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Virgin Islander and Prominent U.S. Producer Releases All-Female MixTape. It Drops Today.

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Ernice Gilbert **October 28, 2020**

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Rich Nice, left, with Sway Calloway By. A&R

Virgin Islands native Rich Nice has worked with top talent in the U.S. and has been part of some of the biggest record labels as well. From Def Jam to Capitol Records, and Columbia Records to name a few, Rich Nice played an instrumental role on some of the most important music projects in one form or another.

But for some, nothing is better than owning your own, and in the year 2000, Rich left Columbia Records, owned by Sony Music Entertainment, a Sony Corp. subsidiary, to form a company along with Virgin Islander Cecil Nibbs, who currently residents in the territory.

Since then, the duo, under their label called A&R (parent company is named Boutique Beats) have collaborated with a number of artists, including U.S. mainland, International and Virgin Islands talent.

Their latest work, [which releases today](#), is an all-female project spanning the international, local and mainland scenes. Called "Sip and Chill: Beyond Your Imagination", Rich says they came up with the title as Covid-19 has prevented a lot of in-person interactions, and has amplified home entertainment.



Sip & Chill Back Cover

In a statement provided to the Consortium, the company explained the difficult process of putting the mixtape together: "This compilation of songs was extremely difficult to acquire, specifically the new exclusives. Normally we would attend group studio sessions and mixes in-person to ensure the quality of the finished product. However due to Covid-19, we had to do remote solo sessions mostly via the Internet with artists and producers, and the new artists stepped up to the challenge."

The company's last physical meetings took place in Los Angeles just before the Covid-19 pandemic-induced shutdowns. At the time, A&R was able to secure some prime talent. "Unfortunately, it was bittersweet for us, as it was the same weekend as Kobe Bryant's tragic accident," the company said. Rich served as Mr. Bryan's A&R (artists and repertoire) when he was at Columbia Records.

Mr. Nibbs, who resides in the VI, manages the company's Caribbean work.

Along with its music, A&R is also part of a morning show called "Sway in the Morning" featuring Sway Calloway, an American journalist, radio personality, executive producer and rapper best known for a show he once hosted on MTV.



On the move to leave Columbia Records and go independent, Rich said, "We decided to go independent and we've been discovering and curating new talent, and working with established talent since I left Columbia Records since 2000. We're now 20 years of independence in discovering and helping music and artists."

Rich also spoke on how the pandemic has affected artists both positively and on the downside. "I would say it has definitely been a gift and a curse. And in the way that it has been a gift, artists are usually so busy and have to move around and have so many meetings and have to be in so many places. Now you have to sit still and concentrate on things in one place," he said. Rich said this also provides artists time to work on music and develop concepts.

On the downside, he said, "Not only can you not perform, but you can't really record the same way. So the collaborations aren't the same... Even something as simple as the final mix, where I could have done that in one night, because of Covid one mix can take five days."

Speaking on recording artists who are suddenly unsure about their career path because of the pandemic, Rich said, "I'm going to say something that some people might take as negative, but if Covid-19 has showed us nothing else, it showed us who is built for this business because this is not an easy business. And now you have to really love creativity and love making music and really feel in your heart that you're cut out for it."

"If you have any doubt in your heart as to whether you're the right person for this, then this Covid-19 may have shown you that this may not be for you. This is like a marriage: for better or for worse. You have to take the good and bad, ups and downs, because there are going to be times when you're flying high, and times when you're flying low, and you got to be ready to rock with it. Whether you're an independent artist or on a major label, however you are, you have to be really, really committed to it because it is a lifetime commitment."