MORTEN K: My music matters to me

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- When I Work with my music it’s like being in a state of zen.

I've met singer/songwriter Morten K to a talk about his new record SUMMER SUN.

How was the recording process?
- My new record SUMMER SUN has been recorded in my own basement studio – Phonebox Studio - by me and my producer and guitarist Jon Kjærran. In the earlier days, you’d had to book a professional studio to make a record. Now everybody can basically buy the studio equipment they need to match professional standards. Therefore what really makes the difference now is the studio skills and a professional set of ears. Jon used to work in the professional studio, I've used several times in the past. He's knows what buttons to turn to make it all sound right.

All in all, there's been a major change in the way the recording industry works, as well as the way my life works over the past decades. With a full-time job and four kids, playing in a band on a professional level is not an option. That's what I did in the nineties. I spent all my spare time in the rehearsal room and on stage with my band. Now working in my own studio is the only way I can keep playing, writing and recording music. Being able to go down and work in the studio for maybe just half an hour, makes it possible to make music – though it takes a long time.

I've been working with my own songs since I started in high school. I've been working with my own album for the past three years or so. I got hospitalized for several weeks, and when I finally got home again, I knew, that I had to take my own music more serious. I found out that besides my family, what really matters to me, is me making music. My music matters to me.

I'm not a skilled musician, but I know where I want my songs to go. At the time I started up finding fellow musicians, who would have a fun time recording things for my songs. I found Facebook very useful for that purpose, as it is easy to team up with old friends and also find new friends with common interests. It's not just me, most other musicians also have their own recording facilities, so I found out that I could send them my basic tracks, and then they could contribute to a song, when they have spare time themselves – and not having to depend upon me, finding spare time in my studio. My new record has got contributions from quite a few danish musicians – but also includes a drummer from Austin, Texas, and a mastering engineer from New York.

It has been a fantastic experience to get mails with new instruments checking in. Finally I teamed up with guitarist and producer Jon Kjærran, who is not only a very skilled guitarist, but also has the ability to make all the tracks fit together in the final mix. He's got golden ears, what I do not have – being deaf in one ear.

Tell us about your songwriting
- After high school I went to London to work. I meet this Liverpudlian guy – Jeff Rycroft – at the house where we both rented a room. It turned out that he was very much into Elton John, and that he – like Elton's partner Bernie Taupin – wrote lyrics for music. However, he had no one to write for, and as I had started writing music in High School, and found the lyric part quite hard, we agreed to team up. So I took some of his lyrics with me when I went back to Denmark. The rest is history some might say, and we've been writing songs ever since, close to thirty odd years. We've become each others Soul Mates, and that's what the song Soul Mate is about.

All the songs on this recording are written by us. Sometimes in collaboration with other musicians, and though my main part is music and Jeff’s part is lyrics, it has over time become some kind of a mishmash, as Jeff comes up with little tunes as well as I come up with a line or two here and there. We both share the love for bands like The Beatles, Crowded House, Jellyfish and Barenaked Ladies. I think that you’ll be able to hear these influences in our music. Though Jeff's in charge of the lyrics, we've known each other for so long, and being soul mates, that the songs comes to tell stories that we both can relate to.

Louise Macintosh
YOU TOOK MY TIME
I went to school in the mid 70’s. I didn’t hate it – I just didn’t like it very much. I wasn’t the sporting type. You know what I mean – not much good at football or running and never quite bright enough to be the teacher’s pet. This always made life kind of hard, so my room and my music was my domain…. tunes on my imaginary tiny blue piano.

“You Took My Time” actually started with my eldest daughter Marie, banging out a little tune on a xylophone, the main hook line in the song. We just made it into something special, though writing about that time at school was hard.

THROUGH THE EYES OF A CHILD
We tend to go back to our own childhood to look at the world from that perspective, sometimes thinking of our own kids. As most other kids, we’ve had ups and downs, but we’ve both seen kids having a harder time than we did. This is a song for them.

SEARCHING FOR THE SIMPLE THINGS IN LIFE
You could say that this is a hymn to our wonderful wives and their lovable ever changing moods. Need I say any more?

FREE
Like Summer Sun, Free has got a feeling of flying in the chorus. It’s a song to help everybody with a bad day, remembering that all the good things may come true, if you dare to dream it, and that maybe sometimes other people’s dreams can be a perfect dream to be a part of.

It makes me think of a line from Jeff – from another song – that I really like; “I’ve had a bad day, and it started late last week”.

FREE
Morten K – Vocal, Backing Vocals & Wurlitzer
Jon Kjerran – Guitars & Bass
Jason Meekins – Drums
Lars “Lasse” Peter Jensen – Backing Vocals
Arranged by Morten K & Jon Kjerran
Mixed by Morten K & Jon Kjerran
Mastered by Olav Christensen

SOUL MATE
This is the song about Jeff and I. How we meet in a house in Stamford Hill in the north of London back in the eighties, and how we’ve kept on writing songs together, knowing that we were destined to write songs this way for all our lives.

SOUL MATE
Written by Jeff Rycroft & Morten K
Morten K – Vocal, Wurlitzer, Bass & Organ
Jon Kjerran – Guitars
Lars Bo Sørensen – Piano
The Loop Loft “Ringo” – Drums
Lars “Lasse” Peter Jensen – Backing Vocals
Arranged by Morten K & Jon Kjerran
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SUMMER SUN
I’m a huge fan of Summer, and though Jeff’s pale and english, and often prefer to hide himself in the shade, he can relate to my addiction to summer and sun. That’s what Summer Sun is about. How we used to be kids having fun in the sun, and how we enjoy to see our own kids share the same joy.

I wrote the music on a summers day back in the previous century with guitarist Kasper Olsen. I started off with a kind of danish lyric, and sent a cassette tape to Jeff – yes that’s how we did before the internet. A short while after I got a postcard from Jeff with the most beautiful lyric. He wrote it on a holiday in Portugal.

Kasper is playing most guitars and the mandolin. Jon Kjerran takes care of the acoustic guitars. Jesper Haugaard (Kim Larsen & Kjukken) plays the Bass. To make the song feel right, I had the idea of making the song a duet, and I asked my oldtime friend Jesper Hempler to join in – as he also has got this fascination of my oldtime friend Jesper Hempler to join in – as he also has got this fascination of – among others – Finn Brothers/Crowded House.

We’ve been working with the mix over the past month, and has ended up with a track that sounds just the way I’ve always wanted it to be.

SUMMER SUN
Written by Jeff Rycroft, Kasper Olsen & Morten K
Morten K – Vocal & Strings
Jesper Hempler – Vocal
Kasper Olsen – Electric Guitars & Mandolin
Jon Kjerran – Acoustic Guitars, 12 String Guitar & Ukulele
Jesper Haugaard – Bass
Lars “Lasse” Peter Jensen – Backing Vocals
Jens Frimodt-Møller – Drums
Arranged by Lars Frimodt-Møller, Jon Kjerran & Morten K
Mixed by Lars Frimodt-Møller & Jon Kjerran
Mastered by Olav Christensen

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