

PATRICK RYDMAN
WHAT TOOK YOU SO LONG (Footprint/Naxos)
RELEASE 26 OKT

A sophisticated pop album seasoned with influences from around the world. Music and lyrics combined with a timeless elegance where every song has its own identity... the common thread is Patrick's voice.

Some people try to separate musical genres. Every style of music should be neatly labeled and put in a designated drawer; if you open one you shouldn't open another. Then there are those who believe it's all connected – it's all music, right? – and it's OK to combine what you like as long as you do it with love, sincerity and discretion.

Patrick Rydman belongs to the latter category. Chances are that you, without knowing it, have come across his work before. He has been a driving force in the critically acclaimed vocal ensemble Amanda, has produced and written songs for other artists, worked as a theater musician and composer for stage and radio, toured as a jazz singer with everything from Big Bands and orchestras (Bohuslän Big Band, Göteborg Wind Orchestra) to smaller settings, sung Burt Bacharach-hits in the playfully fictional cult show *The Missing Fortnight*, and just recently released the duo album *Catwalk*, where Patrick, together with piano player Anders Persson, give a new spin on jazz standards, 60's classics and pop tunes, reminiscent of Bill Evans collaborations with Tony Bennett.

The critically acclaimed debut as a solo artist came in 2008 with *I Will Do It*, presented as a jazz release, which was true in many ways: in basic arrangements, expression and layout. But as always in his music there were elements from all the genres he likes, not least popular music. He is not alone – there are many artists who cross borders and who are not directly connected to just one specific style. Sting, Peter Gabriel, Joni Mitchell, Kate Bush, Steely Dan – all are examples of artists that can give each song a new dress and still be completely recognizable.

With his second album, *What Took You So Long*, Patrick has let go of the ambition to work within a specific genre. For a music lover like Patrick this means that he has welcomed influences from far and wide. Warm 70's soul like Bill Withers and Stevie Wonder. Cool jazz. Singer/songwriters. Art pop. World Music.

Each song has been given its own identity. And still, the record as a whole feels amazingly together and homogeneous. A lot of it is down to the common thread that is Patrick's voice.

What Took You So Long can perhaps be described as a sophisticated pop album that's been seasoned with influences from around the world, both musically and geographically. Patrick combines music and lyrics with a timeless elegance and skill which is quite uncommon these days and therefore all the more missed. The songs are well crafted but retain the dedication to the moment that we mostly find in jazz. Where's the jazzy component then? Maybe in the flowing grooves that don't shy away from salsa or bossa nova. Maybe in the mostly semi-acoustic soundscape. But first and foremost it's probably about the courage to let brilliant musicians add their own elegantly playful licks to the mix.

The warm, laid back album opener *She's Back Again* points to the influence of Bill Withers, while *Gingerbread Man*, the first single, turns up the tempo a little and lets a neon glowing Wurlitzer meet a gritty blues guitar and ELO strings. *The Wake Of Your Smile* shows the hidden link between Burt Bacharach and Prefab Sprout. Lyrically the album shifts from everyday reflections about love, like *The Feeling (That We Label Love)*, and darker subjects; the wartime description in *Soldier Song*, and broken relationships (*Shipwreck In The Sand*). However, all in all it's a life affirming record – melodic, personal, groovy, intimate and full of variation. And sure enough, it closes on a hopeful note with *It's Not Over Yet*, with an ornate nylon stringed guitar soaring over a subtle rhythmic landscape.

– I know that everyone can't love what you do. What I'm hoping for is that as many as possible will understand my ambitions with this. That the album ends up with people who have the same attitude to music as I do. And then, if they like it, well, that's even better! It's that connection that you live for as a musician and songwriter, Patrick concludes, leaving us guessing that there are more songs to be made. More shows. And more albums. In some respects he's already a veteran. But as a solo artist Patrick Rydman has just begun. To be continued...

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