

Josh Wink

By Ray Wallace

Developing and moving on, Josh Wink has dropped his sophomore album *Herehear*. No different in scope and style than the music he has released under other names, or his *Nervous* album, *Herehear* does bring us a more mature and organic sound replete with vocalists and live musicians.



Thought out as opposed to thrown together, it has more curve balls than David Wells. We linked with him at Coffee Time prior to his most recent DJ appearance at industry.

IS THERE A CERTAIN VIBE YOU STRIVE FOR WHEN CREATING MUSIC?

WINK: No. I'm very spontaneous when it comes to making music. Sometimes I may go in the studio and want to make a hip-hop track and it comes out to be a house thing. Sometimes an ambient composition turns out to be a jungle thing. It's really kind of hard to say, but I like to reflect a feeling in my music. That's the beautiful thing about music, is that it conveys some sort of an emotion, whatever that may be.



HAS CORPORATE MACHINERY GOT IN THE WAY OF OVUM OR HELPED?

WINK: It's led itself as a tool for us to learn. We bring certain things to the table, and they bring certain things to the table. We kind of take a little bit of both and then apply it, and then put it out. Sony can be one of the best machines worldwide, but if it's on your side it's the best machine. If it's not it can just like whatever. We're just dealing with learning a lot right now. They're not accustomed to music we're doing, or as diverse as what we're doing. We're not like Mariah Carey's, your Will Smith's, your Wyclef Jean's, your Aerosmith, the Tony Bennett's. We're very different but we have the product, we give our ideas, and it's like we're the A&R ears, we're the production people and everything. It's a lot less work for everybody, but we have a really big support team up at Columbia for our Ovum product, good publicity people out there. We feel pretty fortunate, and it hasn't been a bad thing yet, except for little typos here and there.

HAS YOUR BUSINESS BREAK DOWN. IT SOUNDS LIKE A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE GETTING A PIECE OF THE PIE. OVUM IS AN OPERATION, THEN YOU'RE DEALING WITH RUFF HOUSE AND THEY'RE GETTING THEIR CUT, AND SONY AND COLUMBIA ARE GETTING THEIR CUT.

WINK: Not getting into the logistics because that's basically kind of just for us to know, no offense, but it's a three part deal. It's an extra

person. But Ruff House really believed in our stuff and they kind of approached Columbia with the help of our A&R person, Jason Jordan, to really kind of push it. Our concerns aren't really that much about the dough. In the end it's about product quality, how it looks, how we are represented. The fact that we're an artist based label putting out artist friendly stuff, looking out for artist needs and interest, and making sure our packaging is down pact. A lot of people are coming to us and saying we really want to work with you guys just because there's so much weird stuff going out there right now and your stuff always looks so on the point. With our artwork, with how it sounds, we're trying to create a lot of enthusiasm towards looking for records. I remember when King and I were growing up and we were buying records when we were teenagers. There was so much enthusiasm about going out and buying records and trying to find stuff like these really gray, marble, German pressing of a Depeche Mode record that came out only in Germany. We tried so hard to get it. Now buying records is so easy, and what we're doing is we're using a lot of the territories as ways for us to do that. We would only release certain mixes over in the UK, or only in the US. Each market would have to kind of do their own thing. Only release certain versions as a promo double-pack. We get a lot of support from the whole team of people. The way we look at is just more the merrier, more heads to think about.

YOU'RE NOT IN IT TO MAKE A QUICK BUCK.

WINK: It's nice to make a quick buck just so we can continue doing this for the long run. There's nothing wrong with making a quick buck but we wanted to just put out good quality, and that's really basically our concern. We want to put our quality product, quality music, diverse music, and we want to look after the people's interests and needs for our label. We've dealt with people in the past and we really want to control and look out for people's interest now, which are ourselves. King and I are running the label very carefully in working with people at Ruff House and Columbia. We feel fortunate to be in this position to do this, and put out all different kinds of music.

ARE YOU COMFORTABLE WITH THE POSITION YOU HAVE BEEN THRUST INTO AS A TRENDSETTER IN ELECTRONIC MUSIC?

WINK: I never kinda know what position I'm in. As I stated before, I'm very much into I do what I do. If people want to label or pigeonhole they can do that. What I'm concerned about is doing my own thing. If I was into doing the same thing I would have just all done tracks that sounded like "Higher State of Consciousness" or Size 9, or something like that. That's what all these people can't seem to understand about me, or ridicule about me, or wonder about me. The fact that people are expecting me to make tracks like the hits, and as soon as I don't people are like 'Well, we don't like it as much as the other stuff.' But then there's people that say 'We like that.' It's a weird situation to be in so I'm not concerned with something that I can't control, which is people's opinions and views, and it really comes down to controlling what I control, which is quality of music and product quality, basically the whole package.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE CURRENT STATE OF ELECTRONIC MUSIC?

