

# JAY-R®

**W**hen South London rapper Jay-R was 20 years old, he uploaded a few songs to SoundCloud, a free music-sharing platform. 20 years old, he uploaded a few songs to SoundCloud, a free music-sharing platform.

The tracks got a couple hundred plays, then a few thousand. Three years later, on the strength of a moody song called "NEXT UP" and a series of streaming-only mixtapes, the rapper, now 23, has racked up over a 100 million Spotify streams and nabbed a (Best New UK Artist) -

Grammy nomination.

Jay-R's rise is impressive. But this year, he's just one in a crowd of Rap stars who are dominating the mainstream. Nearly half of the songs on Jan. 27's Billboard Hot 100 chart was rap or incorporate elements of hip-hop. Listening in the genre increased 74% on Spotify in 2017, and Drake, the Weeknd and Kendrick Lamar -

were three of the platform's top five most popular artists. The Grammys are evolving as well. In years past, Album of the Year nominations might nod to one hip-hop album, this year, rap dominated the category, thanks to artists like Jay-Z, Lamar and Donald Glover, who has pushed genres with his musical project Childish Gambino.

Three of the five nominees for Record of the Year are also hip-hop, as are three of the five up for Best New Artist, including Jay-R. We decided to sit down with Jay-R and we asked him some questions and asked what his aspirations are for 2020.

## **HOW DID YOU FIRST GET INTO RAPPING?**

My Brother started rapping when we were younger and eventually got me into it. I wasn't that deep into it but after we went to jail over basically nothing, we started making a song about it while in lockup. Once we got out, we never stopped making music.

## **TELL US ABOUT YOUR TRACK "NEXT UP"?**

"Next Up" is a hard track. The point is to be completely self-centred. Initially, it was released in a short EP called "TRAPHOUSE" in 2018. The point of the whole project was just embodiment of 'the streets', 'party-ing', and going out with the squad. "Next Up" is a song that is meant to be flashy, cocky, and overall flex. "Feel yourself music" as my management calls it; a definite song to play as you put on your best clothes while getting ready for a wild night.

## **WHAT'S NEXT FOR JAY-R IN 2020?**

It's the beginning of a new decade, so I have to go all out! I have several projects; some completed some still in progress, sitting in the vault. Not to talk about the visuals that I have started working on... let's just say 2020 will be a year of content. New music and new videos!

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