



Mach-Hommy's 'Pray for Haiti': A Masterclass in Lyrical Technique

Description

The world of hip-hop is vast and diverse, with countless artists continuously pushing the boundaries of creativity and expression. One such artist who has caught the attention of music lovers and critics alike is **Mach-Hommy**, whose 2021 release, *Pray for Haiti*, serves as a testament to his exceptional talent and vision.

For those of you who have no idea who Mach-Hommy is, he is a Haitian – American rapper who has been in the game for quite some time. The hard-working New Jersey native packed the 2010s with project after project, and much of that music was dropped independently and some of it released through the influential Griselda Records. Ironically, however, I was flabbergasted to discover just how elusive Mach-Hommy was. It was incredibly hard to find any information about him, and even harder to find most of his music!

His artistry is highly respected, especially for his unique flow, raw lyricism, and creativity. Mach's rap style is a hybrid of various artists, including the wit of MF-DOOM, the swagger of Jay-Z, and smooth delivery and vocal tambour reminiscent of Mos Def and Andre 3000.



Basquiat's "Untitled"



Pray

Basquiat and Mach-Hommy both have Haitian roots.

If you look at *Pray for Haiti* eye-catching cover art, it perfectly captures the essence of Haiti's culture and history. The cover is a play on one of Jean Michel Basquiat's untitled paintings where the

character is transformed to feature Mach himself in vivid and vibrant colors. Basquiat himself has Haitian roots as his father was born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

A Love Letter to Haitian Culture

The historical roots of Haitians dispersed across the globe can be traced back to the early 19th century after Haiti gained independence from France in 1804. Many Haitians left their homeland as political refugees in search of better opportunities abroad. As a result, Haitian communities began to form in different countries such as France, Canada, and the United States. These communities evolved and played a significant role in shaping their local areas' social fabric.

Cultural preservation is a hallmark of the Haitian Diaspora. Despite their geographical dispersion, they have managed to maintain an exceptional sense of cultural identity and pride. Traditional Haitian music styles such as Kompa and Racine have thrived among these communities, while cuisine and art from their homeland continue to be celebrated. This cultural devotion is essential because it helps keep Haitian heritage alive and fosters a strong connection between members of the diaspora and their roots.

Pray for Haiti isn't just a collection of tracks; it's an ode to Haitian culture and history. By choosing a title that references the struggles faced by the nation, Mach offers solidarity with his Haitian heritage while acknowledging the resilience of its people. His use of Kreyol throughout the album is intended not only for cultural authenticity but also to challenge listeners to engage with the music on a deeper level.

Lyrical Prowess

One notable aspect of *Pray for Haiti* is its seamless fusion of Haitian Creole segments within each track. This serves a dual purpose – firstly highlighting Mach-Hommy's cultural pride, and secondly enhancing the listening experience by offering a unique flavor not typically found in contemporary hip-hop.

Mach's skillful wordplay is on full display in "*Pray for Haiti*," with complex rhymes and cryptic references that demand multiple listens. His intricate lyricism as he delves into a variety of topics showcases his intellect and depth as an artist.

On the opening track, Mach demonstrates his lyrical ability with very strong rhyme schemes and memorable bars such as "Had to dumb it down in my slow 50 cent flow" giving us a taste of what is to come, over an enchanting and despondent sounding jazz horn loop. Whether he is discussing social issues or personal experiences, Mach-Hommy's ability to captivate listeners with his storytelling is second to none.

Following that we have the track "No Blood No Sweat". This is a decent track and certainly a listenable track, but the beat is a bit too one-dimensional. It feels like it just starts and then ends. Still, though, Mach does a good job and kills his verse with some cool lines such as

"Oh word, your raps braggadocious, Put this 38 in your mouth, go ahead and spit your magnum opus"

If you check out that .38 line again, you'll notice that Mach lines up saying 38 exactly when the track time hits the 38-second mark!

One of the standout tracks on *Pray for Haiti* is "The Stellar Ray Theory," which beautifully showcases Mach-Hommy's ability to paint vivid pictures through his words. This track also includes a bit of bar borrowing from Jay-Z's infamous diss track in "Takeover" where Mach says, "it's only so long fake thugs can pretend 'N*gga, you ain't live it, you witnessed it from your folks' pad, You scribbled it in your notepad, created your life" basically calling out rappers who don't live what they rap. His adept storytelling is further enhanced by sublime instrumentals that transport the listener to another realm.

"Marie" which is layered with a Tupac inspired hook, sees Mach hop from Haitian Creole to French and English as he gives poetic praise to the women and female figures in his life. The second verse is Outkast-inspired as Mach talks about needing a women's energy in his life and some feminine divine over a chunky boom-bap beat.

The track "Kriminel" has a strong starting verse and a catchy song chorus. Here, Mach raps about being unable to eat and experiencing visions in his sleep with the verse conveying a sense of desperation deeper than what would be apparent on the page, over a soul sample-driven beat that is Kanye-esque. This track also serves as another creative moment on the album where Mach uses his Haitian heritage and multilingual talent to separate himself from the pack.

