

Words of Wonder

Wayne Wonder is ready for American market with new album

By Keith Caesar
ARGUS EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

With a smooth rhythm and poised to take over as one of Dancehall's steady rising stars in the United States, Wayne Wonder is hoping his dent will be an enormous one.

The News Argus spoke with the second reggae artist to make the crossover to the United States by phone from the New York offices of Atlantic Records.

Born Von Wayne Charles in Buff Bay Jamaica, Wonder took time to answer a few questions about his career and the road ahead.

No Holding Back is Wonder's seventh album, but it's the first to make the crossover to America. Wonder is also the founder of a record label in Jamaica. His album hit stores recently.

Q: What drives you or inspires you as an artist?

A: Well, everything that happens around me, the whole energy. If I'm writing a love song, I want to go straight to the heart and just pour it out. If I'm writing about the streets, I'm just gonna tell you what it is and keep it real. It's like I'm a painter; I paint what I see.

Q: Have there been any particular obstacles you have encountered that made the journey worth it?

A: Definitely, because it's such a hard road and a lot of times you do stuff that is, in your heart, it's good. But at the same time, a lot of people are saying, 'No, I don't feel it.' That teaches me that if you're doing something, just do it from your heart and believe in what you do now because there are so many obstacles in your way. If I start telling you now, it will take the whole day.

Q: Where did your name originate from?

A: Wayne is my real name, Wonder is my nickname. I was a soccer player. I was a dead ball specialist. I can curve that ball around the wall.

Q: Where was the video shot?

A: Sunny, Sunny Jamaica. It was directed by Little X.

Q: How was it working with Little X?

A: X made the job for me easy. At first I was nervous, this is a big director. We met a day before but the energy, and the chemistry kicked in. So it was very easy.

Q: Are there any favorite tracks on the album?

A: I love *No Letting Go* but there is also a track *Glad You Came* and *Friend Like Me* because

those are, like, real experiences. That's like real Pinky Promise, 'cause you really need a friend like me.

Q: What are you hoping fans old and new will gain from this album?

A: Appreciation of the whole album, just appreciate there is good reggae music out there. It's not limited, you have real players of the game, not just people who are trying the business, but you have people who are putting in a lot of energy and hard work and would love to see it spread and get love around the world.

Q: In London, reggae is big, around the world reggae is big, but in the U.S. there has always been a lukewarm response. Do you have any feelings as to why this is so?

A: From my point of view, I would say it's the distribution in America. We didn't have much distribution, much visibility. So now with VP/Atlantic, for me and Sean, you can put the face to the song. I've been doing this for more than a decade. But now that we're getting more play, you're seeing the videos. So it's about marketing and distribution, so we're getting more about that now. It was lacking marketing and distribution.

Q: For a kid coming from Jamaica, how does it feel to have made the crossover and now attract that elusive American audience?

A: Well, it's a good feeling, its like my dream, back in the days... I'm back in Jamaica and I'm watching MTV, BET and as an artist you dream and wish, you close your eyes, and I would just imagine I was in it. I'm somebody on the TV, and be sitting in my bedroom or somewhere in the house or just being traveling... I can't explain it by using words. You gotta see me at a party. It's just a good feeling.

Q: What do you think about the videos today?

A: If you watch the TV it's all about the bling, bling. Material things are vain things. I more go for nature, the beach, the color, just a whole different vibe. A lot of people call and say, 'Yo, why didn't you have a party scene.' I said 90 percent of the videos are party scenes. I just keep it close to nature and keep it simple so people can appreciate it, and it doesn't have to be about the bling and cars and drinking. You can watch my video on a Sunday.

Q: Does religion play a role in your life?

A: Yeah, because I was brought up in a Christian home. I've been around a good family,



Wayne Wonder's debut CD in America is *No Holding Back*. Contributed photo

so it was good for me, and it always kept me in check. They taught me I must have respect for my elders and all of that. So I'm well aware of how to represent myself.

Q: Do you know what the next video will be?

A: My choice will be *Friend Like Me* or *My Kinda Lady*.

Q: Who are some of the artist you have worked with or would like to work with?

A: I've worked with Marcia Griffith, Tony Rebel, Buju Banton, Baby Cham, Beres Hammond. I'm looking forward to working with more American based producers and artists. I want to do something with 50 (Cent).

Q: Is there a difference between reggae and Dancehall?

A: For me, reggae is the root of everything that comes under it. It's a reggae root. It's like a big river and then you have areas which branch out. Dancehall was around, but it's all reggae.

Q: Who is your inspiration?

A: I listen to a lot of Bob Marley, because I was like, 'How come this man write about these things which are actually happening and you can relate to it?' This is what people are going through — the struggle. It's like he was in a different frame of mind, it was like he was inspired by a superior power. So it caught me, and I gravitated toward it. Beres Hammond, Otis Redding, Mahalia Jackson, Al Green, I don't limit myself. I'm not caught up in sounds.

