

Jack McBannon

true stories

That name says it all: with ,True Stories‘ Singer/Songwriter Jack McBannon has released an album with songs that were literally written by his own life.

“Each and every song tells a story that really happened this way”, he explains and refers to his 20 years of being a musician on the road during which, thanks to a multitude of experiences, the lyrics practically wrote themselves.

Between 2005 and 2010, he spent part of the year in Seattle and Los Angeles, not one but four times, and afterwards went touring the USA, Canada, Europe and Russia. During this period, various albums, EPs and singles were released, most of them in English but two records, released in 2014 and 2017, with German lyrics and under the name Willer.

,True Stories‘ has a different approach – an international one: in a truly fascinating way, the album blends Americana with Blues, Folk, Country and Rock, emphasizing McBannon’s main sources of inspiration: “I’ve always been influenced first and foremost by American artists, one more reason why I needed to trace the steps of my heroes”.

McBannon enjoys talking about his time in the ,Marco Polo Motel‘ in Seattle, where he was living for several months and which also often served as a retreat for Kurt Cobain, to get away from all the hustle made about his person. This and the connection he feels with Cobain – him being one of his childhood idols – are the topic of the song ,Motel 81‘, one of the mentioned ,True Stories‘. McBannon: “The motel was perfect for me, it was cheap, lies at the outskirts of the city and from there you could do just about anything you wanted. And I loved this road movie flair the motel exudes.”

,True Stories‘ contains eleven songs in total. There’ll also be a *hidden track* on the CD, which you won’t find in the digital version. Amongst these eleven songs, there’s a very personal track, ,Dancing In The Rain‘, which McBannon dedicates to his late mother, who passed away almost 20 years ago. “This song is about a letter I found, in which my mum wrote down all the things she wanted to experience, despite her illness. She didn’t get to do all of them before she died, but she’ll live on in all of us and through this song.”

The opening track ,Right Here‘ on the other hand, was a spontaneous creation. Inspiration struck Jack before a concert in Switzerland. “I was on stage and had to wait for my soundcheck. I took my guitar and started improvising. A few minutes later, I had my song. I took my phone and recorded the idea. The song just poured out of me. I love it and am very proud of it”, McBannon remembers.

Apart from the great traditional foot-stomping blues ,Walking In The Dark‘ and ,The Snowflake‘ with its dense atmosphere (and a video clip worth watching), you also have to mention ,An Outlaw’s Inner Fight‘, the first single including video which was released on October 1st 2020. “This outlaw country song portrays the inner struggle of good versus evil and it’s also about not giving up on yourself but believing in your inner strength.

Exactly this also applies when you want to produce your album in an outlaw kind of way: wanting to do most of it by yourself.”

In other words: McBannon didn't just write all of the songs and the lyrics; he also played every single instrument on the record. He also produced his album, created the cover artwork, produced and edited the music videos and even filmed some of them himself.

Only exception: the drums were played by Jens Dreesen, who also mixed and mastered ,True Stories' in the ,Skyline Tonfabrik' in Düsseldorf (Germany).

McBannon composed the second single ,Set Me Free' back in 2010. Looking back a few years, he remembers: "At the time, I wasn't doing so well, I was unhappy and my own personal grunge had me in its grip. But now that I'm doing much better, I rewrote a good part of the lyrics to give them a more positive spin: that everyone always gets another chance. I'm living proof of that."

An example that holds true for ,True Stories' in general. "All my videos start with the phrase 'This is a true story' ", McBannon explains. Just as he has laid out his life for us in his new album, he has spread out more or less all of his instruments in the studio before us, including various guitars, bass, mandolin, piano and percussions. "There are at least six or seven different guitar tunings and some seriously sick slides and overdubs. Most of those I played on my Gibson SJ-200, but there are a lot of special parts which I did on a Fender Telecaster, a Gibson Les Paul and several Ibanez and Freshman western guitars. A lot of times, it's these guitar tunings I created, that serve as an inspiration for a new song."

There's no doubt about it: Everything about Jack McBannon's awesome new album is authentic, touching and very real. Just another reason why its programmatic title ,True Stories' is more than justified!

TRACKS

Right Here * Set Me Free * The Snowflake * Together * Here's A Winner * Dancing In The Rain * An Outlaw's Inner Fight * Walking In The Dark * Motel 81 * The Long Road Ahead * Runaway Me

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