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He's a lot cooler now that he did: Matthew McConaughey launches record label

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What do Creation Records founder Alan McGee and "Dazed and Confused" thespian [Matthew McConaughey](#) have in common? Both were seduced by roots reggae singer-guitarist [Mishka](#).

And while McGee, who released a [collection](#) of the Bermuda-bred singer's songs in 1999 on Creation/Sony, has [segued out](#) of the record business, McConaughey is [just getting started](#). The [oft-shirtless](#) actor (check out [TMZ as of late](#)) is ramping up his fledgling indie this month, mostly because he wants the world to hear Mishka, whose debut release, "Above the Bones," drops on the 17th. His record label, j.k. livin, a reference to a line delivered by McConaughey's stoner-sage [character](#) in the 1993 Richard Linklater [film](#), is the latest addition to his [lifestyle brand of the same name](#).

In an interview with Pop & Hiss last week, McConaughey talked about distribution, his 2009 release schedule and even a bit about his producing role on Mishka's forthcoming release.

Why did you decide to start j.k. livin records?

I originally started it as a platform to get Mishka's music to the masses... in my mind, the music was too good *not* to be heard. Now I wouldn't mind it being a platform for Mishka and other artists I dig in the future that aren't as Top 40 mainstream and [who] fit the just keep livin' vibe.

What kind of release schedule can fans expect from j.k. livin'?

The label is going to ease into releasing mass amounts of music... the business is ever-changing so we want to make sure we are looking forward rather than back at the classic record release models, then find the music we're passionate about and expand. Mishka will be knockin' at least one album out a year and doing a lot of touring.

Do you have a staff?

Surely... wish I could do more of the work myself, but I've got a lot going on with the family, j.k. livin and my acting career.

Did you actually work on the record with Mishka in the studio? When can fans expect a solo record from you?

I produced this album, along with Darryl Thompson. My biggest asset to Mishka and his music is that Mishka and I agree on what is essentially great about his music. In shining a light on what works well, I find it easy to hear what could be better, point it out, and we work on it. As per a McConaughey solo album, I got no plans for one.

What are your hopes for the label in 2009 and your thoughts on digital-only versus physical CD releases?

2009 is about giving "Above the Bones" the best chance to land in as many ears as possible. Mishka will be starting another tour after the Roxy show [on Feb. 17], crossing North America, spreading the word. He also is going to Australia and Japan this year... and iTunes is doing an exclusive early release of the album on Feb. 10 for us. We hope people buy the physical album to really see it and own it, but we're not shipping huge amounts because it's a changing age, and we expect most of the traffic to come via iTunes and the internet.

What is the next release you have slated for j.k. livin after Mishka?

Nothing immediately... there's been a couple of opportunities that have come my way, but nothing that I wanted to take time off [for] and commit to. I've got a few things that turn me on right now, but I want to make sure we do it at the right time with people. Mishka has also written a bunch of new tunes, so I look forward to getting back in the studio with him after the tour.

What is it exactly about Mishka's music that inspires you?

The music and the lyrics. It's conscious reggae that reminds me to bless up, keep a high eye, work hard, love hard, remember true, hope faithfully, give thanks and just keep living.

-- Charlie Amter

Photo by Wally Skali/Los Angeles Times