

STILL DODGING THE BULLETS

MOBY finds himself perched upon a paradox. It's that fickle old dance partner, fame – on the one hand it allows you an audience for your art, affords you a decent rent and gives you a platform for various causes.

But it can also lead to a path of insecurity and self-involvement, baggage involving drugs, alcohol or failed relationships and, says Moby, a short, sad life roughly as long as "a coal miner or Alaskan fisherman".

Fortunately, Moby, 44, has dodged fame's most destructive bullets, and lives a relatively peaceful life in a pocket of New York's Lower East Side, where he is able to make music from home, blog from time to time, and come out to support causes that mean a lot to him.

Yet fame is something that the musician – at once retiring and outspoken – has found himself strangely a part of.

"I do think it's strange that we glorify this institution that really destroys people's lives," he says ahead of his Australian visit.

"We live in this culture where people are collectively obsessed with celebrity. If you talk to almost any person on the planet, most people would give up their life in an instant to go to Los Angeles and be a movie star.

"I've met lots and lots of rock stars and famous movie stars and politicians, and they're some of the most insecure and self-involved people I've ever met.

"And if you look at it empirically, fame is an incredibly destructive, corrosive institution. It really doesn't benefit anybody. It certainly never benefits the famous person – even if the person makes lots of money and is able to have sexy, glamorous relationships, in the end it just tears them apart."

Moby's icons have included famous artists, writers or directors, like Marcel Duchamp, JD Salinger, Henry Miller

or Stanley Kubrick – people who became famous for doing something well.

"It seems like we've turned things on their head now where people become famous because they make a sex tape and once they're famous their manager asks them if they want to learn how to make a record," he says.

"There are some nice things about fame. Sometimes it pays well and it's nice to have an audience for what you do. Sometimes by being famous you can draw attention to worthy causes or good issues, but fame in and of itself is like a demon."

It's been five years since Moby performed in Australia but soon the city boy – who lives in an old warehouse building – will swap the snow of New York for sunshine as he headlines the Sunset Sounds festival.

Moby, whose album *Wait For Me* came out this year, will be joining acts including Yeah Yeah Yeahs, Seaside Steve, Editors, Hilltop Hoods, Sarah Blasko, Kaki King and Datarock at the festival, which comes to the City Botanic Gardens on January 6 and 7.

In the US, Moby has been touring the album and in between found time to play for MTV's *Play to Stop* campaign ahead of the recent Copenhagen conference. It's another important issue to which the singer has lent his voice.

"The only thing I can compare it to, is it's like a car that's begun to go downhill with the brakes broken," he says of the issue that has been dominating world news.

"Climate change is already happening. The question is how severe will the consequences be and how prepared we are for them.

"I don't understand why the Western world is so reliant upon foreign oil. If you can create sustainable energy sources at home, you're keeping your money at home and you're helping support local industry and local jobs."

If global sea levels rise drastically in the next 25 years, says Moby, not a single coastal city won't be affected, and that includes his beloved New York. The vegan also talks about the role of animal production in climate change.

"There are a few unreleased reports showing that animal production is responsible for 25 per cent of all climate change," he says.

Since the 100 million-selling album *Play* turned his world upside down, with every track used in an advertising campaign or movie, Moby found himself a household name. The record, whose cover featured an image of the

If you look at it, fame is an incredibly destructive, corrosive institution

star leaping into the air, was a sure-fire find in every cool person's music collection. He became a voice people wanted to listen to (whether it was his voice on the album or not).

Four albums on again, he's broadened his repertoire with albums such as *18* and *Hotel* – although none have reached the sales of *Play*.

For *Wait For Me*, an album graced by his own artwork of Leunig-like doodles, he approached the record with an "art for art's sake" attitude inspired by his pal, director David Lynch.

It was something the *Twin Peaks* director said about how creativity in and of itself without marketing pressures was a good thing that resonated with the songwriter.

