2Rare is on a mission to bring the fun back to rap. The North Philadelphia artist born Naseem Young has immediately set himself apart from his peers over the last few years with his irrepressible charisma and the furious energy of dance floor-ready hits like “Q-Pid.” East Coast club music has been booming in the mainstream of late thanks to TikTok and A-listers jumping on the trend, but Rare has the potential to be the premier figure in a space overflowing with talent.

 “I ain’t gon’ lie, though, it got to the point where [people] were like, ‘You gotta own this wave,’” Rare says. “I peeped the recognition my music was getting me and I just kept dropping challenges and my joint just kept shooting and kept shooting.”

So over the course of 2022 so far, he’s tried his best to live up to that challenge, issuing a string of energetic rap tracks powered by the ecstatic energy of club music. He raps with a palpable glee as he peppers tracks like April’s “Grubhub” with smirking pop culture references and dizzying bravado. As he continues to craft boundary-pushing takes on the sound, his profile has continued to rise thanks to prominent co-signs and collaborations. Drill icon Lil Durk, for example, hopped on a remix of 2Rare’s hit offering his steely gravitas and winning sense of humor to the viral club cut. It’s one of 2Rare’s finest moments yet, but in a way, he always knew he was destined for this kind of success.

2Rare grew up as a football player first, finding his niche as a kick returner, a position known for its flashiness. When he was growing up, his brother and some other family members rapped, but once he started making music, everyone around him realized that his natural showmanship translated to that world as well. But beyond knowing how to play to a crowd, Rare’s athletic background instilled an unrelenting work ethic in him, one that he thinks about when he’s recording tracks instead of doing ladder drills in the Philly snow.

“I’m gonna keep it a bean: Doing music is kinda easier than working out and all that shit,” he says with a laugh. “All I gotta do is cook up these records? Okay.”

Still, when you listen to the songs that 2Rare has crafted already, it’s hard not to feel like he’s being a little too humble. His rapid-fire bars and uncommon ear for hooks make his songs feel truly unique, and they’ll echo in your head long after you leave the club. The crown jewel of his run so far is “Q-Pid,” an irresistible club flip of 112’s 1996 hit. 2Rare springboards around the beat like an Olympic gymnast, and its corresponding dance challenge has already gone viral. As a result, the video for “Q-Pid” has accrued more than 15 million YouTube views since its January release.

As he processes all this momentum, Rare is still figuring out his next move. He’s been recording at a breakneck pace and says he hopes to expand into both drill and pop music in time. But he recognizes that this moment is, well, rare, and he’s doing all he can to capitalize on it.

On TikTok, he’s already racked up more than 450,000 followers with his kinetic videos. It helps that Rare makes a point of collaborating directly with TikTok creators, something that helps his tracks take off as soon as they’re ready for the world to hear. The resulting attention has been extreme, but 2Rare knows he deserves it. “It’s to that point where people say, ‘Rare runs everything he hopped on,’” he says. “They’ll hear a party song or a dance song and be like, ‘Yo, put Rare on it.’” He’s already proved he’s more than ready for the challenge.