

The Return of King Vamp
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After five years of near silence, Playboi Carti has finally returned with his fourth studio album, *MUSIC*, which is a long 30-track project that has already topped streaming charts and sparked heated debate among fans and critics. With features from large names in rap such as Kendrick Lamar, Travis Scott, The Weeknd, and Future, *MUSIC* is quite ambitious. But everyone still wants to know if the album warrants the five year wait.

Carti has always been an artist known for pushing boundaries, and *MUSIC* isn't shy in its attempt to do so. The album blends the intense style from his previous album *Whole Lotta Red* with a new, more laid-back style. The album also features a new voice from Carti as he veers away from his more experimental high-pitched voice into a more mainstream, deeper tone. Tracks like "Crush" are heavy in the sampling realm, with Carti using samples of choirs to make for a nice buildup in the song.

Despite the innovation, the album's length works against it. With 30 tracks, *MUSIC* can feel overwhelming, with some of the songs seeming to blend together rather than standing out individually. Carti thrives on experimentation, however some of these songs seem to work more off of their samples and adlibs rather than being fully fleshed out. It also even feels slightly rushed, despite it being nearly five years since his last release.

Carti has never been known for lyrical depth, and *MUSIC* does not veer from this. His approach remains more about the energy and emotion of the song rather than using complex storytelling. He raps about wealth, rebellion, and more intensely, a general sense of detachment which can be emphasized by the layering of his voice that often makes lyrics seem secondary to the actual beat of the song.

The album's standout song, "EVIL JORDAN" debuted at No. 2 on the Billboard Hot 100, and its popularity is not unwarranted. The song incorporates a sample from The Weeknd's "Popular," a song Carti himself is featured on. The track blends Carti's usual experimental tone with a more mainstream approach by sampling a popular, mainstream song. This approach is likely due to Carti's attempt to become more mainstream in recent years, highlighted by his willingness to collaborate with popular artists and change his musical tone slightly.

Ultimately, *MUSIC* is a bold yet uneven return for Playboi Carti. While it showcases his signature ability to push boundaries and experiment with new sounds, its long 30-track length works against it, making the album seem bloated. The shift in Carti's vocal style and his embrace of more mainstream elements signal a shift in his artistic style, but some of the songs lean more into the aesthetic than the substance. Despite its flaws, *MUSIC* solidifies Carti's presence as one of rap's most influential artists.