

Modenine

Mode 9 grew up in London, England. He came back to Nigeria in 1979, where he studied Building Technology. While in school (Bida Polytechnic) he met Ayo Animashaun, a publisher who eventually introduced him to SOLO DEE, a quantity surveyor (and one who would eventually make Nigerian hip-hop mainstream popular) who mentored him and introduced him to real hip-hop. During this period, Mode Nine met, through SOLO DEE, other rappers who have elevated the art form, such as Loknan 'Eldee' Dombin, Mista Baron, Six Foot Plus, De Weez and El-Cream and together they formed the super group AFTERMATH. The name of the group later changed to SWAT ROOT following the adoption of the name by Dr Dre for his record label. With SWATROOT, Mode Nine worked on as many as 18 tracks before graduating from school. Mode Nine graduated in 1999 and had his National Youth Service Corps program in Calabar. His parents were not pleased with him when he dabbled into music in 2000 since as typical parents, they wanted him to get a job. For him, it was like a dream come true since he had always loved music, especially rap music. He pictured himself doing what 'Rakim' and 'Eric B' did on TV. He hung out with friends in school rapping and he wanted to make a rap album in 1991 for the fun of it. Mode 9 moved to Abuja having secured a deal with Payback Tyme Records to work on his album. He had to wait through the production and release of albums of his label mates Six Foot Plus (Millennium Buggin' 2001) and Terry the Rapman (Rapmanifestation). Mode Nine concluded the production work on his album IX Files working with Payback Tyme Records producers such as Mr Baron, Eldee, Da Capo and Ross Oscar. The release of the album was however delayed through the production of other label mates such as Rule Clean who scored a massive hit with the track 'Watin I want', OD, JINNI and Eldee. Mode Nine had to return to the studio to redo the entire IX Files album since the earlier recording had become dated owing to the massive improvement in his rhyme style and flow. The rework on the album paid off with the massive hit "It's about to get ugly". This track raised Mode Nine to icon status. He later worked with Rhythm 84.7fm in Abuja (a sister station to Rhythm 93.7 Lagos). He worked as a small time radio presenter featuring established rap acts like Terry Da Rapman and Six-Foot Plus. He quit a year later and moved back to Lagos to promote the mixed tape Malcolm IX he released while in Abuja with Payback Tyme records. Malcolm IX was not however a Payback Tyme Records release but an independent effort on the part of Mode Nine. This brought him in tight competition with other hip hop acts in very hard-to-be-known music industry where rap itself has fully reached a grand lucrative stage compared to the US. The mixtape called Malcolm IX released in 2004. It had tracks like 'Head', 'Orisuna basement freestyle' and '419 state of mind'. The latter was played on Rick Dees top 40. While promoting the mixtape in Lagos Mode 9 met with the CEO of Question mark known as Luciano Gabriel a number of times, but a show at French cultural centre tagged 'E ka bo'. Kevin was impressed by Mode 9 performance and he invited him to come feature on one of the street Monks tracks. At Questionmark entertainment he propelled the underground music to mainstream when he dropped the deserving 5 mics album called Pentium IX which sold out completely (10,000 copies). This album contains tracks like 'Rock on', 'Lagos state of mind'. Pentium IX has set a new standard for other rappers coming out with album. Mode 9 has performed alongside some of the finest emcees like Guru of Gangstarr in 2003, Wyclef Jean and in 2005 he opened for Akon in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. His last single CRY featuring label mate Nnenna got massive airplay and on 15 October 2006. Mode 9 won 3 Channel O awards.

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