

Meet the real Karl Wolf

Ahead of his Dubai gig with Pitbull next week, the superstar DJ talks fame, money and women with *Rob Garratt*

Karl Wolf is not a guarded man. Sit down with the Wolf and you'll expect him to howl – howl about his talents, his success, his money, and his love life. It's not that the Lebanese-Canadian star is arrogant, he just seems to lack a certain modesty that most people develop somewhere along the course of a normal adult life.

But then the 33-year-old star has never had an ordinary life. Born in Beirut and raised in Dubai, Wolf began working behind the scenes in music in his late teens, following a move to the colder climes of Canada. In 2003 he achieved national notoriety there as the final frontman of band Sky, before launching a solo career that has seen him shift millions of copies of four albums, collaborate with Taio Cruz and Jay Sean, and notch up six Canadian gold singles. So perhaps it's no wonder his modesty got lost along the way.

On fame...

'I grew up here [in Dubai], but even when they know I'm here my friends won't call because they think I'm too much of a superstar. Fame is part of my reality these days. People complain about fans bugging them, and I can relate to that. When I'm not in the mood, when I'm ugly and haven't shaved and I want to go to the supermarket and everybody eyes me, that's the only issue. But I like that. I see someone looking at me and it's like scoring points – points, points, points. Recognition is good.'

On his stage name (which derives from '80s basketball movie *Teen Wolf*)...

'It started off in my basketball team. I was the shortest guy on the team – I'm like five foot seven, I don't care – but I was fast so they called me Teen Wolf. When I first called myself Karl Wolf, everybody was like, "Really dude? It's a joke! It's not going to work!" My whole life I've been trying to prove them wrong. It's taken me years to get there.'

On his riches (Dhs60 million at last count)...

'My net worth came out three months ago. You can just Google it. All my people called me and said, "I didn't know you were worth that – I need a raise!" Even my business partner said, "Are you hiding money from me?" I don't want that out there –



it increases the chance of kidnapping, of girls saying, "he has my baby" – but what else can you do? If you have a high profile you have no choice. It's ridiculous what you find out... I mean Pitbull has less money than I do.'

'It's ridiculous – Pitbull has less money than I do'

On the smell of success...

'You know fame has a certain smell. I like to entertain people and I know why they like certain things. I like to walk by fans and I want them to smell me, because I know how it will make them feel. They feel lucky. I want them to feel that.'

On his Arabic roots...

'At first I was always trying to stay away from that. I always said, "I'm not Arabic." I thought it was a hindrance, but when I moved to Canada I realised that's what makes you different.'

On his most recent Canadian gold record, 'Mash It Up', produced by Dubai-based DJs Dany Neville and Greg Stainer....

'I had this song with an unpronounceable name and I had to make a clean version. I went to Dany and said, "I need a crazy remix." He hooked me up with Greg and we went back and forth a billion times on Skype. He's such a talented DJ and producer.'

On the business...

'A lot of artists don't have any discipline, no business sense. No desire. They may be creative, but I have both – and that's why I've

excelled. I've fired 10 managers because they're dishonest. I don't tolerate that. I'm a ruthless businessman, but I'm very kind hearted. I'm a sweet guy, but don't take my sweetness for weakness.'

On women...

'I've got nothing going on. I'm single. It's hard for any woman to endure my lifestyle and energy. I had a girlfriend, two, three years ago; it didn't work out for me. I have to date a celeb. I'll take Jessica Alba or Haifa Wehbe. Haifa and I are friends, she tweeted me a few days ago. I wanted to [date her] but she's probably with some prince. I like the bachelor life, but it gets lonely. I like to be proper in the day – but the Wolf comes out after midnight.'

Karl Wolf supports Pitbull at Dubai World Trade Centre on Friday June 29 at 8pm. Dhs295-595, www.timeouttickets.com

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