

# Shaggy: An Interview on His Lasting Success - Nightlife

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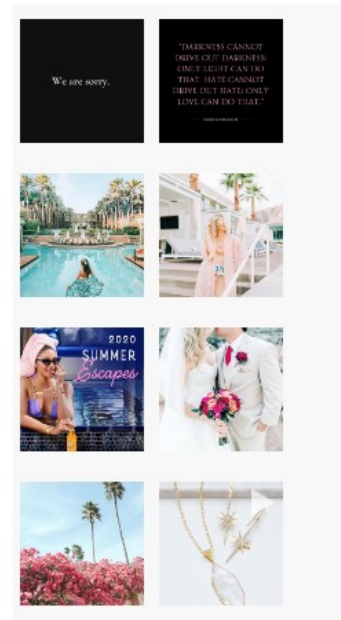
## Shaggy: An Interview on His Lasting Success

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It doesn't take long to recognize the voice of reggae artist Shaggy whose music is replete with funky sounds, feel-good beats and catchy lines. Managing to stay true to himself and his musical style, Shaggy has found success in a variety of genres from reggae to pop to dancehall. Spending decades in the music industry, Mr. Lover Lover gained popularity in the 90's with albums like the funky 1995 *Boombastic* and later, *Hot Shot* that went six times platinum and featured major hits like "Angel," "Luv Me, Luv Me" and the anthem of denial, "It Wasn't Me." His eclectic mix of sounds and unconventional attitude to appeal to himself rather than the mainstream has allowed him to continue making authentic music over the years.

We had the chance to catch up with Shaggy on how the music industry has changed over the decades, the challenge to appeal to a wide audience and what's in the near future for the suave artist.

Catch Shaggy at [Livewire](#) on November 17 at 8 p.m. Tickets [HERE](#).

**AFM: After 20+ years making music how are you able to stay creative and original?**

**S:** To be honest with you, it's about not overstaying your welcome. I'm the first person that gets bored with me and I make music somewhat selfishly and hope that it connects with me and my own tastes. With that, you kind of hope you can mix it up and for the most part it always works. Some might look at it and say it's reinvention but it's really me trying not to be bored with me; I've done pop music and then went to dancehall and then urban reggae and now I'm back in pop and doing it in a different way than how I used to do it. What's different about doing pop music now is the social media aspect of it that we never had before. The way music is made now is fascinating. It's nice to be a part of all that. And it's even more challenging now. I'm an older guy connecting with a younger audience and that in itself is an enormous challenge.

**AFM: How has the music industry changed since the early 90's for you?**

**S:** A lot has changed. You have to document everything now. It used to be people would watch movies, play video games and listen to music; those were the three main things. Now, there's so many different mediums. That is a huge change for me. I'm a guy from a time where I would just sell them what I'm selling, just music. Now you have to let everyone in and some people might not be as comfortable with that. You can't just be a musician, now you have to be a celebrity. Not a lot of us are interested in being a celebrity, some of us just want to make the music. So how much you reveal is kind of up to you. For me, it's how do I achieve success without selling out? And there's probably disappointment for a lot of people around me because some think "oh yeah get a reality TV show" because it makes their job easier. But I don't think I should be doing something in my life to make their job easier. So I took the hard way.

**AFM: You have been able to stay true to yourself and your music through the years. Do you see that same trait in any other new artists today?**

**S:** Well new artists it would be hard to say. When you're just coming out you're trying to grab whatever attention you can. Most new artists right now that are successful already have followings so they've already opened up and exposed themselves. Record companies really aren't putting anyone out from scratch anymore. It's almost as if these artists have to do all the work first. Yeah, a record company puts a record out, but it's the fan base that makes the record sell.

**AFM: What's it like returning back to the studio after making big hits like "Oh Carolina" and "It Wasn't Me"?**

**S:** It's exciting. None of these records were made knowing they were going to be hits. We didn't just go into the studio and say "we're going to make a hit." I make records everyday. I'm here now in the studio and I'll probably make two today. Consciously whenever I come off tour I just come in to make records so there's always tons of material so all we have to do is go through it and say ok this one is hot, that one is hot. So there's no pressure. There's pressure when you want to choose the right one to send to the right people. So it's not really in the studio, it's more sitting down with your people that you're working with and finding that one record. And that

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can become difficult for all of us to agree on because there can be six or seven different types of taste that you're trying to make work as one.

**AFM: Who's been your favorite artist to collaborate with?**

**S:** I don't have a favorite. If you look at my collaborations, I don't have big stars on my records. I did a record with Janet Jackson for the soundtrack for *How Stella Got Her Groove Back*. I didn't even know Janet Jackson was going to be on the record, she just ended up being on it. She was never in my video, we never had a conversation, I met her once briefly and that was it. And it ended up being a No. 1 record. And then there was Pitbull and he never showed up in the video either. But on "It Wasn't Me" there's this guy called Rik-Rok who was a co-writer with me and we ended up putting him on the record. And Radar, which nobody really knows, he was on "Angel." Nobody really knows those guys. I'm not really going after the big star features. Usually if they're going to be on your record they want to make sure you're hot first and if you're hot you don't really need them. So as far as collaborating, I let the music dictate it.

**AFM: Is there one single that you still love performing today more than others?**

**S:** It's hard to say anymore because the big ones always go over nicely like "Angel," "Luv Me Luv Me," etc. because they're mega records but there's some that are just fun. And I would say right now—and it changes—but right now I would say "Only Love." But it can change. And in some countries it's different. Like in India, RedOne's "Don't You Need Somebody" was massive so that was a lot of fun because it feels good. You like to do a record that grabs people. But that's a tough question; that's like asking me what one of my kids I like best.

**AFM: What else can fans expect from you in the near future music wise?**

**S:** We're in the process of a new album. Right now we're going to see where the music takes us. Everything is about the vibe and the feel. Hopefully some things connect with the audience and at this point it does feel good and we're having success and we're going to try and build on that. I'm very anxious to be out there with the audience and see where it takes us.

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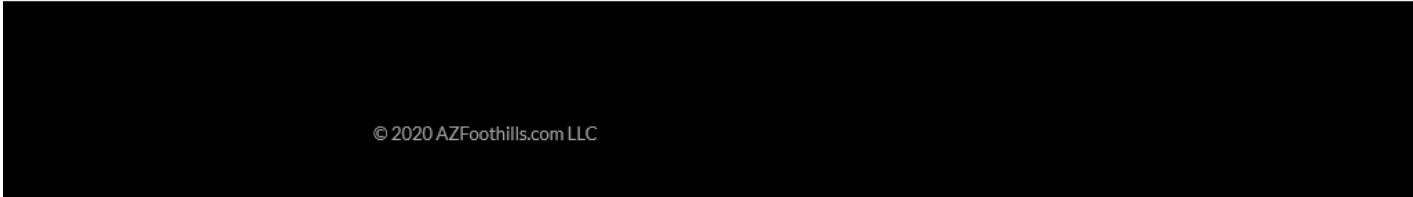


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