



Mar 23 2010 6:51 AM EDT

# Matthew McConaughey Invites MTV News Into The Studio With Mishka

Reggae singer's second album with the actor-turned-producer, *Talk About*, hit iTunes on Tuesday.

By Matt Elias

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In late December, Matthew McConaughey and Mishka were holed up in a cozy studio in Santa Monica, California, putting the finishing touches on a new album by Mishka, the first artist signed to McConaughey's J.K. Livin' label. The duo offered MTV News a rare glimpse into the recording process, allowing us to document the actual session — not just a re-creation of what they did before our cameras arrived.



The guys were laying down the final track of the album, "Stars Will Be Shining," a fitting title for the journey that connected Mishka and McConaughey in the first place. In a truly "stars were aligned" kind of story, McConaughey heard Mishka's music while vacationing in Jamaica in 1999. The actor liked Mishka's brand of roots reggae-meets-folk rock so much that he made several attempts to contact the musician, to no avail.

"I kinda had an APB out looking for anything Mishka," McConaughey

recalled. "A guy in my office said, 'There's a guy named Mishka that's at the House of Blues here in Hollywood, so we'll go see if it's him.'"

It turned out to be him, and the duo began their relationship — both personal and professional (McConaughey launched his music label solely to get Mishka's music to the masses). McConaughey joked that the artist had no idea who he was until Mishka's wife remembered seeing him on TV from time to time.

McConaughey grinned: "Yeah, I'm on TV sometimes."

And with McConaughey's help, Mishka had his time to shine on TV too — with appearances on "Jimmy Kimmel Live!" and "The Rachael Ray Show." He also found success with the 2009 album *Above the Bones*, landing at #1 on *Billboard's* reggae chart and earning iTunes' Best New Artist honor.

That album was McConaughey's first venture as a music producer, and he continues that role on the new LP, *Talk About*, due Tuesday (March 23) on iTunes and March 30 in stores. McConaughey sees a lot of similarities between his day job and producing music — something he clearly gets a kick out of.

"It's very similar to making movies. It's very similar to telling a story," McConaughey said. "That's what's really neat about it. Maybe it's a different vocabulary, but each song's its own story. Each song kind of has their own three-act structure. ... We start with a tease, then intro everybody, take it high, climax, pull off, give it a rest and then leave them wanting a little bit more."

McConaughey admits that he's still learning the lingo — "When in doubt, I'll throw 'legato' out there every 10 minutes," he joked — but he's not on his own. The album is also co-produced by Butch Walker, who boasts pop/punk producing credits with Fall Out Boy, Weezer and many others. While Mishka's mellow genre is not usually on Walker's radar, the veteran producer said reggae is not as scientific as producing a pop record. In other words, it doesn't take as much tinkering and editing.

That was the vibe when we visited the studio that day: an easygoing group making sun-drenched music, just in time for those lazy summer days.



Matthew McConaughey  
Photo: MTV News

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