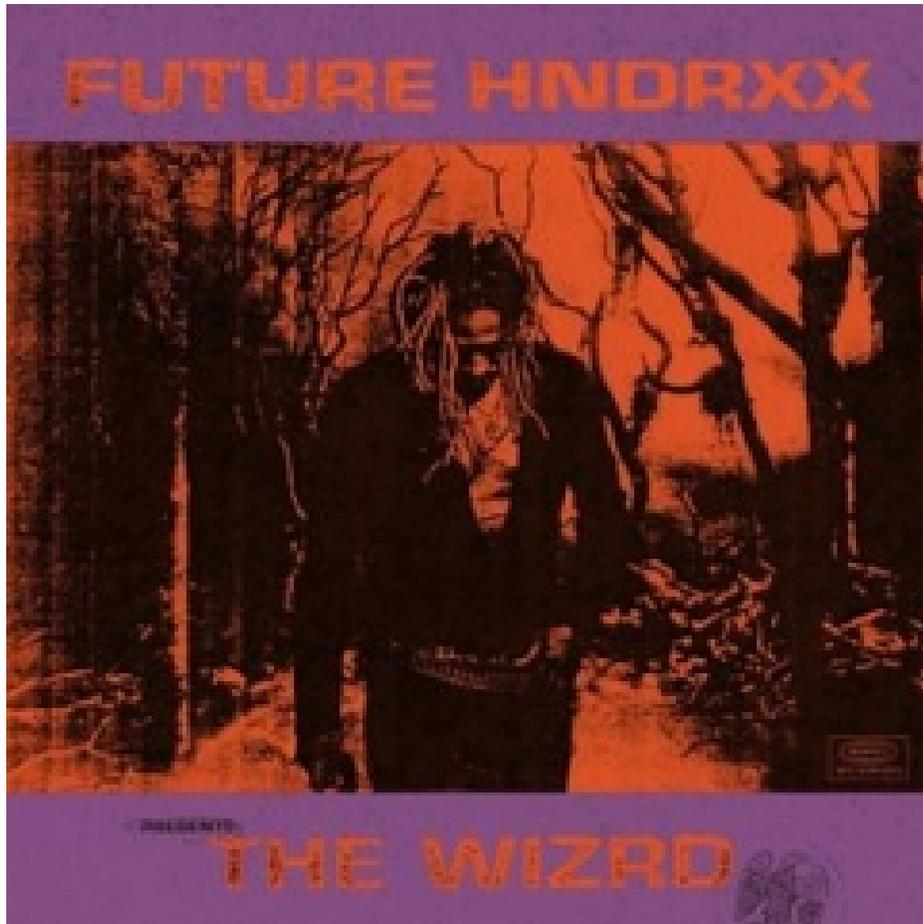


# Future: The WIZRD

SC spectrumculture.com/2019/01/29/future-the-wizrd-review

Daniel Bromfield

January 29, 2019



2019 marks five years of Future's run as Atlanta's most consistent rapper, and *The WIZRD* feels like the end. Not because it's bad, necessarily – this is only the second or third worst album he's made since *Monster* – but because Future seems tired of it all. In a revealing recent *Rolling Stone* profile, the rapper revealed that during the sessions for their collaborative album *WRLD on Drugs*, 19-year-old upstart Juice WRLD told him his music inspired him to try promethazine cough syrup as an eighth-grader. Rocked by the tangible impact of his music on youth, he indicated he might retire from music – unlikely, as with all rapper retirement announcements, but at least with a better reason than publicity.

Compared to rap in the early Trump era, the cutting-edge Atlanta rap of the late Obama years seems like a bastion of morality. Future talked extensively about drugs and vacuous consumption but made it clear it wasn't something to emulate and that he was really suffering. By contrast, emo-influenced rappers like XXXTentacion and the aforementioned Juice WRLD turn a "damaged," "fucked-up" archetype into something heroic. Still, Future is partially responsible for this. His music helped make "sad and on drugs" the most popular rap persona, tipping the exhilarating hedonism of the swag rap that preceded him down a black hole, and his rock-star affectations hold sway over a culture that lionizes dying like one.

Like frequent collaborator Drake's *Scorpion*, *The WIZRD* contradicts the popular narrative that's taken root around it. Drake's onetime victory lap had to counter the pre-release PR disaster of Pusha T's revelations that the Canadian had been hiding a child. Future, it seems, had already laid a lot of this album down by the time he had his epiphany. How else to square his sigh of "I made it seem so fucking cool" in that *Rolling Stone* piece with his brags about his drug consumption on "Call the Coroner" and "Krazy but True?" The latter would seem to come from the post-Juice WRLD fallout, sniping as it does at Future's imitators, but it also includes the man screaming "smellin' like kush, promethazine-drinkin'."

Maybe *The WIZRD* might've played better earlier in his career, and not just because we wouldn't be aware we were listening to a work of art the artist has probably disavowed. Future hasn't felt much need to deviate from his sound in the last half-decade, so the quality of his work has remained consistent as the surprise factor dwindles. Future has quit lean, and his flow seems sharper and more present here than the syrupy monotone of yore. His snippy little vocal affectations jump out more, like when he spits, "jumped on a Lea" on "Baptize" with the kind of

delightful curtness that tells you Lear jets are just a fact of his life.

It'd be a shame if he quit making music instead of taking it in a more disciplined and responsible direction. The fixation with Japan that was so pervasive on last year's *BEASTMODE 2* carries over to *The WIZRD*'s "Talk Shit Like a Preacher." Maybe he should move there for a while. In *Kill Bill* there's an old swordsmith who's sick of making instruments of death and discovers a more wholesome use for his steel: slicing sushi instead of heads. Future, likewise, would do well to find a more wholesome use for his still-sharp weapon instead of hanging it up to rust.

