**Darkoo - Biography - Jan 2021**

Nigerian-born and London-raised, Darkoo’s love for music was nourished within her family home where the sounds of 9ice and D’banj, alongside Fela Kuti and Ebenezer Obey could be heard resonating around the house. “Even now, my mum listens to the same kind of music I do, so we all definitely have good taste.”

A self-confessed ‘Afro-head’, Nigerian superstars such as Wande Coal and Wizkid left a lasting impact on Darkoo, particularly after she moved to London around the age of seven. But, perhaps surprisingly, so did Justin Bieber. “The first song I remember from when I first moved to the UK was ‘Baby’, that was my tune. I really like to listen to all kinds of music. When I first arrived, my ear for music changed a little bit.”

Despite growing up with a passion for music and evidently the talent for it, after snatching up third place at a Year 6 Talent show for a performance of Justin Bieber and Nicki Minaj’s *Beauty and a Beat,* her childhood dreams had been firmly set on becoming a footballer until she went to an all-girls secondary school with no one to play football with. At this point, the Lagos native began honing her lyrical craft. “We used to have rap battles and I was writing a lot of lyrics at the time.”

After being offered studio time, and with the urging of her friends, Darkoo began recording, releasing her debut track, *Gas Station* at just 16. Racking up 150,000 views on Youtube in a year during Year 11 was quite the feat. “Blowing up in school is the best feeling ever. I was gassed, I was a hood celeb - every party I went to, people wanted me to perform it.” However, the success of her debut was nothing compared to what was in store for the release of Darkoo’s stand-out track, *Gangsta*.

Featuring fellow Londoner and rapper One Acen, the infectious track with Darkoo’s deep husky vocals shot the teenager to fame, quickly becoming a TikTok favourite, gaining 22 million Youtube views and shooting into the UK Top 40 charts in just the first week of its release in November 2019. Before the meteoric success of the track became clear, Darkoo remained cautiously optimistic. “The way that I am, I try not to get my hopes up - until it’s done, it’s not done.”

However, with the global success of ‘Gangsta’ which was recently crowned the biggest Afrobeat Song of 2020and her three MOBO nominations under her wing, caution can now be well and truly be thrown to the wind. “It changed my life. I didn’t expect it to be that big. Out of all the songs I’ve done, I never thought it would be this one that went off.” Just a month after the track dropped, Darkoo headed back to West Africa in December to an incredible reception in both Nigeria and Ghana, with the latter including an appearance at Afro Nation. “I came out on Tion Wayne’s set and I remember being worried about seeing this massive crowd of people with no one knowing my song. When I went out on the stage, I couldn’t believe it. The only other time people were screaming like that was when Burna Boy came out.”

While her sound and voice have had people excited, Darkoo’s style, specifically the way she switches it up between being more feminine- or masculine-presenting. has also been a huge talking point. However, for the Nigerian artist, it’s pretty simple: she wears what she feels like wearing. “I do want I want to do. I could wear a wig and make-up and still wear a tracksuit. There’s nothing to it - today I want to do this, tomorrow I want to do that. It wasn’t until people started talking to me about gender fluidity and presentation, I didn’t really understand it until I went away and did some research.”

At just 19, the possibilities for Darkoo seem endless and though the pandemic has no doubt delayed her plans for a headline show in 2020, her career is already in full motion while fans eagerly await her first EP that she’s currently working on. “My goal right now is to just make great music that touches the right people.”