

A Kinder, Gentler Shaggy? You bet.

Steamtunnels talks to the dancehall king about his hit CD *Hot Shot*.

By Thomas Gibson

Shaggy, the Jamaican born, U.S.-bred dancehall king, has come out of a two-year hibernation reflecting on his unexpected popularity with a sizzling new album, *Hot Shot* (MCA).

Though he has lived his entire adult life in the U.S., Shaggy's roots are in Kingston, Jamaica, where he was born Orville Richard Burrell on October 22, 1968. As a kid, his friends nicknamed him "Shaggy" after the cartoon character on "Scooby Doo." Music was his passion, even as a boy growing up on the island nation.

"Reggae isn't a radio format in Jamaica," he says. "They just play what they want, so my influences range from ska, dancehall and rock steady to soca and R&B."

Shaggy began pursuing a musical career when he moved to Brooklyn, NY at the age of 18. He got a major boost when "Mampie" and "Big Up," both hard-core Shaggy dancehall tracks, hit #1 on the New York reggae charts. After a frustrating year of trying to find more work, Shaggy finally joined the U.S. Marines in 1988. A few years later, he found himself in the Iraqi desert fighting in the Gulf War.

"War is ugly," Shaggy says. "It had a big impact on me, in terms of appreciating life. When I got out I decided, 'This is it, I'm taking my music to the heights.'" And so he did with *Hot Shot*, which has soared up the reggae charts.

In its thirteen tracks, *Hot Shot* proves that Shaggy is a master of many styles—

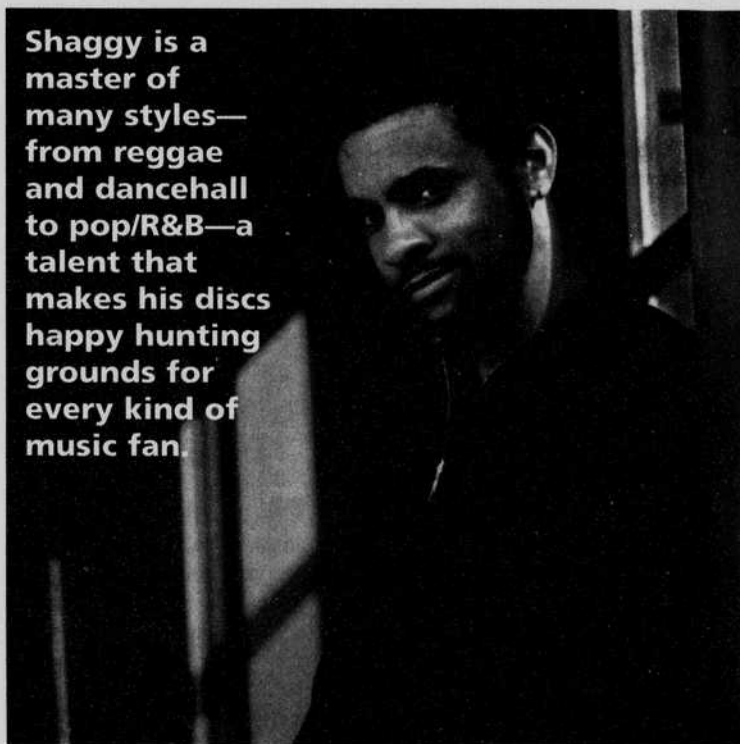
from reggae and dancehall to pop/R&B—a talent that makes his discs happy hunting grounds for every kind of music fan.

Hot Shot came out back in August, and the first track released—"It Wasn't Me"—a catchy, yet melancholy tune featuring Ricardo "RikRok" Ducent, propelled the CD to gold status.

"I want my songs to tell a story, to be funny and fun at the same time," says Shaggy, who is known for his sexually provocative lyrics and head bouncing beats. "This album is a rollercoaster ride. I wanted to show many different sides of my musical personality," Shaggy adds.

"I always want to make different styles of music. We try to evolve at the end of the day. I've always strived to be best; we make music to make music." Shaggy's music has always been far reaching. His first single, "Oh Carolina," became a sensation in the U.K., but

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it was "Boombastic" that gave American audiences their first dose of the singsong master.

Currently, Shaggy is on the back end of a two-month concert tour, but he says he loves the adventure of spreading the excitement from his fans.

"If you don't know me yet, come to a Shaggy concert. I guarantee, when you leave, you'll be a Shaggy fan," he promises. •

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