

D.C.-born singer Kanii is focused on the future. Though he's just graduated high school, he's looking ahead to where his boundary-pushing music is taking him next with a fearless proclivity for new sounds and styles he might conquer. In doing so, Kanii continues to create energetic anthems like "I Know" from his debut EP *exit* via Masked Records / Warner Records which became a cultural phenomenon amongst young people all over the world and is now RIAA Certified Gold status.

On his new EP, *it was nice knowing u*, Kanii trades in dancefloor-ready beats and dynamic synth melodies to create addictive refractions of R&B. On the Trippie Redd-assisted remix of new single "sins (let me in)," he turns out a jam informed by Brent Faiyaz, Michael Jackson, and Jordan Ward. "I want to introduce my fans to a new side of me, sonically and artistically," Kanii says. "This is just a new vibe for them to enjoy."

And the vibes are palpable throughout *it was nice knowing u*'s five tracks. "nightcrawler," a thrilling mixture of electro-pop and R&B, bounces with dance-inspired drums and night-vision melodies. Kanii croons, "*When I look in her eyes, I can see my demise.*"

"nightcrawler" was produced by indie soul staple Twin Shadow, who gives the song some of its retro edge. Even though Kanii's sonic style is deeply focused on atmosphere, tone, and melody, there's an emphasis on telling the story. "There's this girl and she's not really good for me, but there's an emotional fulfillment I can't stay away from," he says. "I'm stuck between knowing what I want and knowing it's not good for me."

Kanii may still be a teenager, but he already displays the songwriting chops of a seasoned veteran. It's a blend of old-school wisdom and new-school ingenuity, informed by the music he grew up listening to plus the digital recording software he taught himself to use. "My grandfather would play the Temptations, a lot of Motown, the Jackson 5, all of that," he recalls. "My mom was more into pop music, and she listened to a lot of newer stars like Beyoncé." Kanii acknowledges his influences but refuses to be pigeonholed: He wants to be boundless. "I want this project to be cohesive and versatile," he says. "I have so many sounds and so many ideas. If anyone thinks they have me figured out, I'm not doing my job."

Throughout *it was nice knowing u*, Kanii shows he isn't willing to rein himself in or commit to any one musical subgenre. His brilliance as a songwriter lies in his ability to fuse strands of pop, R&B, and jersey club—and all sorts of otherworldly sounds beyond that—into a style that feels informed by just about everything you can think of, while never sounding like any one thing in particular.

"pretty photos" sees Kanii cueing up a funk groove and pitching his vocals to an upper register, recalling the style he used on early releases like 2022's "attachment." The melodies take center stage, but Kanii shifts his focus to a previously untouched topic: "I met this girl who I really vibed with," he says. "Normally, when I like someone, it don't last. But with her, she was worth fighting for. I wanted to write a song about those good feelings." It's a tried-and-true subject matter, but he still manages to sound

uniquely Kanii, a truth that holds throughout his work. He takes the familiar and makes it sound wholly new.