



ROLLING STONE

Here's something you need to know about Nico & Vinz: In conversation, they sound like an inspirational cat poster come to life, spitting platitudes such as "Whatever you put your heart to, if you work hard enough, you can do it," "You owe a certain amount of positivity to other human beings" and "The power of the mind is incredible — believing in stuff, it's underrated."

THE NEW YORK TIMES

pop music has become an underused vehicle for unironic statements of change, a state of affairs that qualifies Meghan Trainor's "All About That Bass" as a real empowerment anthem. Broadly speaking, sloganeering has been exiled to the fringes.

And yet, a couple of times a year, a song penetrates through the self-involved clutter...This year it's "Am I Wrong," a bright, Police-esque pop-soul number by the Afro-Norwegian duo Nico & Vinz, singers with clean, burr-less voices and relentless optimism.

For [Nico & Vinz], who made their initial mark by finding a way to make earnestness something more than a personal crusade, sincerity is its own performance. But their initial success forces a test: Can they stick to their causes in the face of pop's filthy, irresistible lucre?

It's numbingly direct, ideologically underfed, and sure, catchy enough.

So goes the rest of this album, which gives the most obvious of platitudes the most glossy of sheens.

Nico and Vinz are resolutely positive singers, and to complement that attitude, they've opted for production that echoes the neutered global pop of the 1980s, sprinkled with African influences. The album's social commitments are stronger than its aesthetic commitments, but it doesn't suffer for that. Behind that choice seems to be an understanding that reaching the most really means alienating the fewest.

USA TODAY

On the Verge: "Wrong" plays strong for Nico & Vinz

With its bright summer sound, eclectic influences and empowering lyrics, Am I Wrong gives listeners a taste of Nico & Vinz's ambitious plans...

...the Norwegian duo's sound hits all the right notes.

[NPR](#)

"Am I Wrong" is a song of uplift by two singers and songwriters, Nico Sereba and Vincent Dery, who record as Nico & Vinz...The duo smartly recasts the sounds of their native Ivory Coast and Ghana within the radio-friendly structure of Scandinavian pop. Its staying power in America, however, probably has to do with its soulfulness. The song may not reach the levels of genius attained by Marvin Gaye or Sam Cooke, but in its singers' plaintive voices, and in the way it swells and ebbs, accommodating both hope and hesitation, it connects with the spirit of those great crowd movers.

The lyrics of "Am I Wrong" add up to a string of inspirational non-sequiturs...it's reassuring, but also sad and a little unsteady. The volatile elements of "Am I Wrong" come together to form a whole that sustains, but also acknowledges instability; the song offers hope, but acknowledges how difficult perseverance can be.

like so many hits whose meanings seem to adapt to fit their moment, it's here now, for the many different listeners who might need it. Protest takes courage and focus. Pop is all about commodification: the soft center of what adapts. But sometimes, when history collides with it, a simple song gains dimension. To paraphrase Nico & Vinz, that's just how listeners feel.

[AP](#)

[Black Star Elephant] blends African rhythms with broadly danceable pop and urban sounds

[THE HUFFINGTON POST](#)

With inspiring, uplifting lyrics and beats and hooks that won't quit, the song has been unstoppable this season, and rightfully so. To put it simply, the song makes you want to dance, sing-a-long with it, and drink pina colodas on the beach while pumping it loud - perhaps all of the above should be done simultaneously.

[TIME](#)

...catchy song with a chilled-out vibe... The hook-laden track by the Norwegian duo Nico & Vinz — Nico Sereba and Vincent Dery — makes it clear that Scandinavia's pop dominance is unrivaled.

...be warned: their catchy, upbeat song will get stuck in your head

[BILLBOARD](#)

Norwegian duo Nico & Vinz bring "Am I Wrong," their already world-conquering collection of rhetorical questions, to the United States, with the dancehall-inspired song recently turning into the pair's Billboard Hot 100 debut. The pair approach lines like "Am I wrong/ For trying to reach the things that I can't see?" with dead-eyed earnestness, but the slide guitar and backing harmonies jeep the song an airy affair.

... so far the song can only do right. Pop radio is embracing the song's world music-meets-soul vibe — think Akon singing over the Police.

[VH1](#)

tapping into the laid back vibe of the warmer months

[VIBE](#)

No shade to Iggy Azalea's "Fancy" but Nico and Vinz's "Am I Wrong" ruled summer 2014.

IDOLATOR

The vibe of the record is completely different than anything happening in music today, due to its roots in African culture that are mixed in with emotive pop.

Our latest favorite hails from Norway, whose current international smash we cannot seem to get out of our heads.

The song has a soulful tone that has evident roots in traditional African rhythms, yet it also has a twist of Scandinavian Pop. But the true beauty comes in the form of the official video, which was shot in various countries like Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Its striking scenes of nature and local communities provide a soothing backdrop for the melodious tune.

