

“I can make a great sex song anytime I want, without even saying a body part, without saying anything that would be omitted on the radio. Somehow, I’ve just been given that ability,” Jeremih remarks matter-of-factly, not even the hint of a mischievous grin on his face. The man knows his talent, and his calling card. And as enviable as that talent is, no man of Jeremih’s intelligence and versatility would be satisfied in a pigeonhole: “In no way do I feel that ‘Birthday Sex’ defines me as an artist, or defined my first album. People are quick to make comparisons: ‘he’s the next R. Kelly, he’s the next Dream.’ That’s flattering talk but we’re all different, as people and as artists.”

Indeed, 23-year-old Jeremih Felton has planted his own flag among the glittering banner acts at Def Jam: “I feel like I’m on the best label I could be on; I’m not intimidated by anyone musically, and I’m honored and inspired by the artists around me. There were a lot to choose from, a lot of labels were interested in a short period of time, but I didn’t get this far by making bad decisions. And to be blessed with L.A. Reid’s thoughts and even his critiques, I couldn’t ask for anything more.”

So the stage is set for Jeremih’s sophomore album, *All About You*, dropping September 28th. The singer/ rapper/producer/multi-instrumentalist has again aligned with producer Mick Schultz to deliver eleven songs long on sophistication, sex appeal, and even some old soul. “Mick and I have a great chemistry; we entered the game together, and we have albums’ worth of music,” Jeremih imparts. “I want him to get known too; I’m not selfish like this has to be the Jeremih show. This album is a great showcase for his ability as well as my own. Once people hear this album, others will recognize what I recognized in him and reach out for more of what we create.”

What they create is a sonic palate ranging from subtle savoir-faire to unapologetic, house-shaking climax. First single “I Like,” featuring labelmate Ludacris and co-written by Keith James, is pure baby making bliss. Jeremih’s uncanny falsetto wends into Ludacris’ irresistible, irrepressible flow, bobbing and weaving with Schultz’s bubbly, scaled-back rhythm. Elsewhere, the titular track is a languid 4/4 offset by sawing high-octave synth riffs. But Jeremih’s vocals, smacking of a young Michael, steal the show. Rare is a falsetto this controlled, this textured, this evocative. Listen for it also on “Take Off,” what Jeremih terms a relationship record told from the lesser-heard male point of view: “Guys have feelings too, guys get hurt, and this record expresses that. There’s a point when we feel like we’ve done enough in trying to work this out, and now it’s best if I take off for the both of us. I can say I been there, but I also hear this from a lot of peers. Women can relate to it too, even if it’s not from their perspective.”

“Down on Me” featuring 50 Cent is a super smash in the waiting. 50 unleashes an insistent, machine-gun flow, while Jeremih contorts himself through some outrageous vocal acrobatics. His voice, spiced with an island cadence, bends and stretches about one of the nastiest hooks R&B has seen in quite some time. “Down on Me” is definitely a song to be up on. “I’ve always respected 50 and always wanted to work with him,” Jeremih notes. “I wanted to reach out to a couple artists who could bring to the table what I know I do.”

Jeremih doesn’t lack confidence. Nor should he. A native of the unforgiving Southside Chicago “a city full of talent” streets, Jeremih kept to a positive path, honing his prodigious musical chops

on saxophone, drums, and piano. He graduated high school a year early and enrolled at the University of Illinois as a prospective engineering major. Bookworm by day, beatmaker by night. “I write off beats,” Jeremih reveals. “I’m a producer myself, that’s how I thought I’d initially get into the game. After a while, I just got to writing to the beats. And at the time, I was rapping, not singing.” Indeed, the U of I campus couldn’t hold Jeremih; he transferred to Columbia College, one of Chicago’s preeminent creative schools.

“That’s where I met Mick Schultz and started vibing with him,” he continues, “And began singing over his beats, because that’s what a lot of his stuff called for at the time. But singing and rapping both came natural; that stemmed from playing instruments growing up. Playing the piano taught me how to sing, or at least how to sound out, reach, and hold notes.”

Jeremih holds notes, and court, on *All About You*. The album has a depth, a sense of growth, an exploratory side. “The Five Senses” is a slow, sultry Firestarter featuring Jeremih’s peerless tone. Then there’s “Broken Down,” full of ominous piano chords and cadenced like a frozen moment in jazz or soul lore. And “Holding On,” the subsequent track: “After being broken down, you gotta keep holding on,” Jeremih affirms. “It’s about trying to see the future when you’re going through something in the moment that’s getting you down. I played this for my Grandpops and a lot of older listeners and they really responded to it. I’m proud of this song and how far I’ve come as an artist.”

Jeremih has other reasons to be proud. Concurrent with his album release, he’ll be appearing on the second season of BET’s popular series, *Rising Icons*. *Icons*, presented by Grey Goose vodka, pulls back the curtains and chronicles the lives of rising stars, both at home and on tour. Jeremih will share the spotlight with fast risers such as J. Cole, Estelle, Laura Izibor, and B.O.B. Elsewhere, he’s been honing his pen game for other ballyhooed newcomers, including Jenna Andrews, for whom he and Mick wrote “Tumblin’ Down,” her debut single on Island Records. “I write what I feel, and with the pitch of my voice, I can write for a man or a woman,” he states. “My voice just has the ability to do a lot of different things.”

Speaking of different things, fans yearning for even more Jeremih can cop the Deluxe version of *All About You*, available via iTunes and featuring several tracks not on the physical CD. Expect also a Jeremih mixtape, on which the young star does as much spitting as singing: “I rapped a little on my last album with ‘Raindrops,’ and people asked ‘Who was that?’ Now, I have some new stuff that I went hard on that just didn’t fit with the theme of this album. So I’m looking forward to the mixtape to let people see that side of me. A lot of singers try to do it, and it can either A) turn all your fans away like ‘You need to stick to singing, fam’ or B) get you respect as being able to do both. I can put rhyme to a melody and have it accepted.”

It’s been a whirlwind couple years for Jeremih, first setting the Midwest ablaze with his indie anthem “My Ride,” following that up with the RIAA-certified platinum “Birthday Sex,” a nomination for an American Music Award, and now, an imminent sophomore album. “I’ve almost traveled the world in a year, and that’s an amazing experience. I now know what to expect this time around. When I do shows, I perform every song off the last album. People still want to hear those songs live, and those are from a year ago. So I’m excited to see the response to this material.” Jeremih recognizes that without his dedicated fans, none of these amazing

experiences would be possible. That is why, on September 28th, he would like to tell each and every one of them it's "All About You".