**GoldLink**

The past three years have been nothing short of a whirlwind for the artist known as GoldLink. His 2017 project *At What Cost* was the catalyst that sparked the fire, burning on up to his 2019 debut album *Diaspora*. However, somewhere in the middle, GoldLink reached his own personal crossroads on the path to fame. The 27-year-old wunderkind endured as much tragedy as he did triumph, where accolades were compounded by moments of reflection and questioning it all. He’s poured his emotions into his follow-up album *Haram!*, building upon his own moments of destruction and finding his own moments of peace.

Raised in the grittiness of the DMV, GoldLink lived through what many only talk about. “It’s a very rough place,” he says of his hometown Washington, D.C. “In order for you to grow, you have to be raw, or they won't champion you. So that shaped my music and my perspective of how I go about my career.” Prior to becoming a career recording artist, GoldLink was dabbling in music, yet still tempering it with the streets. He knew something was there, when the songs were all hits and no misses. “I just accidentally kept dropping songs and them catching fire. I was very confused, because I was very much in the streets at that time,” he explains. His friends and mother had an intervention to put him on the right track. “Long story short, I got raided for a fourth time,” he continues. “My mom sat me down, and she was like, you can either die or you can take this seriously. It's up to you.”

Before he was catapulted into the mainstream, GoldLink secured enough wins to ensure that he was well on his way. His debut mixtape *The God Complex* in 2014 got the ball rolling, and by the following year he was selected for XXL’s 2015 Freshman Class. He followed suit with *And After That, We Didn’t Talk*, but it was 2017’s *At What Cost* that sealed his fate. The project’s lead single “Crew” reached the Billboard Hot 100, complete with a Grammy nomination for Best Rap/Sung Performance in 2018. He grabbed a second Grammy nomination the following year for his work with Christina Aguilera on “Like I Do.” 2019’s *Diaspora* marked his major label debut on Squaaash Club/RCA Records, as GoldLink’s star was shining brightly, from his own work, to top-tier collaborations. Eventually, the highs and lows had begun to take their toll.

“Between 2017 until now, I started spending almost 50% upwards of my time outside of the country. So I started getting a different perspective and sort of creating from that standpoint. So by that time, I basically just started to figure out what it is that I wanted to do,” he expresses. “I think the process of the album really started after this tour I did with Tyler [The Creator], plus the death of my friend Mac [Miller] happened around this time. When all of that happened, I was very suppressed as far as just trying to like navigate through these industry rules set in place. We’re trying to make sure that I’m following those criteria, but also trying to be human at the same time. I think that didn’t intersect well, and therefore I just started not giving a fuck.” He started studying other artists like Prince and even Metallica, whose most introspective works emerged from their own respective turmoil through fame. The product of GoldLink’s introspection is *Haram!.*

*Haram!* touches upon all corners of GoldLink’s psyche, to which he represents it all sonically. The title is derived from the Islamic law, of what’s forbidden and what’s not. “It was kind of satirical,” GoldLink expresses of the title. “I look at things like *Black Mirror* and *Grand Theft Auto* as satire, so I was asking myself, ‘Is what I’m saying haram? Is not following the rules haram? Or is it everybody else that’s haram?’ And that's just kind of the central theme: just being as raw and as introspective as possible without boundaries.”

The first single “Raindrops” is reflecting on an ex, as Flo Milli tops it off with an unequivocal style switch. Other tracks like “Wild And Lethal Trash!” bring together SantiGold with Fire! as GoldLink adds flairs of Punk. “Open 24” is open season, where he showcases his ability to bring both lyricism and sonic changes with the drop of a bar. Production from Kaytranada and other cameos like NLE Choppa make the mission complete, as GoldLink is here to but provide a post-apocalyptic glimpse into his own world and the world around him. “I think it’s gonna confuse a lot of people,” he says with a laugh, “but they’re gonna like it.”