



## **MAD SKILLZ (Donnie Shaqwan Lewis)**

**Grammy Award winning spoken word artist, songwriter, producer and cultural strategist Mad Skillz stands as one of hip hop's most trusted architects of language and legacy. For nearly three decades, he has operated at the intersection of lyricism, authorship and cultural commentary, shaping defining moments both in front of and behind the spotlight.**

**Skillz first emerged nationally with his 1996 debut album From Where??? on Atlantic Records, widely regarded as an underground classic and a lyrical benchmark of its era. As the industry evolved, so did his role within it. He became one of music's most respected ghostwriters and creative collaborators, crafting records for major artists while earning a reputation as the writer called upon when the message must resonate and the moment must last.**

**His body of work reflects the level of creative rooms he has consistently occupied, from hip hop to pop and every genre in between. Across decades, his pen has been entrusted to shape records, define narratives and elevate voices at the highest levels of the industry.**

**In 2002, Skillz launched his annual "Rap Up," a year end lyrical recap that quickly became a nationally anticipated tradition and remains a defining cultural moment each year. More than a recap, it established him as hip hop's historian in real time, documenting the culture with insight, wit and authority.**

**His influence extends far beyond albums. He was selected to craft the official tribute for a Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction, delivering a landmark spoken word piece that resonated across generations. He later delivered a standout performance at the BET Awards honoring Hip Hop's fiftieth anniversary, seamlessly weaving together decades of iconic lyrics in celebration of the culture's global impact.**

**A world touring MC, creator of the series Hip Hop Confessions, and producer of the 2024 documentary Mad Skillz and The 90's Girl Brunch, Skillz continues to expand his storytelling into film, television and curated live experiences.**

**Since 2018, he has served as Artist in Residence at the University of Richmond, teaching The Voice of Hip Hop in America and mentoring the next generation of cultural leaders. In recognition of his impact, the City of Richmond declared February 13 Mad Skillz Day.**

**Mad Skillz is more than an artist. He is a custodian of hip hop history, a Grammy recognized voice of authority and a rare creative force capable of translating culture into moments that resonate across generations.**