The song also embodies happiness, freedom and love, which is what summer should be all about.

FADER

My favorite song for moms of 2014 was "Am I Wrong," which has hung around the top of Billboard's Adult Contemporary chart for half the year. The song has clear roots in Africa's pop-driven Afrobeats movement, but with the tempo slowed down and acoustic guitar plucks pushed forward, it gave me instant nostalgia hits of riding in my mom's car as a kid and hearing Babyface and Eric Clapton's "Change the World" hundreds of times. Unlike some of its aforementioned contemporaries, "Am I Wrong" is not mummified as a marketing tactic. Instead it has an organic momness: wispy guitars, hand drums, and some sweetly sung, passionate vocals. Moms, as they forever will, deserved it. —Jordan Sargent

SPIN

"I ain't tryna do what everybody else doing," cross-cultural duo Nico & Vinz (born Kahouly Nicolay Sereba and Vincent Dery) declare on the inquisitive "Am I Wrong," a radio-ready Afro-pop banger with an irresistibly sincere spin. It's a melting pot of genres: hip-hop, R&B, reggae, and dance, accented with sharp horns, tribal drum beats, and vigorous step-dance-inspired hand claps. As promised, the guys aren't retreading well-worn territory: They might hail from Oslo, but Sereba and Dery — who are also of respective Ivorian and Ghanaian descent — saturate their soulful single with a south-of-the-equator edge.

POPMATTERS

Give it up to Norwegian duo Nico & Vinz, who bring a unique fusion of styles to the musical table on their debut album, Black Star Elephant. Arguably best categorized as pop musicians, Nico & Vinz incorporate dashes of African music, hip-hop, and R&B. Ultimately, Black Star Elephant proves to be a pleasant, uplifting album,

Nico & Vinz never over perform, hence delivering vocally with a cool, chill vibe that exemplifies winning. Again, there is a level of respect that is the rare find in a majority of pop music. There is no denying that Nico & Vinz better their listeners by eschewing negativity, not to mention avoiding profanity for the most part. Nico & Vinz seems to be "Runnin'" on the right path, ranking as truly upstanding people without question.

THE BLAZE

positive message of self-reliance and hard work ...The song is awesome, and my official nomination for the "song of summer." And either way, it's nice to have a song with such a good message dominating the charts.

POP CRUSH

The song's inspirational message has become an international smash, and one of the summer's most celebrated hits.

STEREOGUM

With "Am I Wrong," Oslo duo Nico & Vinz have rocketed from obscurity to worldwide stardom.

MIC

people across the whole world are hearing the song and falling in love without even knowing who wrote it... While it might be too soon to call 2014 a Norwegian renaissance, "Am I Wrong" is a strong reintroduction to the country that brought us some of the 1980s' most distinguished music. Ylvis gave us all a good laugh last year, but it's thanks to Nico & Vinz that Norwegian pop may end up on top of the world, or at least on top of the charts, after all. Soon enough, when people hear a Nico & Vinz song, they'll know who they're hearing.

BUSTLE

Summer hit alert! it instantly knocked me on my butt with its ridiculous amount of pure awesomeness...With a great beat, infectious melody, and emotionally charged lyrics, "Am I Wrong" is exactly the kind of hip-pop track rapper Drake wishes he had recorded... Can't you see yourself cruising down an open road with the windows open, just blasting this song? I know I can

ALL MUSIC

(3 of 5 stars)

Afro-beat pop by way of Norway, Nico & Vinz deliberately blur cultural and musical boundaries on their 2014 debut, *Black Star Elephant*. Such happy disregard for genres is the secret to the duo's appeal, as is how they emphasize hooks above all else. Usually, the rhythms are too streamlined and club-ready to be called polyrhythms, although they certainly exuberantly percolate in the fashion Westerners associate with African drums. They're there for color as much as they are for dancing because the emphasis is on the insouciant breeziness of their light-as-a-feather melodies and harmonies. Often, as on the global smash single "Am I Wrong," they recall nothing so much as a Europop variation of Bruno Mars' interpolation of Sting, who himself often dabbled in multicultural musical adventures, which means Nico & Vinz provide an odd squaring of a circle: they're interpolating an interpolation of an interpolation. Far from diluting the pleasures of *Black Star Elephant*, this cultural disconnect enhances them because it emphasizes how, at their core, Nico & Vinz are lite bubblegum worldbeat pop, and will try on any fashion just as long as it might bring them a hit.

THE BOOMBOX

Am I Wrong' finds Nico and Vinz — born Nico Sereba and Vincent Dery — aiming to inspire with the mid-tempo track. Off their upcoming album, 'Black Star Elephant,' the pair sing from the heart and delve into finding one's identity on the dance groove.

