

# Showbiz

Editor **Bill Pierce**  
bill.pierce@sunmedia.ca  
416-947-2270



## Tomorrow In Your Sun

Sun Media music critic  
Darryl Sterdan interviews  
No Doubt about their  
Canadian concert tour.

# Call him Moby 2.0

After hitting it big with his album *Play*, the musician lived hard and partied even harder, but that's all history as the detoxed New Yorker prepares for his new CD, *Wait For Me*



Marie-Joelle  
**Parent**  
IN NEW YORK

NEW YORK — Ten years after the album *Play* and movie *The Beach* vaulted underground artist Moby into instant stardom and a global success he wasn't prepared for, he's back with a new and very personal offering.

This is Moby 2.0 — sober, vegan, spiritual and with no unrealistic expectations.

"It's the first time in my life where I've accepted being normal. Before, being normal was horrific for me."

Moby greeted me in his all-white studio in the Nolita neighbourhood, located above a former prison that's been converted into lofts. In the '80s, the basement here was used as a practise studio by Iggy Pop, The Beastie Boys and Sean Lennon. David Bowie lives across the street.

### Overplayed

At age 43, he's finally managed to shed the party-boy image he's had since the success of *Play*. The album sold nine million copies world-wide. The song *Porcelain* was overplayed in every bar on the planet. Moby was everywhere, at every event, on every red carpet. He went all out on the party circuit.

"I've exhausted my lifetime supply of drink tickets," he said.

His studio has platinum records lining the walls, retro mixing equipment piled to the ceiling, a ladder that leads to a rooftop terrace, a picture taken with Hilary Clinton over by the fridge and alien figurines to round out the decor.



MARIE-JOELLE PARENT/SUN MEDIA

Moby sits among his collection of retro mixing equipment in his New York studio. The musician looks forward to touring here for his new CD, *Wait For Me*: "Every time I go, it hits me how much I like Canada. Culturally speaking, it's the perfect mix," he says.

And then there's the disarmingly normal Moby himself, drinking tea and looking like anything but a celebrity.

"I clearly wasn't prepared for it. I became a global celebrity, but at the same time I was still the nerd who makes music in his apartment," he explained. "I liked it, but it depressed me at the same time. I became too public;

I was hated by people who didn't even know me."

Moby doesn't hide the fact that he got hooked on the celebrity life.

"I started making music for the wrong reasons, to satisfy the industry. *Hotel* (2005) is the one I'm least proud of. I don't like songs that are too polished, just like I don't like that kind of person in life. My

music has to be vulnerable and flawed."

The musician, whose real name is Richard Melville Hall, also decided to give up drugs and alcohol, habits he'd had since the age of 11. Hall was raised in Harlem by his mother. The nickname Moby comes from the novel *Moby Dick*. Herman Melville is one of his ancestors.

"I'm in a very healthy, very honest phase," he said of his present life, which includes a vegan diet and transcendental meditation. "Being sober gives me more time for my music. There was a time when I was drinking way too much and I was losing half of my week to being drunk or hung over. The pleasure it gave me wasn't worth the pain anymore."

Except that going clean isn't necessarily a very New York thing to do.

"There are about 250 bars open until 4 a.m. between my studio and my apartment in Chinatown. People come to New York to go wild. There's a bloated version of every 21st Century vice here."

After losing himself for several years, Moby finally had his epiphany a year and a half ago while listening to a talk on creativity given by one of his idols, filmmaker David Lynch (*Mulholland Drive*).

### Unassuming

"It hit me, what's more important? Accommodating the marketplace or aspiring to make art?"

That was the inspiration for *Wait For Me*. The result is a much calmer, unassuming and thoughtful recording than its predecessors. The singers involved are all unknowns.

The first track, *Shot In the Back of the Head*, is an instrumental piece.

"There's no chance this will get on the radio," Moby said.

And he couldn't care less — his goal now is to make "personal" music.

After spending the summer in Europe, Moby will tour Canada in September.

"Every time I go, it hits me how much I like Canada. Culturally speaking, it's the perfect mix," he said.

"The politics are sound and progressive, except for your prime minister. And every time I do interviews in Canada, the journalists are nice and well-informed. It's the opposite of England where the first questions I get asked are which stars I've slept with and how much money I have. That's not a joke."

*Wait For Me* will be released June 30.

**Marie-Joelle Parent is Sun Media's New York correspondent.**