

More “Benjamin” than Franklin

By: Mical J. Roy, Entertainment Editor

A Sound that Money Can't Buy

If you've ever heard “Benjamin” Franklin's music, you know he's surely on his way straight to the top. One thing is for sure, this young man believes enough in his music and himself that you are destined to join the movement. Franklin's sense of humor and strong determination for life are going to be the reason we view him on the big screen sooner than later.

Benjamin Franklin, a name that is equally aligned with MONEY. It's not a catchy Hip Hop name he came up with one night while writing in the studio, it's actually his given name. A very strong name, that's sure to get him added attention in the industry, it's perfectly connected with his personality and his indulgence for the sounds he develops for his fans.

Mr. Franklin is taking everyday in sheer stride, not rushing the moment, as he's certain it's soon to arrive. He is inhaling and exhaling the blessings as they come to him, and disposing of negativity continuously along the way. Baggage tends to slow one down from meeting their goals. Much like Benjamin Franklin, the artist and the human being, his interview was anything but common. Teen Chic readers, meet Benjamin Franklin!!

TCM: When did you initially get into music?

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN: I've been involved in music all my life. Since about 7 years old, I've been in all kinds of choirs and in middle school I started a band. It was just something that was in me. No one forced me into music; I just wanted to do it. I began seriously pursuing it as a career when I turned 18.

TCM: What keeps you driven in terms of your music and your dreams?

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN: The idea of positively helping and affecting others keeps me driven. When I first began pursuing music, my drive was kind of shallow. I knew I was uniquely talented and loved music, so a career doing what I enjoyed the most seemed like the perfect option for me. As time went by, I started to experience some setbacks and I had to find purpose in it to continue fulfilling my dream. I think I've finally and just recently did that this past year.

TCM: Explain your journey at this point?

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN: As I stated earlier, I began seriously chasing (as I call it) when I turned eighteen. It was strange, but on my birthday that year it seemed as if

nothing else mattered and all my focus and my time went directly to “making it”. During the next couple of years I entered talent shows, recorded demos, went on auditions, sung at events, and participated in music conferences. Anything that had any kind of opportunity, I did it. At the end of 2006, I decided to leave college and just go for it and that was definitely a huge turning point for me. That was the first time I left a comfort zone. Fortunately for me, a couple of months later I got an opportunity to be a songwriter at a major studio. While there, I got to see big artists from Justin Timberlake to Lil Wayne and observe how they worked and carried themselves.

I thought that studio was where I was supposed to be and my ticket to the top. Actually, I wanted that to be where I was supposed to be. There was opportunity everywhere, but nothing was really moving for me as I had hoped. Deep in my heart I knew that it was not my time or place to make it, so I followed my intuition and left.

After some serious soul searching and focusing, I decided to make my own way. With the help of a friend of mine, I started to write more songs and ended up putting together an independent EP (single) that I just released in December entitled CONSTRUCTION PAPER. I’m a little nervous, but now I feel like I am definitely a more solid artist headed in a very positive direction.

TCM: Is Benjamin Franklin your real name? If so, what made you stick with your “Government” name as opposed to a catchy name like B. Frank etc?

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN: Yes, Benjamin Franklin is my real name but I actually just go by “Benjamin” now. I made that change (along with a lot of others) at the top of last year. My full name was starting to feel like a gimmick...and not a good one. Everyone who wanted to work on projects with me ALWAYS thought the cover of my CD should have my face in the middle of a one-hundred dollar bill. Lame, right? Additionally, I just thought it was better suited as an interesting fact about me, and not the main focus. I still use my full name in desperate times when I need people to remember who I am...HA!

A lot of cool people call me “B FRANK”, though I don’t advertise that nickname. When I was at the studio, a lot of the rappers would call me that. For the record, its just “Benjamin”.

TCM: Name 2 things you absolutely can’t live without (your cell phone and computer are not options to use)?

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN: My car is a BIG everyday tool. You really take a car for granted until you don’t have one. My voice would be the other. I had some vocal complications last year and for a singer of any kind, that’s some scary stuff! Heck, for a talker of any kind that is scary! I know most people take their voice for granted, but imagine you tried to say or sing something and nothing came out...

TCM: What do you have to say to young readers hoping to blaze the trails into this Entertainment industry?

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN: Everything is not what it seems. Being an Entertainer/Creator is a job just like any other occupation. The only difference (a big difference) is that the rules to become successful in the entertainment business is not as defined and concrete as say, a lawyer, doctor, or teacher. In those occupations, you go to school, get your degree(s) or certifications, find the job, work hard, and climb the ladder.

Well, in the entertainment industry, there are countless ways to get the job and no matter how hard or long you work, you may never move up, get recognized, or even worse, get financial rewards like a simple pay check. Nothing is guaranteed and success is based upon chance. Also, if you don't like being judged and you can't deal with numerous disappointments, you may want to push on the brakes before you even start. That's just the start for me. I'm sure I'll have plenty more to share when I step into the major playing field. Most importantly, there has to be strong, resilient love in your heart for performing/creating because money doesn't buy everything (and you may not get that much of it).

TCM: What are your views on this upcoming Inauguration and how does it make you feel to experience such history?

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN: I'm just happy and optimistic toward the future. I know most people see it as a "first African-American President" thing, which is fine, because I'm very excited about that too, but it felt really good for me to see the best man win. The fact that he won because he was simply the best person for the job says a lot about our government, voters and nation as a whole. Everything should work that way. Imagine how great the World would be if it did. Imagine what awesome shape the economy would be in. Imagine how great music would be...

TCM: Who's the most influential person in your life?

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN: I don't have a single influential person; I'd say I have pieces from many (people). My parents are very loving and giving, which influences me to do the same. My sister believes in me with all honesty, which inspires me to work hard. Music artists like Madonna and Donny Hathaway influence me to be daring and creative while other artists like Toni Braxton and Kanye West inspire me to never give up and always work hard.

TCM: What mantra do you live by?

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN: "Do unto others as you would have the do unto you." Is that even a mantra? Even if its not, I'm noticing that it's a golden rule many are forgetting to live by. When you do good (to others), it ALWAYS comes back. Probably not immediately, or obviously but it always does.

TCM: Aside from your own music, what are you listening to right now or in your car?

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN: Ooooooh...,I'm an IPOD/ITUNES fanatic! Brandy's new album, *Human*, is in super rotation and Britney Spears' album, *Circus*, has been rockin' the pod too. My favorite new artist that has been getting a lot of play is this guy by the name of Sam Sparro. He's awesome. I've also been feeling this girl by the name Lykke Li. Her song, "*I'm Good, I'm Gone*" is my current life anthem. There's a lot more that I'm listening to (I'm an avid music buyer) but I'll just leave it at that.

For more information, and to listen to Benjamin check out his website at www.myspace.com/bensingsandwrites

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