

Young Steff



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ineland, New Jersey, Young Steff inherited the ability to hit certain notes and win spotlight and on the road, traveling with and crooning alongside his father's group, Spirit. His father and mentor "Big Steff," has guided his now 22-year-old son through the intricacies of the music industry. Whether it's a pitch-perfect falsetto, or a display of heartfelt melisma, Steff not only gets the job done, but he also conjures up both the understated elegance and innocence of an era long gone (think a young Michael Jackson) as well as the youthful sheen and swagger of contemporaries like Usher Raymond. And yet, upon listening to Steff tell his own stories through music, you get the feeling he'll make a mark all his own.

In an era of pre-packaged phenoms, hunger is a rarity, but as Young Steff will tell you, it's hunger that has gotten him this far, and hunger that will keep him here for the long run. For Steff, who used to win talent shows left and right—including the McDonald's "It's Showtime At the Apollo" Kids Talent competition in Philadelphia—the path to success should have been relatively straight forward, especially once his demo landed in the hands of then Roc-A-Fella Records execs Jay-Z and Damon Dash. So although a 12-year-old Steff ended up signing with the Roc, and even scored a hit with "Can I Holla" featuring Bow Wow on the soundtrack to the movie "Like Mike," when Dash and Jay-Z parted ways he was forced to make the most important decision of his young life: either stay with Dash as he launched a new venture, or venture off himself. With the support of his father, Steff decided to take road less traveled and become a free agent. As fate would have it, that choice led them to producer-turned-label-founder Rich Harrison. Having heard of Harrison through hits like Beyoncé's Grammy Award-winning "Crazy In Love," Amerie's "1 Thing," and Jennifer Lopez's "Get Right," Steff knew this could be an opportunity to bring something fresh to a genre that some would argue is reaching a stale point. The feeling was mutual, and upon meeting Steff for an impromptu audition, dancers in tow, Harrison offered to sign the dynamic young performer to his burgeoning Richcraft Inc. label through Atlantic Records.

Steff has been writing his own material since he was 11 and while most young performers today seem stiffly choreographed; Steff brings his own street dancing persona to the stage and continues to be his own choreographer. After one listen, it's clear what Young Steff has to offer. Which is why Harrison has reason to gush: "Young Steff is that rare combination of a shining stage presence and charismatic personality, together with a truly unique voice. This alone makes him competitive on a world-class level."