WINK: I think it's great. The fact that it's very open-minded and ever growing, and abstract and ever changing. The only problem I have with it, as soon as people start to label it, 'This music shouldn't have this sound in it.' 'This shouldn't have vocals, shouldn't have guitars,

shouldn't have real instruments'. I think that's the downfall of the music because through technology everything is becoming so convenient and easy for people to make music out of their house. So so many people are doing it and there's like a lot of cool stuff out there.

WHAT IMPACT HAS THE INFLUX OF NEW EQUIPMENT IN THE MARKET HAD ON YOUR SOUND?

WINK: Not much at all 'cause I don't really have anything new. I was just talking to Mario J (industry/method 11:11) and he was telling me about the equipment that he has, and I told him what I have and what board I have. He's like 'No way'. I have the first Maki 16 track that came out, a CR1604, and I still have it. He's like 'No way.' I was like, 'Yeah, I did the whole album on it.' It's basically for me not what you have but how you can master what you have, what you can do with what you have. I mean, I'm in the midst of getting new stuff because the stuff I have is just weathered and old. I look forward to getting new equipment and doing stuff, and I look forward to the future of technology and using it.

YOU'VE DEFINITELY GROWN WITH THE MUSIC AND YOU'RE NOT SHY TO THROW ANYTHING INTO THE MIX.

WINK: It's a balance. It's all about, for me, a balance. I think the album tells a story. The first part is a little bit more listening aspect, and then the last part is kinda more techno and house and dance oriented. It's just like me as a DJ. I like to always play everything; at least I try too. It shouldn't be any different in my production style, and it's not like me doing it. It's like my, this is what I feel like doing. It doesn't sound like typical drum n' bass, or it doesn't sound like typical this. It sounds like me just happening to do it. A lot of people can pick up and start doing drum n' bass and it can just sound like every other drum n' bass thing. I like to try to do it and just do it just how I see it and envision it.

HOW DID "BLACK BOMB (JERRY IN THE BAG)" WITH TRENT REZNOR COME ABOUT?

WINK: It was done around the late summer of '96. I had finished it and I was playing it out on a portable DAT in clubs and people were coming up and saying 'What is this? This is crazy.' It's slow, but it has all this tension and anxiety and build-ups in it. That's why I talked about bringing it to the next level. I suggested perhaps working with Kool Keith from Ultramagnetic MC's. We were gonna do that. We worked out everything and talked to his management, and then I was gonna fly out there and no one knew where he was when I was gonna do that, which I hear a lot, and everybody who I say the story to says the same thing. I didn't really have the time to wait around for all that to happen. We were just shootin' names across and his name came up, Jason Jordan, who is our A&R up at Columbia, suggested using a friend of his who is friends with Trent to get it to him. We sent it to him via Trent and he contacted us and said, I like it. Let's do it. I didn't basically work with him. We talked on the phone about ideas, and we sent tapes back and forth.

WHAT ROLE DOES DJING PLAY?

WINK: It balances. I like using my whole aspect of me as a DJ as a producer. I like the balance of the two. I think I need me as a DJ and producing, not meaning that I'm always gonna make dance music because the album is not all dance oriented, but it's segued kinda like a DJ would do it. I have a passion for Djing and making music and I

continue to do it.

WHAT IMPACT HAS "HIGHER STATE OF CONSCIOUSNESS" HAD ON YOUR CAREER?

WINK: Opened a lot of doors towards a lot of things, and closed a lot of doors because people became close-minded after that. That's all they wanted after that, and then when all these weird remixes came out they started judging me and I had no control over this, and that's one of the reasons why I have my own label. It opened up the doors to getting even the Ovum deal and travelling the world, but not just "Higher State". There was "Don't Laugh"; there was Size 9, and "Meditational Manifest" on R&S. It was like all these things.

DOES PHILADELPHIA HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH YOUR SOUND?

WINK: No. I mean, I'm very proud and happy to be from Philadelphia, and there's a lot of press and media coming about the whole new sound of Philadelphia, about Ovum, about the whole deal. We're having journalists coming from like France or England, just to come and see what we have going on there, and it's cool. Philly was the basis of, I think, dance music and a lot of the responsibility of where it is now with the disco sound; Harold Melvin & the Blue Notes, Gamble and Huff, R.T.S.O.P., Philly International Strings. So because of disco, the four/four kick drum and house music, and techno was based in between them, a mixture of German electronic and eighties pop music along with the four/four kick drum, which was disco. It wasn't, I guess, a Philly sound I have, it's just something I happen to do in Philadelphia and I'm happy about it.

HOW DO YOU THINK HEREHEAR WILL FARE?

WINK: I don't know. That's the fun of music. We feel happy with the way it looks and the way it sounds, and I have no expectations. There's no hype on the album that's what I love. It's coming out and it's anticipated. People are looking forward to it rather than being hyped about it. As soon as there's hype about it there's expectations, and with expectations come if it's met or not, and when it's not met shit goes bad. So I don't want any hype on it. That's why I chose to put it out like after all this electronica hype died down. I'm not The Prodigy. I'm not the Chemical Brothers. I'm doing my own thing, and so I chose to wait for a while and release it at a time when it's like kinda calmed down a bit.

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