

Black Fortune BIO 2021:

Black Fortune lives in the DMV, but he's always imagined his music coming from somewhere more grand—like outer space. “Style-wise, sound-wise, I get my shit from the moon and stars and sun,” he says with a wink. As the DMV flow has spread across the country—that propulsive, punched-in barrage of bars—Fortune has dabbled in it, but he prefers a more worldly approach. He pours out R&B-inflected melodies on his hit, “Nothing To Lose,” and raps with the gritty energy of Brooklyn drill on the Fivio Foreign-assisted “Off Shit.” His music has never been bound by genre or regional borders; it's a vibrant collage of sounds, stitched together by his widescreen view.

And yet, Fortune cares deeply about where he's from, and about the DMV sound. “It's like the most unique style of music you're gonna hear,” he says. On his upcoming album OSSHMOB, out in April, the Landover, Maryland, rapper pays tribute to his scene in a way that few ever have. Bringing together rising stars and local legends like Xanman, Lil Dude, Goonew, and Fat Trel, among others, the album marries Fortune's soulful approach to rap with the percussive sound of the DMV in a celebration of all the colorful voices and magnetic personalities the region has produced.

As the middle child among 11 siblings, Fortune didn't have it easy growing up in Landover, but his upbringing gave him a deep appreciation for the area and its culture. “Landover is just like any other hood,” he says. “You got some good areas and you got some areas that's straight poverty. That's where I come from.” His family would constantly move him and his siblings around the city, which allowed him to soak up the shape and culture of the area in its entirety.

Exposed to gogo at an early age, Fortune always had a love for local music. But it wasn't until sixth grade that he discovered the joys of the region's rap, listening to Fat Trel and Wale for the first time. In high school, he began recording his first music, cobbling together cash from street hustles to pay for studio time in College Park. Those hustles caught up to him—he was hit with dozens of charges for armed robbery, and sentenced to probation for six years—but they also funded his art. “When I got put in the box, I had nothing to do but make music,” he recalls.

Despite his early career's stops and starts, he was clearly onto something. “Whenever I would take music serious, I'd go viral,” he says. In 2018, he put out the record that'd send him over the moon, “OsshWop.” It's a DMV classic. Fortune raps in prismatic colors on his verses, tying in sugary hyperlocal slang and switching up flows like he's the area's answer to Lil Uzi Vert. That spurred his delirious debut album, OsshRock, and its glossy 2020 follow-up, OSSHLORD. While those were largely solo joyrides through the DMV, Fortune now wants to bring his community with him. His upcoming record, OSSHMOB, is a celebration of the scene and a call for unity.

Featuring OGs and newcomers from around the metro area, OSSHMOB is a revelation. It's rare and exhilarating to hear these artists cut verses side by side—let alone over production this rich and textured. The beat to “Whitney and Houston” sounds like if Wu-Tang Clan made crank music, with haunting strings draped over thudding drums that Fortune and Lil Dude demolish. To Fortune's ears, it sounds like a brighter future. “A lot of the time in the DMV you don't see too many artists working together because everybody got their own problems,” he says.

Sure enough, Fortune had to work out some differences to bring this record to life, making countless phone calls and asking every artist to come to the studio without an entourage. They recorded all the material together in person in Landover and Fort Washington, but the work was worth it. On OSSHMOB, that newfound harmony sounds like sheer joy—the ecstatic feeling of a bunch of rappers bouncing off each other, pushing each other to their limits. With any luck, Fortune reckons, the record will inspire kids from his area code and remind them there's a thriving local scene that can and will come together when it matters most. “We're basically all the same culture, we grew up the same way,” Fortune says. “In reality, we all together.”