Mach teams up with legendary rapper Westside Gunn, who also serves as executive producer of the album. Their chemistry on warped tracks like "Folie À Deux", or the dusty piano looped track "Rami" which has a cypherlike vibe to it as the two trade off back and forth each other, highlights their mutual admiration and respect for each other's craft.

The track "Magnum Band" sees Mach team up with a frequent collaborator in Tha God Fahim and even though God Fahim does a great job on the track, the song is fantastic before Fahim even steps to the Mic because Mach sounded like a man possessed with lines such as

"Ever since you cut the locks off, you got me twisted",

"Catching stray bullets, I know that s**t stinging, Y'all seen the Dr. Dre footage, I keep them heads ringin"

"I put that biscuit to your tea like it's England"

The smokey and surreal "Au Revoir" features some wonderful vocal interplay chemistry between Mach and guest Melanie Charles who delivers incredible vocals. Mach also contributes a strong, joyous, and reflective verse to this track, rapping about being able to keep his sound, stay loyal to himself, and do things his way without having to sell out which resulted in him breaking bread and hanging out with Jay-Z.

The closing track Ten Boxes-Sin Eater has a lot of clangy and thumping metallic tones laced throughout the beat. It's the kind of sound you'd hear in a 70s martial arts film! The song concept is simple, and Mach drops a dope verse without really going overboard.

Unforgettable Production

The distinctive production quality of *Pray for Haiti* further sets it apart from other hip-hop releases. With contributions from esteemed producers like Conductor Williams, Camouflage Monk, Nicholas Craven, Denny LaFlare, Sadhugold, Messiah Musik Cee Gee, and DJ Green Lantern, each track offers a unique sonic palette that perfectly complements Mach-Hommy's voice and overall aesthetic. And the range of instrumentals used on the album ensures that every song feels fresh while still maintaining cohesion as an album.

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MACH-HOMMY

PRAY FOR HA

1. THE 26TH LETTER (PROD. DENNY LAFLARE)
2. NO BLOOD NO SWEAT (PROD. CAMOFLAUGE MONK)
3. FOLIE À DEUX (FEAT. WESTSIDE GUNN, KEISHA PLUM, PROD. CONDUCTOR WILLIAMS)
4. MAKREL JAXON (PROD. CONDUCTOR WILLIAMS)
5. THE STELLAR RAY THEORY (PROD. CONDUCTOR WILLIAMS)
6. MARIE (PROD. CEE GEE)
7. LETA YO (SKIT)
8. KRIMINEL (PROD. NICHOLAS CRAVEN)
9. PEN RALE (PROD. SADHU GOLD)
10. MURDER CZN (FEAT. WESTSIDE GUNN, PROD. CAMOFLAUGE MONK)
11. MAGNUM BAND (FEAT. THAGODFAHIM, PROD. MESSIAH MUSIK)
12. RAMI (FEAT. WESTSIDE GUNN, PROD. CAMOFLAUGE MONK)
13. KREYOL (SKIT)
14. AU REVOIR (PROD. DJ GREEN LANTERN)
15. BLOCKCHAIN (PROD. CAMOFLAUGE MONK)
16. TEN BOXES - SIN EATER (PROD. DENNY LAFLARE)

EXECUTIVE PRODUCED BY: WESTSIDE GUNN, MACH-HO



Pray for Haiti track list and Producers

The collaboration with Griselda Records played a crucial role in bringing *Pray for Haiti* to life. The association between Mach-Hommy and Westside Gunn is particularly vital as it goes beyond their shared affinity for rap; it's a critical synergistic relationship that helped propel the album forward. Although earlier ties had been severed due to creative differences, their reunion through this project speaks volumes about their mutual respect and admiration.

Authenticity Over Hype

One aspect that makes *Pray for Haiti* so engaging is its authenticity. Mach-Hommy isn't trying to chase trends or produce radio hits. Instead, he remains committed to his artistic vision and prioritizes quality over quantity in terms of his output. This approach has garnered him respect from fellow artists and hip-hop aficionados who appreciate the integrity behind his work.

Most importantly, perhaps what sets *Pray for Haiti* apart is its inherent potential for social impact. A portion of all proceeds generated from this album will go directly towards improving healthcare facilities in Haiti. With every purchase or stream by fans worldwide, there is a tangible contribution being made toward creating positive change in the lives of those who need it most.

Despite its many merits, some might argue that *Pray for Haiti* isn't immune to criticism. Detractors may point to Mach-Hommy's partial use of face coverings during performances or his reclusiveness as factors that distract from the music itself. Nevertheless, these peculiarities seem only to fuel further intrigue and solidify Mach-Hommy's enigmatic persona.

With the album being one of most accessible in his stacked discography, *Pray for Haiti* is an illustration of Mach-Hommy's undeniable talent and the rich cultural tapestry that informs his artistry. The fusion of heartfelt lyricism, innovative production, and a deep connection to Haitian culture makes this album a must-listen for any hip-hop fan looking to experience something beyond the mainstream. Just remember to add the hyphen.

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