Q: Now that you've reached the American mainstream, does the work slow down or is it just beginning?

A: It's just beginning, 'cause I still got to prove myself. They have me as a one hit wonder even though I've been doing this for years. If they dig up the history and dig up the archives, they will know I did *Saddest day*, *Movie Star*, *Joyride*, *Bashment Girl*, and *Watching You*. There are so many songs.

Q: Which album is your favorite?

A: My *Vibe* album I really liked, that was the vibe. *No Holding Back* is definitely the icing on the cake.

Q: How many albums have you done?

A: This is going to be my seventh album. It's really like the first album that's getting the real attention, the real notice, and I'm really proud of it.

Q: Are you hoping other reggae artists will get the exposure like you and Sean Paul have?

A: There's a lot of talent there, they just need exposure.

Q: What was the deciding factor that made you want to crossover to America?

A: I don't think about what success is going to come I just do it and want people to appreciate the song. If the success comes I'm grateful, and I got to give thanks to God. Crossing over is a good feeling, the more people who hear it, it's going to be better.

Q: What's next?

A: My tour is getting set up now. I'll be doing Europe, Africa a lot of stops. I just want people to see Wayne Wonder.

News editor Janell J. Lewis contributed to this story.

Wonder's CD has smooth sound

By Keith Caesar
ARGUS EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

No Holding Back, Wayne Wonder, VP/Atlantic Records

If you thought Sean Paul's *Dutty Rock* was off the hook, there something new you might want to take a listen to, because the newest reggae artist to make a crossover to the United States is bringing a little bit of reggae, a little bit of R&B and a whole lot of Wonder.

No Holding Back the first album which unites reggae artists Wayne Wonder and Atlantic Records. Wonder is the second artist to be signed from the joint venture between VP Records and Atlantic.

This album is a worthy follow-up to Paul's album. But there is one little difference.

Wayne's lyrics pulse with smooth rhythms and are laced with the infectious beats of the past that will take Dancehall enthusiasts and novices on a trek through time.

Of course you've heard the first track off the album the infectious *No Letting Go*. However, this album doesn't stop there with lively tracks such as *Friend Like Me*, *Definitely*, *Just Another Day*, *Enemies*, *My Kinda Lady* and Wonder's Dancehall hit *Saddest Day*, a track that Foxy Brown remade for her 2001 album *Broken Silence*.

At best this album will be a worthy introduction for the artist whose bag may be filled with a trailer load of hits as his career progresses.

Don't sleep cause this is one album that will have you realizing how good it feels to be in love.

With a smooth slice of Dancehall for your listening pleasure, this is the worthy introduction to Wonder and his chatting skills.

Slowly but surely the Reggae invasion of the United States has found another worthy soldier to its cause.

And as the reggae invasion continues to find a solid niche, there definitely will be *No Holding Back* for this artist.

CKY goes beyond average skateboard bands with intense songwriting skills

By Demond Cureton
ARGUS REPORTER

CKY, *Infiltrate-Destroy-Rebuild*

Sometimes discovering something innovative at a moment's notice can prove to be quite interesting. CKY (short for Camp Kill Yourself) is a band that portrays innovation of the music scene on its second release, fittingly titled *Infiltrate-Destroy-Rebuild*.

The band hails from

Pennsylvania and is featured in skateboarding videos.

Drummer Jess Margera appears in the movie *Jackass* doing inane stunts with a shopping cart and a parking lot divider (do the math). For those who saw the insanity of the movie, they were fitting to play the soundtrack.

There is more than meets the ears when it comes to this band. On a superficial glance they appear to be your average

band, clad in T-shirts from your local skate shop. Within the portraits of the quartet lies a great well of musical talent. The CD was so addictive to listen to that the songs skipped throughout the mind like a uncontrolled pet escaping from its cage.

Even at first listen, CKY starts off portraying what it does best: the use of catchy songwriting skills. They attack and jam, plus groove and grind at

the same time. Deron Miller and Chad Ginsburg deliver double guitar riffs that merge into one another flawlessly. They show their acoustic style in *Close Yet Far*.

Drummer Jess Margera pummels in the groove; sometimes with a hint of funk (human creation station, shock and terror). Things change up in the driving pulse of "Flesh into Gear" and "Escape from Hellview." Vocalist/guitarist Deron Miller

contributes a wide range of melodic vocals with lyrics that speak stories of human repression and frustration.

Margera says, "People reach a point where they're sick of hearing cypocast stuff. Scenes get oversaturated and then rock music turns to a new direction. I think we're a new direction." From listening to the creativity and diversity in their music, there are iron in those words.