



One of the most prolific electronic artists to succeed in the mainstream, Moby has never been one to limit himself to just one pursuit.

by Sarah Illingworth

Have you done a lot of press overseas for Destroyed yet?

Yeah - honestly the place where I've done the least amount of press is here in the United States, because for some reason America is one of my smaller markets. And the city where I've

MOBY

DESTROYER

Over the 20-odd years he's been making music he's also become a skilled photographer, done time as a restaurateur (he opened, and has since bought out of the teashop Teany in New York's Lower East Side), and consistently supports a number of philanthropic ventures, not least of which is Mobygratis.com, a website that allows independent and non-profit filmmakers to download and use some of his many unreleased tracks for non-commercial projects - for free.

A tiny man with a slightly nervous disposition, the producer/DJ recently relocated to Los Angeles from his native New York, although he's held onto his hut-like loft in the latter - which is where I met him for this interview. Sitting on his rooftop, surrounded by the everchanging skyline of Lower Manhattan, we talked about old versus new school New York, Moby haters and his latest album, Destroyed.

You've been making music for a really long time now - you must be sick of the press thing.

I'm actually not - I had an experience about 15 years ago [where] I was putting out an album called Animal Rights, and it was this very dark, obscure punk rock/metal record, and no one was interested. So I went to England for a promotional trip, and there were two people who they could find to interview me. It was a journalist from a homeless newspaper in Birmingham, and a student newspaper in Nottingham. They were the only two interviews they could round up, and I distinctly remember sitting in front of the hotel, thinking to myself, 'if ever I'm in a position where more than two people want to interview me, I can't complain.' And actually, more often than not I really enjoy the interview process.

done the least amount of press, out of all the major cities in the world, is New York. For some reason New Yorkers just don't like me that much. People think that I'm sort of indulging in self-deprecating hyperbole [when I say that], but the Village Voice had an article about me a few years ago, and the opening line was, 'Before seeing this concert I knew that everyone hated Moby. After seeing the concert, now I understand why.'

Ouch. So has LA's been kinder to you?

No place is perfect - except for New Zealand, and I'm not just being sycophantic.

We have our faults.

I guess the main fault being it's far away from everything, but that's part of what makes it perfect. And LA is similar in that sense that its imperfections make it a more interesting place.

I know you're no longer involved with Teany, but how did you find the experience of opening a store in New York?

Well, it was fuelled by drugs and hubris. About 10 years ago, the Twin Towers had been attacked, lower Manhattan was a war zone essentially. There was the National Guard and police everywhere, and my girlfriend at the time and I, our response was just to drink a lot and take a lot of drugs. That didn't work out too well, so after a couple of months of excessive debauchery, we thought, 'okay, let's open a tea shop.' Which was really interesting, 'cause neither one of us had restaurant or small business experience, and neither one of us had a clue what we were doing. But we opened it up - and we broke up the day that it opened. So it was really interesting the first couple of years, being forced every day to interact with your ex-girlfriend. It was

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challenging. But the restaurant was great - I haven't been there in a couple of years.

When you approach a new album, do you find that there's typically a theme that drives it?

In this case there is a theme, because most of the music was written late at night in hotel rooms, because I have really bad insomnia. Especially when I go on tour and I'm changing timezones a lot, I have a really hard time sleeping. So the last tour that I did, I forced myself - when it was four o'clock in the morning and I couldn't sleep - rather than sleep I would work on music. I

think that the album is very much infused with that aesthetic, that comes from being awake at four o'clock in the morning in an empty city. The music on the album is very electronic, but old electronics. It's all recorded with old drum machines and broken old synthesisers... it's an electronic record, but it's not very digital. The song that I like the most right now is called 'Rockets'. And it's almost like a lullaby. It's very slow and repetitive and soothing, sort of like a warm bath, but in analogue electronic form.

Where did the idea come from for Mobygratis.com?

A lot of my friends come from [the] world of independent and experimental film, and their recurring complaint is how hard it is to get music for movies. I've had friends making films with a budget of \$50,000, and 80 percent of the budget has gone to licensing a couple of songs that they really wanted to have in the movie. So I started Mobygratis as a way to give music to independent filmmakers, and film students, to just help out. The selfish part of it is [that] it also is a way of getting people to hear some of the stranger music I've made. I make a lot of music, and you can only put out a record every year and a half. So the question becomes, what do you do with all the other music? And I was like, well why not just give it away for free on this weird website?

Destroyed and its accompanying photo book (shot by Moby) is out now. ✖

Website: moby.com

Facebook: facebook.com/mobymusic

Twitter: twitter.com/thelittleidiot