

STOP

Look. Listen.

TREY SONGZ

From Reluctant Crooner
to R&B
Star

Unlike most R&B artists who make it a point to prove that they have always lived-and-breathed R&B, soul or gospel, Trey Songz has made it abundantly clear that he was pushed into the music industry by his family. A native of Petersburg, Virginia, Trey confesses that his childhood was quite normal. He didn't take any voice or piano lessons, nor did he really listen to much R&B. "I wasn't even paying attention to R&B at the time," he admits. "I was listening to straight rap, like Biggie, Jay-Z and Nas." Now that his R&B career is well on its way, Trey has vowed to make sure that his music is felt on the streets.

In regards to R&B, the only artist to ever grab Trey's attention was R. Kelly, an artist who is respected by R&B and rap fans alike. "When it comes to R&B, he kills it. He gives you every part of the soul he can think of," says Trey, "from the gangsta to the gentleman." Much like Kelly has done throughout his career, Trey wants to make sure that he's felt in the streets, as much as he's felt by fans of good soul music. Such fans included his mother and grandmother — both of whom recognized their boy's talent and thus pushed him to join the church choir and compete in local talent shows. At age 15 he met his producer and mentor, Troy Taylor, who's worked with everybody from Patty Labelle to B2K. Upon finishing high school, Trey moved out to New Jersey. During the car ride, his newfound mentor schooled him on the history of music. Trey paid his dues and worked as a production assistant for Troy, which led to him inking a deal with Atlantic Records. While developing his production skills and earning writing credits for the likes of Kevin Lyttle and Trick Daddy, Trey started to hit the mixtape circuit — typically reserved for hip-hop — with his R&B.

His debut album, *I Gotta Make It*, plays like the diary of a young man with dreams and a straight hustler attitude and is a definite work of "street and sweet sensibility." It stands as proof that sometimes all a person needs is a little push to unleash their full potential. According to Atlantic Founding Chairman Ahmet Ertegun, Trey "has the voice, the songs, the intelligence, the soul, and the charisma of a true star." You heard it here first. **BB**