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Jeff Cascaro *Mother and Brother*

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With his second album "Mother and Brother", Bochum-born singer Jeff Cascaro makes his reputation as one of Germany's major voices in soul music with a pop attitude permanent. His first album "Soul of a Singer" (2006) created this very special mood blending catchy songs made from pop, soul, jazz and blues elements. The new album immerses into that refreshingly different, individual, and outrageously entertaining cocktail. Jeff Cascaro - the voice... and the mood.

But let's start from the beginning: **Jeff Cascaro** started his career at the young age of 18 as the winner of a youth jazz contest. He gained experience as a background singer and guest musician with the NDR and Rias Big Bands, as well as with German stars like Ute Lemper, die Fantastischen Vier, Sasha, Joe Sample of the Crusaders, Götz Alsmann, Klaus Doldinger's band Passport, the Guano Apes, and Paul Kuhn - just to name a few, as they stand for Cascaro's wide spectrum in music of different genres. One thing that has never changed about him is that he unmistakably wears his heart right next to his soul. Since 2000 the versatile practitioner also works academically: he is a professor of jazz singing at the "Franz List" Conservatory in Weimar. His CD debut in his own name was carefully prepared by Cascaro - here he showed at last what it means to him to have the *Soul of a Singer*.

Mother and Brother is also close to the singer's soul. It tells us the story of his love for music, for life itself ('Ella' or 'I Feel Fine'), it opens chapters of his path of life, his loves and suffering ('When She Sings To Me' or 'The Sun Is Shining For Our Love'), or they discreetly ask for a dance ('Love Is In The Air'). Cascaro follows the ways classic soul singers like Stevie Wonder, Bill Withers, and Wilson Pickett were travelling before. But Cascaro knows that each traditions need fresh interpretations: "Of course I follow a thread, but in none of the pieces you'll find a second verse that sounds like the first. There are always slightly different notes, a different melody."

Jeff Cascaro not only sings the songs, he also composes them and writes the lyrics. This already added to the authenticity of his first album *Soul of a Singer* and is carried forward on the second album. The fact that he arranged the material in the studio himself and also contributed the beautifully warm flugelhorn solos is not just a personal extra benefit, it's the foundation of his work.

On *Mother and Brother* Jeff was once more supported by his companion Christian von Kaphengst as his producer, co-author, and creative mentor. The warm, earthy sound of the album, however, is Cascaro's own: "Of course you have an idea of what you're doing", he says. "I always want to keep being able to act spontaneously. Otherwise you'll end up with the usual pap you hear all over the place."

So the 11 songs on the album are like an outdoor summer party, where soul, but also pop, jazz and blues gather for a casual rendezvous with Cascaro's irresistibly graying voice. It's this voice that makes *Mother and Brother* one of this year's great musical highlights.

Like good friends, a few cover versions mingle with the family on *Mother and Brother*. There is John Paul Young's irresistible disco classic 'Love Is In The Air', but there is also B.B. King's urgent plea 'Help The Poor'. Finding his own approach to Genesis' classic hit 'Follow You, Follow Me', turned out to be challenging; a challenge that allows Jeff Cascaro to show what he is made of. He created a candlelight ballad that would go well with the bristling and cracking of a fireplace. "At first I didn't like the piece all that much. It was difficult to put it in a new context. But now it's one of my favorite pieces on the album because it came out incredibly good."

This assessment is true for the entire album without any exaggeration. More than that: *Mother and Brother* is like a feature film showing Jeff Cascaro's life from a multitude of perspectives. Cascaro shows the affiliation of soul, jazz and pop in a whole new light like no other German artist has done before him. The album with its slow jams, its pleasantly tricky, playful mid-tempo tracks, and the captivating danceable material, will cast a spell on all those who believe in music as a universal language.

Who could find better words for this exquisite combination of vocal melancholy , airy pop numbers, warm-hearted soul hymns, sensitive jazz tunes, and flamy disco tracks than Jeff Cascaro, the unpretentious soul star: "I just want to be an ordinary guy doing his sound."

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