The result is a more personal record, Moby says – and one that inspires repeat listening. A moody, soaring, atmospheric album, *Wait For Me* is something of a home-cooked affair,

recorded in his home studio with raw ingredients (read: no samples).

Although their output may be quite different, Moby and Lynch have plenty in common.

"It's interesting because his movies are very complicated, but in person he's very sweet, direct and uncomplicated," says Moby. "There is a huge dichotomy between David Lynch the filmmaker and David Lynch the person."

They share a love of abandoned buildings and, ironically, the building Moby now lives in used to be, among other things, a meat packing plant. "I spent most of my adult life living in buildings that used to be factories," says Moby. "So the building that I'm in now, it was a prison hospital during the civil war, then it was a meat processing plant for a long time, and also a lot of different musicians had their music studios here, like the Beastie Boys and Sonic Youth and Iggy Pop and Sean Lennon."

"A city like New York, it's like a much shorter-lived version of Rome, where everything has been repurposed and everything has been built on everything else, so every last square inch of New York has a history going back at least three or four hundred years."

Moby loves the village vibe of New York City. Recently he witnessed the city's good side when locals came out to Central Park to play in the snow. If you ever want to feel good about humanity, he says, just stand at the base of a sledding hill in NYC and watch Jews, Muslims and punk rockers sledding with their kids.

The cure for misanthropy and/or terrorism is sledding, he says. "It's hard to hate people or want to blow them up when they're out sledding with their kids."

Sunset Sounds, City Botanic Gardens, Brisbane, January 6-7; sunsetsounds.com.au; tickets 1300 438 849.

Commercial savvy Datarock has no time for games

NORWEGIAN band Datarock (pictured) know how to rock the bank.

They may not be a household name just yet, but their songs have been heard everywhere from TV shows and movies, to ads for Apple's iPod, Coke, Argentinean beer and a major UK phone company, to 22 computer games.

In an age where record sales are dwindling, you can't blame a band for being commercially savvy.

"We never had anything terrible, like weapons of mass destruction," jokes frontman Fredrik Saroea.

"Our punk fans didn't appreciate the Coke ad too much."

Despite their prevalence in computer games – and their hooky, '80s inspired electro tunes lend themselves perfectly to the gaming environment – Datarock rarely play video games themselves. They don't have time.

"I know a minimum of 250 million people have heard a Datarock song in a video game,

but I never have. It's really bizarre," says Saroea.

It's the live arena where they rock the most, and this Bergen-based two piece (who multiply when on the road) spend more than half the year on tour. They've just released their second album, *Red*, a follow-up to their debut *Datarock Datarock*, whose single *Computer Camp Love* was a big hit on Triple J's Hottest 100.

Frequent visitors to Australia, Datarock have played almost all the major festivals and this time head up Sunset Sounds.

Although the US has the numbers, per capita, Australia is one of their largest fan bases – on a par with their home base of Norway, says data cruncher Saroea.

The band will be jumping on stage in their trademark red tracksuits, which you can buy online, points out the ever entrepreneurial Saroea.

"It's interesting when fans turn up to our shows in the tracksuits. The reason they're so

expensive is that's pretty much what we pay for them."

So who washes their famous tracksuits? "We have to wash them ourselves. We don't wash them often enough. Sometimes it's terrible."

The album *Red* (obviously their favourite colour) wears its influences on its (red) sleeve – with the band name checking Devo, Talking Heads and directors such as John Hughes.

The song *Molly* is a tribute to '80s princess Molly Ringwald.

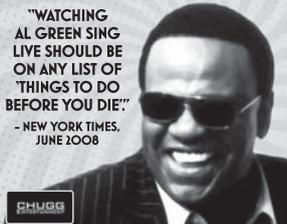
The video for single *The Pretender* takes its cues from the John Carpenter sci-fi movie *They Live*.

"The song is about the arbitrary nature of the actual identity behind an online avatar," says the song's composer. "At the time I wrote the lyrics there was a lot of talk about online predators and monitoring of the internet."

Sally Browne Datarock will perform at Sunset Sounds on January 6.



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