



Big Gigantic Wants You To 'Free Your Mind' and Feel Good About Yourself

By **Murjani Rawls** - Mar 5, 2020

Free Your Mind, the seventh album from electronic duo Big Gigantic is full of songs you want to start your day with. Like a playlist of 'hype up music' that athletes use to get in their collective zones, Big Gigantic made an album for you to celebrate yourself. In fact, it's a celebration for saxophonist/producer **Dominic Lalli** and drummer **Jeremy Salken**. In 2008, Big Gigantic was started on a dream while both members were working as a pizza delivery man and a barista. Fast forward to now, where the duo is about to embark on an immerse tour with technology like 3D cameras. It's hard to see a positive future when you're in the thick of the present. *Free Your Mind* is a manifestation of an 11-year process of hard work, love, and collaboration – both with other artists and fans alike. I spoke to Dominic about releasing their first album in three years and the labor of love that was poured into it.

It's been three years since you guys released an album. Within that time, you've been doing remixes and collaborations with artists, so you've kept active. Electronic music is always changing and melting into different genres. How has Big Gigantic grown up to *Free Your Mind*?

Dominic: From the beginning, everything was like an experiment. I'm a saxophone player, Jeremy's [Salken] a drummer and we're like playing in bands. Then, I get a computer and I'm like, "Okay, let's like write some music like this versus the whole process with four other guys." It's definitely a different process writing songs and getting to a certain place. I just really loved the way everything blossomed into what this album is and it's the message behind it. I love the way we roll out albums. It's just so much more than a group of songs.

We put a whole story and idea to get people thinking about our concepts. So, I just really love our team and everyone we work with, We all just have a cool, fun thing happening and it's just really exciting especially on days like today. When everything sort of finally comes fully shows itself and we just can just sit back and celebrate that. The response so far from the fans has been amazing. We had a really cool little album release party that was really fun. It's been a great experience.

In speaking to the relationship with the fans, you guys did a little fan poll. This was asking about things that they love and were thankful for. There were a ton of different responses and it fits the encompassing message on the album. How was seeing those responses and what are some of the things you are thankful for?

A lot of things factor there just the way just in terms of the way we wanted to. Our album before this was *Brighter Future*. When we started thinking about what we wanted to do for the next album past like a brighter future – what does that mean? What is the next step past *Brighter Future*? We started thinking about those things and connecting the songs with certain ideas. The first song we rolled out as a single, 'You're The One' is an ode to yourself. Telling yourself you're the one and starting off with self-love.

We thought it was a super important thing because it's something you don't always think about every day. How do you get to this place where your mind is free? etc. The first step would be something like self-love. You really have to get in tune with yourself. Love who you are no matter what cards you're dealt before you move on the next thing. We touched on things like friendship as well. In terms of myself what means to me, my wife and I had a son this year. A lot of those concepts have just been floating around my life. Having a newborn baby and finishing a new album kind of correlated together. It was cool to dive deep into my own feelings and be able to project those out with the music and message.

In reference to the title track, much of it feels like a celebration. Like most of the songs on the album, I envisioned it played in a live setting. Especially, towards the tail end of the track. You also picked up Jennifer Hartswick to do the vocal work. She brings a lot of soul to this track. How did this all come about?

Jennifer is a dear friend of ours. Before we were Big Gigantic, we would play music with her. She's an amazing trumpet player and she's also sung with a bunch of different people. Jennifer sang on our last album, too. I wrote a song and thought, "Jennifer would be the perfect person to sing on this." She comes out and does our Red Rocks shows with us. I wanted to do something else with her because she's just like one of the most talented people I've ever met. Also, she's my home girl on top of it.

You know at the end bit of the song where she's singing, "You gotta free your mind. You gotta open up?" All that stuff is like this next level. I mean, it just takes the whole song up like you said, a celebration of getting to that moment. I picture that, especially hearing that in my head. Her vocals and when you do the live show leading into the breakdown with that part. I can see it as a big part of the show. We actually performed it sort of as it is on the album at our Red Rocks show this last year and it was definitely definitely a big moment of the night.

With 'Burning Love,' it depicts love from every background and orientations. If you go to a Big Gigantic show, there are people from all over, so I'm happy to see you both so welcoming. Were you guys conscious when you were making the video of doing this treatment for this song?

Yes, definitely because, you know, I mean, you know, in what is love, you know and you can love is gender or you know, or race or anything, you know, love is pure and you know, so that, you know, I wanted to make sure you know we want it at the same time. It is a classic love story, you know what I mean? So, but we didn't want to feel like we were excluding anyone because it's just you know, that's, that's the world we live in today. You know, there's the diversity is very, very diverse and we love that you know, we will welcome mat and I think you know, the more you can draw from that and those experiences the greater human being you can be you know

'Ain't Got Nothing' has Lyle Divinsky on it. This album has many different flavors, but this track definitely has an R&B feel. You are able to tailor the arrangements to what Lyle brings on the vocals. It's a song that feels different than anything else on the album.

It's a cool story. Lyle sings in a band called The Motet and I used to be in that band way back in the day. We were a spunky, afrobeat, electronic band. I keep in touch with all those guys. He's just a fantastic singer. Now, The Motet does this funky, old kind of soulful music. I was like, "dude, we gotta do a song together." I wrote that song quite a while ago – sometime after Brighter Future.

I sent it to Lyle and said: "I think this song would be great for you to do with us." I didn't hear anything for a whole year. I knew he was busy. Then, he hit me back like a year later and was like "Hey, man, I'm so sorry I missed this email. I got it and I went in and recorded all this stuff. Here you go." The whole song was done except for the very end part where he kind of fades out. That was pretty much it. Then he came back over and we redid some stuff. I just thought that was a really cool story.

Big Gigantic is known for collaborations, but bringing artists like Ashe, The Funk Hunters, and Kidepo into the fold really brought these songs to new places. Everybody together elevated each other's creativity and you can hear how fun the process was.

Man, it's a tribute to the artists we work with. Just their patience and perseverance. For example, with Ashe, we wrote 'Friends' years ago. It took a bunch of different forms and finally landed on the one we ended up going with. It's by far my favorite of all the other versions. It comes down to working with great people. When you have a good vibe with the person in the studio, it's really easy to attempt to make something that works. When you're just open and listening, and on the same wavelength with these other people, you can really make cool things happen. These people are some of the best I've worked with. We're lucky to be able to and just bring it all together somehow.

***Free Your Mind* is your seventh album. You're going to do some shows that have 3D cameras and visuals operating off the Unreal Engine. That's insane. Just thinking about where you both began on this journey, how do you feel today? Were all the ups and downs worth getting to this point?**

We've gone so far beyond what we ever thought this could be. I wouldn't take back any moment because I wouldn't be here talking to you right now. It all just happened the way that it happened. And, man, I'm just so grateful for it. I'm a jazz saxophone player who was super struggling, but just really passionate about music. I just stuck with it and believed in myself.

Every time I got knocked down, I just stood right back up, put my head down, and keep kept my grind on. I'm going to continue to keep doing that because I still have a lot more that I want to say and do musically. This is my life. And that's what I love about it is just that stuff. We've gained so many amazing fans. There are so many amazing people who support us and just we wouldn't be there without them. We love the journey that we're all on together. It's been beautiful and amazing.

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