

JASON WILSON

Age: 39

Location: Guelph

Bio: Two-time Juno nominee for reggae recordings, www.jasonwilsonmusic.com

Jason Wilson continues to break down barriers in the music world.

Once described as a “skinny white guy” who plays reggae music, the Toronto native says the music chose him.

“My Jamaican friends introduced me to reggae at a very early age and it really became part of my culture,” he said. “Later, when I was 11 or 12, I found out that my cousin back in Britain was in (the band) UB40 and that really sealed the deal. I make no apologies for playing reggae – even though I may not ‘look’ the part to some people.”

The University of Guelph graduate student was recently nominated for his first solo album, *The Peacemaker's Chauffeur*, in the reggae recording of the year category at the Juno Awards. It marked his second Juno nomination.

Over the years, Wilson said he's been blessed to play with such musical icons, including the likes of Pee Wee Ellis (bandleader for James Brown and Van Morrison), Ernest Ranglin (the guy who taught Bob Marley to play) and Dave Swarbrick (Britain's most famous fiddler of Fairport Convention fame). He has also collaborated with performers from outside the genre, including Alanis Morissette, Amanda Marshall and Ron Sexsmith.

Wilson, who has also co-authored and edited books, is currently researching the impact of Jamaican music on Canadian society for his PhD.

Jason Wilson was nominated by Mercury staff.



NICK IWANYSHYN, SPECIAL TO THE MERCURY.