

BY AMBER ALSTON

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO BARRINGTON

It has been a year since Barrington Elect released his debut album, *Crying Entity*. The album release party was quintessentially New York, taking place in a shuttered garage, flanked by various members of the city's creative scene. Sporting a shaved head, a full beard, and tattoos (a look that has become his signature), Elect took to the stage in a floor-length silky pink outfit, before delivering an unforgettable performance of his gospel-tinged trap single, "Big Body" to the amped-up crowd. Always on high, Elect melds his love of ghetto glamour with a down-home sweetness that is hard to resist.

If you were to ask Elect about himself, he'd tell you that he is a part of music royalty. He was once quoted as saying, "I have inherited the performance of father James Brown, the vulgar mouth of mother Millie Jackson, style from Andre 3000, and my smooth honey voice from John Legend. I'm filled with the energy of funk and soul."

While his personal history is much less dazzling, his music does feel like the love-child of his heroes. It is heavy on guitar, keyboard, and drums, and he fuses religious imagery and spiritual exhalations with progressive sentiments about love and sexual yearning without being preachy.

"They said 'Bitch, another outfit?' and I said 'Yes ma'am, we in Paris.'" It's mid-February now and Barrington has just returned from Paris Fashion Week. His soft, yet confident, Southern drawl echoes through the phone as he recounts a week of parties, presentations and looking for inspiration with his creative team. He's in a subdued, yet jovial mood and jokes about making the group stop frequently to take pictures of his outfits.

An unintentional street-style darling, his looks have captured the attention of photographers like Mordechai Rubenstein and made him the muse for a roster of upcoming designers. His wardrobe consists of customized wigs, high-end streetwear, furs, durags, sequined masks and gold chains that give him the ability to present himself as masculine or feminine as his mood dictates. "My clothes are just a part of my creativity," he tells me. But his frocks have also become a physical manifestation of his punchy, ungendered, dreamy, bedroom-ready lyrics and have closely aligned him with musicians such as Ian Isaiah and Mykki Blanco, who have used their fashion industry connections to become mainstream.

Born in the Bronx and raised between Tampa and Atlanta, Elect was reared by his churchgoing mother and grandmother, whose voices appear across his body of work. He's convinced that he caught the creative bug in the womb, a consequence of his mother's insistence on attending choir practice while pregnant.

"I grew up in Crawford Memorial United Methodist Church in the Bronx," he notes. "I was always with my mother during choir practice and I would watch her perform on Sunday mornings. One Sunday, the children's choir came out in yellow and blue robes and I asked her who they were. I wanted to be in those robes, so she put me in the choir the next week."

The pageantry, vulnerability, and ear for soulful melodies that he learned in the church have become fixtures of his music. Songs like "White Noise," which proclaims, "I'm alive, don't you hear my cry?" are directed at a scorned lover, yet feel like an invocation.

Camo Jacket by Wan Hung, Clear Jacket
by C'est D by Doyeon Yoni Yu,
Tulle by Alessandro Trincone, Pants by
Wan Hung

Top by VFILLES
Yellow Label by Paul
Cupo

REGRET-FREE ~~DRIVING~~
NEVER ACCIDENTS
BUT THE PURSUIT EVOLUTION

Camo Jacket by Wan Hung, Clear Jacket
by C'est D by Doyeon Yoni Yu,
Tulle by Alessandro Trincone



Headpiece by YEOHLEE, Top by Alessandro Trincone,
Pants by Alessandro Trincone



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But Barrington’s music is far from pulpit-proper. Tracks such as “Big Body,” invite listeners into a voyeur’s sexual fantasy with the refrain, “I’ll be your sexual creature if you don’t flip the script on me.”

The young artist’s lyrics weren’t always so direct. He started his music career in his late teens in Atlanta and had trouble deciding where, if at all, he fit in. He worked with producers across hip hop and r&b and tried on numerous personas with limited success. Feeling lost after graduating from college, the young singer decided to return to his birthplace five years ago.

“Being back in New York taught me that I had to create my brand and that I had to do that independently,” he expresses. “When I was in Georgia, I was running around and trying to grab everything—hoping to get any opportunity. I worked with so many different producers and rappers trying to make things happen, but I was not focused on figuring out who I was.”

Shortly after landing in New York, he snagged a job at one of the city’s cutting-edge boutiques and began to develop a network across the worlds of fashion and music. His connections led to the creation of a creative team that has, at one time or another, included visual artist Anthony Jamari Thomas, composer Ezra Bloom, and set designer David Menendez. “They introduced me to instruments I had never heard of and helped me identify who Barrington was as an artist.”

Having just binged the latest 21 Savage album and finding himself drawn to the Atlanta trap scene, he tells me he is focused on returning to the studio with a harder edge. Using the attitude he’s developed in New York and calling on his musical gods he’s deemed his family, Elect hopes to mold a career “that can’t be described because no one has seen anything like it before.”

While he would like to keep his future projects under wraps, one thing is abundantly clear: anything with the Barrington Elect brand on it will be full of bravado, flare, and spirit.

“Right now I’m interested in bossin’ up, loving up and leveling up because I feel like I’ve reached a point where I can’t be touched,” he says with a quiet confidence. “That may sound cocky, but I genuinely like being fluid in my creativity, and nothing is stopping me right now. Some people say I’m reppin’ the East Coast — but child, I’m just reppin’ Barrington.”

Coat by Sagittaire A,
Top by VFILES Yellow
Label by Paul Cupo





Photographer: Salim Garcia, Stylist: Amber Alston, Set Design: David Menendez



Scarf by Mona Sultan, Coat by Sydney Loew, Top by VFILES Yellow Label by Paul Cupo, Pants by VFILES Yellow Label by Paul Cupo