



Andrew Brown aka Mr. Brown (left) and Malik Williams

BROKEN BEAT FROM BROOKLYN? BELIEVE IT.

Champion Soul began as a duo disseminating melodic broken beat groove, but has since expanded into an all-encompassing New York project, one which is as far from the bedroom massive as it is from the hollow sound of the Neptunes's bling.

Brooklyn-based Andrew Brown and partner Malik Williams discuss their vision, process, and new material with chemistry and ease—Brown lays the groundwork while Williams distills his comments to their very essence. “We started out as a party and we’re still a party, but we always felt we needed to expand on things,” Brown states. “Once we started to [produce music] it came together naturally, because we both know music and have similar tastes. When you get into the studio it solves a lot of problems.”

“We’re working within a structure that’s very difficult—bringing a song format to electronic music and still having it be danceable,” relates a talkative Brown. “Each time I

feel we’re getting better and better at it, but our ideals are still way up there.”

The pair’s recent album, *Excursions*, brings a warm, human touch to machine-made grooves, featuring a diverse range of vocalists on almost all the tunes. Brown describes the process of recording vocals as a “community affair.” “You see the vocalists featured, but we also bring in a keyboard player, a horn player,” he explains. “They’re all friends that we hang out with. We’re interested in the studio atmosphere and the dynamics and what other people bring to the whole event, the different personalities. Maybe my initial reaction is ‘What is this?’ But that person needs to express [himself], so you have to sit back and let them run with it and see how it turns out. It has to be a really nice balance.”

Far from resting on the blissful fruits of *Excursions*, Champion Soul is already halfway finished with their second album. “It’s from a very strong soul outlook,” clarifies Brown. “The album [has] a strong black traditional element, yet it’s very song-structured with beautiful melodies. There’s more

futuristic soul.”

The Afro influence will be extremely in your face,” Williams elaborates. “It’s more rhythmically involved. It’s tech elements dealing with the soul base.”

Though the duo’s sound may nod towards the underground bounce of Bugz in the Attic and the sultry swing of nu-soul, their purest inspiration remains close to home—the African, Haitian, Jamaican, and current hip-hop sounds that make up Brooklyn’s musical mix. “I bought the new 50 Cent and I love it,” Brown says. “Actually if there’s anyone I’d love to work with now it would be 50 Cent because he’s just so smooth. You can give him any type of beat and he’s gonna flow.”

“That’s the next phase for people like us,” concurs Williams. “We’re not into some elite thing. This music is for everyone—in a Jeep driving around Brooklyn, wherever!”

Champion Soul’s debut album Excursions is out now on Life Line Records.