WONDERING SOUND

Iggy Azalea and Charli XCX's bouncing-ball brag "Fancy," but the pop-radio staple that probably best epitomized the expansive, possibility-filled sentiments that typically define summer was "Am I Wrong," an airy dance hit marked by pleading vocals and a chiming Afropop-inspired guitar riff.

the song turned on sparkling guitar lines and questioning lyrics, expressing longing in a way that could just as easily be about overcoming oppression as it was about love.

'Black Star Elephant is full of welcome attempts to make 2014's version of dance music bend to the sounds of Sereba and Dery's homelands, subjecting their individual elements to enough Scandopop alchemy to make them friendly to a radio landscape dominated by demanding chords and pummeling four-four beats.

Nico & Vinz's lyrics, marked by hope on even the more bittersweet songs, sound so out of step with a pop-music culture dominated by sometimes-nasty boasts of sexual and monetary prowess, and they stick out even more because of Sereba and particularly Dery's vocals, which retain their real-person grain amid the beats and loops.

[ABOUT.COM](#)

(4.5 of 5 stars)

"Am I Wrong" is simultaneously very familiar and a breath of fresh air. That combination frequently can add up to a breakout smash pop hit. This may well be where the top pop hits of summer 2014 begin. "Am I Wrong" is more musically complex than the typical top 40 pop hit, but it does nothing to alienate listeners.

Norway's Nico & Vinz have combined for a sound that is outside of the typical mainstream pop box while still remaining accessible enough to appeal to the broadest possible audience. Nico & Vinz are one of the hottest new pop acts of 2014.

[THECELEBRITYCAFE.COM](#)

(5 of 5 stars)

The song is about going against the grain and not letting what other people do dictate your actions... Don't simply sit around watching TV and conforming, go out, be different, be wild, live life.

[ATLANTA JOURNAL CONSTITUTION](#)

African dance elements, a propelling drum beat and a moody club feel.

[CREATIVE LOAFING](#)

You know that track that's playing everywhere right now, that kind of has that uplifting pop/New Age-y production and a dude singing over it, "So am I wrong, for thinking that we could be something for real? / Now am I wrong, for trying to reach the things that I can't see? / But that's just how I feel / That's just how I feel / That's just how I feel / Trying to reach the things that I can't see?" I bet you have it in your head now. Ha. Ha. I do too.

[MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL](#)

Afro-Norwegian duo spreads more multiculti pop.

[SHEKNOWS.COM](#)

"Am I Wrong" is so right. I don't want another song for my summer playlist. I've got everything I need with Nico & Vinz's single "Am I Wrong." It's been out for a while, but it's only touching radio airwaves on our side of the world now. I think of warm, sandy beaches, crisp sangria and tiki lights when I hear it. With each play, I am transported further into this fantasy, and I think you will be, too.

[ARJAN WRITES](#)

charismatic duo from Norway who capture a feel-good summer vibe on "Am I Wrong" while also spreading a powerful message of empowerment

[VOICE OF AMERICA](#)

These two bring an international outlook to their music

[STAR.FM](#)

"Am I Wrong" by Nico & Vinz is one of the songs of the summer, but it's not just a catchy tune: it's proving to be an inspiration to people everywhere.

[KFBK \(iHEART RADIO\)](#)

Nico & Vinz's "Am I Wrong?" has taken the country by storm this year. The Norwegian duo has come a long way, and through their hard work and talent, have made their dreams come true.

[ROMAN'S RAP UP](#)

ARTIST SPOTLIGHT: Nico And Vinz

[Am I Wrong] stands out with one thing that most artists don't have: positivity.



:::PERFORMANCES:::

[DAILY TROJAN](#)

@ USC Welcome Back show

Their energy and smiles were infectious, and they quickly built an intimate connection with the audience. Students couldn't help but dance and sway their hands to the music perfect for a beach resort. Because it was their first college show, Nico & Vinz were eager to please and show off their talents, shouting out to the crowd and showing off some impressive dance moves to complement their silky smooth vocals.

[IDOLATOR](#)

@Jimmy Kimmel Live

With the way the exuberant, warmly-receptive audience was dancing about, it's no wonder why the pair had big smiles plastered on their faces throughout their performance...and why this song is so damn huge.

THE BOOMBOX

@Soul Train Awards

The winners of the Best New Artist award came with their A-game during the televised performance on Sunday...kept the focus on their vocals as they were backed by a few dancers and a minimal digital display.

The 2014 Soul Train Awards nod is the latest sign that Nico & Vinz are on the rise.

LOCAL BOZO

@McKittrick private showcase

Although finding ample space inside of the packed room was challenging, the group's high energy performance and their humbled appreciation to the crowd in attendance overshadowed any modicum of frustration. Most fans in the house alternated between dancing in place and taking dozens of pictures on their phones- no surprise considering their close proximity to Nico & Vinz... Time will tell if the pair's subsequent singles will be as successful as their first, but based on their private showcase on Thursday night in New York City, our money is on Nico & Vinz to continue on their meteoric rise.