**How Recording and Mix Engineer James Hunt Follows the Lead of Artists Like Kendrick Lamar and Baby Keem**

*Amphion One18 Monitors Help Him Keep Pace with the Prolific Output of His Discerning Clients While Maintaining Quality*

**Los Angeles, California, May 17, 2023- For recording and mix engineer James Hunt, the very aspects of music production that have become the center of his career were once shrouded in mystery. “I was playing in bands with friends for a long time and came to realize I was way more excited by the ways you can create texture and manipulate sound than I was in actually playing my instrument,” he says. “But I never really knew it was a career path.” It was not until meeting VP of Studio Operations at Interscope Chuck Reed that Hunt found himself exposed to the possibilities of working as an engineer in a professional studio environment. “He brought me over to his house where he had a studio and I got to see how the studio operated and watch his engineer, Jose Alcantar, at work,” he recalls. “They took me under their wing a little bit and started showing me the ropes and giving me gigs. And everything snowballed from there.”**

Continuing to work his way up the studio ladder, another serendipitous encounter provided a platform to showcase his abilities to producers and artists working at the industry’s highest levels. “I was working at a studio finishing up an American Idol session and MixedByAli and Sounwave showed up for a tour of the studio,” he says. “The studio manager came and got me because I was part of the technical staff there, and when we went into the room Ali asked me if we could mix a record there that night. We mixed Kendrick Lamar’s Money Trees, and we never stopped working together after that,” he says. “My whole career launched off of that one studio tour.”

**Amplifying the art**

Lamar, along with Las Vegas rapper Baby Keem, now occupy most of Hunt’s time with their prolific creative output. “Those two really keep me busy,” he says. “I would be open to more outside mixing if I had time but these guys do not stop.” Hunt wears several hats with his clients, staying involved at many points in the production process. “I’m doing a little bit of everything from recording to mixing and more,” he says. “It’s a lot of work.” Hunt values the clear vision his clients bring to the table. “I try to go with the flow more than anything when I’m working with these guys,” he explains. “There’s a very clear intent and vision to everything they do, so I focus on tapping into that and helping them take the music where they want to go. I trust their instinct above all else.”

To deliver mixes that meet his clients’ standards and those of millions of eager listeners, Hunt began to explore a monitor upgrade for his home studio. His inquiries led him to discover Finnish speaker manufacturer Amphion. “I saw several other top engineers using Amphion speakers, so I reached out on Instagram to the company directly to see where I could get a demo,” he says. “Their Marketing Manager Julian Hyvonen was immediately super helpful and friendly, giving me advice on speaker placement, acoustics, and getting me set up with a demo of the One18s,” he says, referring to the Amphion speaker model featuring a 6.5” aluminum woofer and 1” titanium tweeter for a frequency response of +/- 3 dB from 45 Hz up to 20kHz.

**A new way of listening**

Upon testing the One18s, Hunt noticed an immediate difference in their sonic presentation as compared to his previous monitors. “The first listen was a little jarring because it was so different from how I was hearing things before,” he says. “I was almost thinking to myself that something was wrong with my setup, but I listened to a few more records and started to mix on them and realized that the speakers were just giving me much more information than I was accustomed to. I’m used to speakers that have a clear sonic signature, where one pair has a bright high-end, or another has a tendency to sound compressed. But the Amphions just put the music right in front of you. You can forget about the speakers and hone in on the music, and that’s why I fell in love with them.”

Hunt promptly acquired the One18s, and discovered immediate gains in both the quality of his mixes and efficiency with which he could achieve those results. He notes how the clarity and accuracy of his monitors makes identifying problem areas in a mix easy and fast. “As an engineer, you’re looking for a speaker that is unapologetic and precise,” he says. “Accurate speakers don’t sound good until you make them sound good with your arrangement and mix choices. There are speakers out there that might be fun to produce on because they make your music sound bigger and bassier, or smooth out the mids, but they’re not accurate and the mixes won’t translate anywhere else. Whereas the Amphions will show you the work you need to do to make your mix sound good everywhere, not just on your own system in your room.”

**Clarity that travels**

Since acquiring the One18s, Hunt has utilized them not only as his primary monitor at home but as a required carry-in when working at other studios. “My Amphions go everywhere with me,” he says. He explains that having access to his preferred monitors provides a consistency that would not otherwise be possible when working offsite. “Every studio has speakers of varying quality, but they all have a sound of their own. The One18s give me a perfect reference that’s familiar and that I know I can trust to give me the detail I need. That way I’m always at home no matter where I’m working.”

Hunt encourages up-and-coming engineers who are serious about their career to prioritize saving up for higher quality monitoring that will allow them to more effectively meet industry standards for mix clarity. “When you upgrade to something like Amphion, it’s going to be a huge step up for you and your work,” Hunt says. “But you have to choose a speaker that suits your workspace. I use the One18s here, as I have a large and fairly well-treated studio. But if I was working in a smaller room like my bedroom, I’d still choose Amphion, but I’d make sure to fit the speakers to my room. I might go with the One15s or One12s, which would work great in that space.”

**Keeping up with the best**

Fresh off his contributions to Kendrick Lamar’s Grammy Award-winning *Mr. Morale & the Big Steppers*, Hunt has no plans to slow down, and with clients as hard-working as Lamar and Baby Keem, to slow down would be to fall off the wagon. “Kendrick’s too much for just one person to keep up with,” Hunt says. “It takes a team.” Working with his One18s, he feels better equipped than ever before to keep pace with artists who are uncompromising in their pursuit of excellence. “Kendrick is the kind of artist who’s right there during a mix,” he says. “He hears what you hear and is guiding the process every step of the way, right up through mastering. It’s all following his lead, so I need to have tools that allow me keep pace, and the One18s are just that.”

For more information about Amphion, please visit: <https://amphion.fi/>

**About Amphion**
Amphion Loudspeakers Ltd. was established in 1998. We design and build loudspeakers that are characterized by honest and accurate sound reproduction. Precise driver integration ensures world-class imaging and phase coherency. Controlled dispersion technology helps achieve more stable results in a variety of room acoustics. All products are handmade in Finland (and the Amphion amplifiers are assembled in Finland) to ensure enduring listening quality.

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