

New Release
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LC 14585

SongWays

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Roger Matura

3 CD Box - the Return of The CaveMan
auf wiederseh'n zukunft!?

Somewhere beyond the rainbow...

The coal dust of Germany's „Ruhr“ region clogs your lungs more than it clouds your mind. The dust of American desert highways, leading straight as the crow flies into infinity, is much better for that – at least poetically speaking. For Roger Matura, born a coal miner's son in Gelsenkirchen, it was clear from the beginning that he would sooner warm to the heavenly folk-blues of American provenance than to the dark sweaty coal-mining songs of his birthplace.

In New York's Greenwich Village, where Roger Matura settled in 1978, they were obviously waiting for some one like him as he quickly advanced from street musician to a hero of the scene. Roger didn't just have his wonderful raspy voice to offer, but a whole range of English songs whose melodies snuggled right up to Bob Dylan's style. In his guitar solos, he mixed in the wildness of Jimi Hendrix and the rough rocky elegance of Lou Reed.

The former social worker worked hard and heartily on his records, which were released between 1979 and 1981 on Moses Asch's legendary Folkways Records Label. Since then Roger Matura has been pendling between two continents, proving himself as a gifted singer/songwriter who finally even achieved recognition in Germany. Still, Roger Matura remains an insider tip in spite of his many activities, with true authenticity in folk-rock, as always, being reserved for Anglo-American artists. Roger has released nine albums, among them the double CD „On Folkways“, on his own label „Hotcon“ since 1988, writing heart-moving songs again and again – and far too few have ever even heard them.

A very unusual Roger Matura album came out on Ozello Music this past year, the instrumental „Time Traveller.“ On SONGWAYS, the new Sublabel for singer-songwriters, blues and the like, the indie-label presents a selection of Matura's most beautiful and most intensive songs with the release of the 3-CD-Box „the Return of the CaveMan / auf wiederseh'n zukunft!?", recorded between 1979 and 2005. While CD 1 and CD 2 present 39 original compositions altogether, among them 3 unpublished tracks to date, CD 3 has 17 cover versions, almost all of which pay tribute to Roger's idols and inspirations for his own song-writing art. With the track ‚Give My Regards to Waterloo Station‘, Roger Matura's fragile throaty voice and acoustic guitar attest to the process of his musical socialization. With „A Whiter Shade Of Pale“, simmering with its inevitable Hammond organ sound, with the Kinks classic „Sunny Afternoon“ that sounds even more sentimental than the original, or Lennon/McCartneys „Nowhere Man“, that holds all the weariness of the world with the lamenting sound of the harmonium, he continues excellently in this vein. Driven by the drunken swing à la Tom Waits, Roger Matura sings himself, supported by a subtly unobtrusive accompanying band, into the Olympia of Rock'n Roll heroes who failed

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to appeal to the tastes of mainstream consumers. And his version of the classic „Moonlight In Vermont“ has by no means to hide behind the likes of Billie Holiday, Louis Armstrong and Frank Sinatra.

While ‚Give My Regards To Waterloo Station‘, is a new production with Roger Matura’s monolithic sound, his selection of songs from earlier productions points out his oftentimes highly diversified moods, intentions and musical focus. Supported by an illustrious band of musicians and using analogue technology, handmade music, guitars, violin, saxophone, tin whistle, accordeon, keyboards and drums, Roger „Caveman“ Matura develops a sound that orbits around classic folk, raw rock and archaic blues, performing a flight over 50 years of pop music history to boot.

‚The Return of the CaveMan / auf wiederseh’n zukunft!?!‘, that starts with „Somewhere Beyond The Rainbow“ from ‚Time Traveller‘ and ranges over the „Dämonen der Finsternis“ to the until now unpublished „I’ll remember You“, reveals the opus of a manic song-worker. Roger Matura knows how to place accents – with his music as well as with his lyrics – in which he continually reveals his unsatiated hunger for love and freedom. And he’s not afraid of transfiguration in the process, as can be heard in the song „Only Fools Fall In Love“ (from the album ‚Blue Shadows‘) and the catchy „Under The Cajun Moon“ (from ‚On Folkways‘). Unmistakeably clear, on the other hand, are his statements about our omnipresent destructive „trash culture“ („Generation Kaputt“) and the demand for a life with human dignity for all („Hart leben jung sterben“ – „live hard, die young“).

Roger’s songs are short and sweet, making their point without pointing accusing fingers or using filigree frills. Especially the selected tracks from his albums ‚Industriestadt-Tot‘ and ‚Live In Thessaloniki‘ show a hugely physical presence that let you know how Roger Matura, with painful intensity and passion, stands up against the „Dämonen der Finsternis“ („Demons of Darkness“). The melancholy side of Roger Matura, that doesn’t even shy from sentimental folk-kitsch and pansy pop, reveals itself in songs like „Wintermond“, „Sternenjäger“ and „Wir steh’n zusammen“, off his album ‚Schokoguß & Vanilleeis“.

If Roger almost exclusively sings in English it’s not because he rejects German lyrics, but simply because he feels he owes it to his artistic works, where not the choice of language is important, but the musical quality. For the artist who lives and works in the greater Cologne area today, the world of music is an inexhaustable field of experiment where he can let his thoughts and feelings run free. The desire to squeeze Roger Matura into a stylistic corsette, to still label him as the „Ruhrpott Dylan“, is simply obsolete. With the 3-CD-Box, his musical world full of turns and surprises opens up, and it’s more than worth discovering.

Summary

For Roger Matura music is an inexhaustable field of experiment – and has been so for a good three decades. Retrospect and foresight at the same time: the 3-CD Box ‚the Return of the CaveMan / auf wiederseh’n zukunft!?!‘ and the Cover-Collection ‚Give My Regards to Waterloo Station‘. As a frontier runner between folk and blues, jazz and rock, the singer, songwriter and guitarist hits his listeners in the middle of their hearts with his fragile raspy voice, catchy and unforgettable melodies and lyrics that take up arms to fight for love and life.

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