

Songwriter deals with peace, love maturely

Derek Spalding

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Mishka has matured tremendously as an artist in just the past year. His latest up-tempo album *Talk About* demonstrates his songwriting instincts that align seamlessly with his messages of peace and unity.

Since playing Nanaimo last year, Mishka has been recognized as singer/songwriter of the year by iTunes and he has become the new face of an eco-friendly collection from surf-gear giant O'Neill.

The soft-spoken rasta earned his iTunes recognition for an online-only release of 'A Guy With A Guitar,' which was essentially an acoustic recording off his third CD *Above The Bones*.

His latest album steps up the tempo a bit more, a goal of Mishka's when he went into the recording studio.

The avid windsurfer, who was raised on the ocean sailing with his parents, recently relocated his wife and children to Maui after spending the past couple years in Nevil, the sombrero-shaped island in the Caribbean.

Transplanting from one region of the world to the next comes natural to Mishka, but he and his family feel they found a place they can call home for the next while.

"It's the way I've grown up, so I'm always moving, but it's a bit tricky for my wife and kids, but they love it," he said.

"I think we're going to stay there a while, it seems that it fits us, there are some pretty mellow vibes."

Mishka wanted to infuse a faster pace on *Talk About*. He wanted to give his fans a bit more to dance about during his performances.

Much of his work has been that laid-back rasta, surfing sound, which he loves, but he wanted something more this time around.

He maintains his earthly folk-rock elements on the album and is true to the rich reggae foundation of his writing, but listeners are more likely to tap a foot or shuffle around the room when they spin this CD.

The budding artist has a new image now that he's promoting the ECO'Neill Spring 2011 collection.

The eco-friendly line includes basic T-shirts, tank tops and beanies made from 100% organic cotton. The company uses recycled plastic to make their latest

boardshorts, which is an ethical endeavour that Mishka can get behind.

"It's the right direction for companies to be taking," he said. "We don't have to be using more resources when we don't have to."

Mishka has used O'Neill gear all his life.

His love for windsurfing and his respect for the company made the collaborate sponsorship an easy decision.

He jokes that his friends poke fun at him because his new O'Neill clothing creates a much sharper image than his casual look.

"I've always have more of a shabby image, but people are saying I'm looking pretty smart these days," he quipped.

"I've never really cared about what the outward appearance is like for me.

"But now I have new pants all the time."

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