

ASS Remixed **An Interview with Anthony Antoine**

By Craig Washington

Anthony Antoine, who turned heads when he flipped pronouns with the openly gay themed “Dante’s Got A Man”, is back at it again with a sizzling late summer release, the delicious “Ass” single and remixes. “Ass” is a steamy tale about boy meets boy with greater booty that features some of the hottest pillow talk since Prince’s “Do Me Baby.” Standouts include a “Bottom or Top” remix laid on top of Missy’s “Work It” and a bold Kellis remake “The Boy Milkshake Song”. Anthony Antoine sets new standards of hip hop realness by addressing love, lust and romance between men and up ending dominant attitudes about what it means to be a man. Bringing provocative lyrics, tight hip hop and house flavored hooks, and a range of delivery styles (sometimes intense, sometimes playful, always sexy), Anthony Antoine delivers the goods without compromising the music for the sake of the message.

He has been either performing or producing music for over 15 years and has developed a distinctive vision and the chops to convey it. Back in the 80’s the then seventeen year old moved to London where he played with Paul Hardcastle (“19”) and garnered an international dance hit “Swing” with The Deff Boyz. He later released two singles including “Under Your Spell” with noted jazz artist Ronny Jordan and performed as an opening act for C&C Music Factory. Since his move to Atlanta in 1999, the Newark native achieved local celebrity status as an independent artist who also performs with Adodi Muse, the self described gay Negro ensemble. It was “Dante” (which received major play throughout the national club circuit) that distinguished Anthony Antoine as an original, one who stood apart from the rest of the hip hop/pop/r&b pack.

I lunched with the dangerously handsome performer to talk about his music and his message and as I anticipated he had a lot to say.

What moved you to do “Ass” (asked with a straight face)

It’s exactly what I wanted to say, I didn’t filter it. It’s unapologetic. A celebration of being an independent artist. Too often we don’t hear our stories told over music.

One of my favorite cuts are “Don’tUEva”, your response to hip hop homophobes. And “Curiosity and The Hennessy,” you know you have to talk about that.

That was about giving something for the kids that love hip hop. Then hip hop is thought of as hard. As an openly gay artist, I wouldn’t be expected to do that and have it carry. That I could create a song in that vein surprised me. “Curiosity and The Hennessy” is my favorite song I’ve ever written. It’s about a man who keeps showing up at my door and says he’s not gay. The excuse is the alcohol. “What’s up with you and me is a secret I can keep. Call it whatever you please. It’s okay with me. Blame the Hennessy”

Okay tell me about “I Got The Moves” which features baby, baby daddy and baby mama.

Vogue was 11 when we recorded it. Dana is my baby mama and my best friend. Vogue my daughter is clearly our child, a merge of Anthony and Dana. I'm a father. That's another aspect of me as a gay man. I'm still good friends with my baby mama even though she knows the truth about me.

Who is your audience?

My music is for the kids. Particularly black gay folks. Very few folks have had the opportunity to talk about being gay, sexuality, gay sex on a CD. Gay folks been changing pronouns in songs and applying them to their lives forever. I got emails from a brother in Montana that had gone to my website and heard my music. I didn't think there were black gay folks in Montana (laughs). I'm really pleased. The culmination is that.

How is it working with your producer?

Jimmy George of Wave Motion Sound recording studio. He's the same one that did "Dante's Got A Man." He restored my faith in heterosexual men. Here's a man who didn't know me, who regardless of what I brought to him, he's down. We work so well together. I love that it didn't matter that I wanted to do "gay music". It was good music to him, and he ran with it.

When did you start being openly gay in your music?

Going through coming out and getting comfortable with my sexuality, it made sense that I talk about it in my music. There's a saying that no one can do you like you. There's no one out doing Anthony Antoine. It really evolved as I became more involved in activism and HIV prevention.

Any Hobbies?

Sex, but that's performing too (laughs). No I spend a lot of time with my daughter. I love going to the movies and hanging with her and her friends. She's 13 with a cell phone. I'm a homebody. I love writing, watching good television, Will and Grace, Sex In The City. I love just chillin'.

What inspires you and what do you fear most?

I'm a very passionate person. People who are passionate inspire me. The kids who are passionate about HIV prevention. When they disclose their status, that's revolutionary. My greatest fear is that someone dies without fulfilling what they were supposed to do on the planet. I used to fear that my music wouldn't happen in the way I planned. I don't have that fear any more. You can't take my CDs away from me. They are done.

Want some more? Hit the website at <http://www.anthonyantoine.com/>