

Music

The Pursuit of Happiness

Despite selling over 45 million singles, Jason Derulo has yet to experience the respect that his Pop/R&B counterparts—Chris and Trey—enjoy. But, he is not worried and his nonchalance may just deliver him the applause he's long desired.

BY JACINTA HOWARD

Jason Derulo sounds tired. It's release day for his fourth studio album *Everything Is 4*, the day after his debut on the Fox hit, *So You Think You Can Dance* and he's just getting back in the country after an international travel stint. So 'tired' might be an understatement.

Actually, the grogginess in his voice gives his baritone a rough edge that would probably make the women who've made him a mega-star swoon, and you can't help but get the feeling that he's very aware of that. In fact, Derulo seems hyper in tune with what works for him, and to that end, he says he's finally reached the mountaintop—the place where you stop giving a hot damn about what anyone thinks of you and start living life on your own terms.

"Everybody that's not in my immediate circle [seems] to have a little bit of hate for me," the 25-year-old singer, who last year went through a very public breakup with singer/actress Jordin Sparks, admits. "I can't live my life to try to please people. I have to live my life how I live my life and I gotta make sure that I'm happy."

So yes, black audiences may think the platinum-selling singer/songwriter is a little...corny, with his synth-soul sound and slick dance moves, but who cares? He doesn't seem too worried about it. Derulo's safe pop tunes may elude urban radio, but 45 million single sales later, that isn't exactly something to be sad about.

"I do have an urban background, that's part of who I am," says the Miami native, who has written for Diddy and Lil Wayne and scored a hit single last year, "Wiggle" with Snoop Dogg. "I was going to do neo-soul at one point and I thought I was going to do straight R&B, so it's something that's within me for sure. But I'm influenced by other stuff."

One needs to look no further than Derulo's song "Broke," featuring Stevie Wonder and Keith Urban to get a good sense of just how slickly oiled his pop machine is, although Derulo insists that he's only making music from his heart. "I don't know any other way to create," he says.

His new album probably exemplifies who he is at the core more than any other of his previous works, as he teeters between prototypical pop tunes and a slightly riskier R&B-tinged sound with relaxed agility. His music is truly a reflection of where he is right now, and he's good with that. "I don't think I've ever been happier and I think it's because I am doing me."



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