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## **Daniel Stelter** *Homebrew Songs*

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Whether it comes from a jazz or rock direction, Daniel Stelter says he is not a particular fan of “purely guitar-based records”. “Not because they’re badly played, or the people aren’t talented. I simply prefer records with a singer on them,” explains the young guitarist, who has just delivered a guitar-based record of a different kind entitled ‘Homebrew Songs’. It’s a record which he himself and, let’s face it, a large number of listeners will want to listen to over and over again. “The idea was to play totally ordinary songs featuring just me on guitar. The melodies could also have been sung.”

Daniel Stelter has fully achieved what he set out to do. With one noteworthy exception, his ‘Homebrew Songs’ are all instrumentals with the kind of immediate appeal you would maybe associate with Coldplay’s hits. Jonny Buckland, the Brit rockers’ lead guitarist, Joe Pass, Marc Ribot, Wolfgang Muthspiel, Jeff Beck and John Lee Hooker are all musicians that never fail to amaze Daniel. “Some guitarists play quite simply and impress me mainly through their sound.” With ‘Homebrew Songs’, Daniel Stelter has joined their ranks.

It became clear at an early stage that Daniel himself was one of those guitarists that can touch the ears, minds and hearts of the listener with just six strings: in 1992, the fifteen year-old accompanied his brother at the ‘Jugend Musiziert’ event and went on to win first prize many times over. Following on from that, he was involved in numerous productions including the State Youth Jazz Orchestra, Tino Oac (Soehne Mahheims; ‘Soehne, Mond und Sterne’), Helen Schneider (produced by Till Broenner and Christian von Kaphengst), Georg Ringsgwandl, Marc Secara and Barbara Schoeneberger as well as many others.

On ‘Homebrew Songs’, Daniel Stelter invites us to the source of his inspiration. This is where the busy studio and live musician, composer and producer, among others for Bochum Theatre, Porsche and KissFM (the complete jingle package), Sat.1 (‘Entscheidung in den Wolken’, 2009 and ‘Bis dass der Tod uns scheidet’, 2008), prepared the “album in which I feel at home” in his own good time. That explains why, with the help of his friends Ulf Kleiner, Tommy Baldu and Michael Paucker, the album only took three days to record in the studio. “When you don’t over-rehearse it’s easier for the musicians to introduce their own personality,” laughs Daniel Stelter and goes on to relate how the drummer Tommy Baldu, who he knew from the band fronted by the ‘Soehne Mannheims’ singer Tino Oac, came on board for ‘Homebrew Songs’: “Tommy was my first contact point because I love his playing - and his unusual sounds.” Baldu introduced the bassist Michael Paucker. Together they form an astounding rhythm section capable of creating outstanding energetic soundscapes (among others, they also play together in Quartett Triband - see the ‘Trip’ and ‘So

Together' albums which have both been released by Herzog records). Keyboard maestro Ulf Kleiner (whose magic touch on piano, Rhodes, organ and analogue synthesisers can also be heard in Jeff Cascaro's band) already knew Daniel from sessions long before they both began to study in Mainz. Having played together since then, both in the band 'Jazzteam' and as a duo, they communicate on a deep level. They also work well together on the songwriting side, as Kleiner's contribution to the tracks 'Slick' and 'Indigo' as well as his co-production credit demonstrates.

Daniel wrote the track 'Amor Macio' together with the singer Liza da Costa. Her gentle Portuguese voice is responsible for the above-mentioned exception to the otherwise instrumental 'Homebrew Songs'. Together with 'Monsterfee', it forms the "quiet part of the album," which is how the guitarist describes the melancholy floating jazz-fado pop song. The 'intro' to the album, which opens as a kind of "what to expect next", makes it clear that 'Homebrew Songs' is not an album of introverse songs for miserable days. That idea wouldn't really occur to his listeners once they have decoded the track 'Menime': "Read backwards it stands for Eminem, someone I continue to be intrigued by. As with all the music that I like, his music contains a touch of the blues," says Stelter before going on to mention the soul-inspired 'Flutter' and then pointing out 'Simple Plan' with its confident groove à la Donald Fagen. "Some people are incredibly thick-skinned. This song is dedicated to them. I could have called it 'Mr. Supercool'."

In 'Paperboat', Stelter shows that, along with radio-friendly wah-wah guitars, he also knows how to arrange compelling encounters between different acoustic instruments. The song is based on the image of a paper boat slowly drifting along a river, intermittently getting caught and being picked up by the current again until it eventually capsizes. Guest bass clarinetist Frank Spaniol adds a moving obituary to the fragile toy. The symbol of the gently flowing river has been a long-term inspiration for Daniel Stelter. All his life, he has been living on the banks of the 'River Rhine' which could be viewed as the continental counterpart of the Mississippi given how laid-back 'Indigo' finally rolls on to the piers of the culture-steeped waterway.

Perhaps Daniel Stelter is not a 'wonder boy' as his funky blues would lead us to believe, nor is he a 'Monolith' - the triphop-rocky track which he prefers to dedicate to the perpetual presence of the rock of Lorelei. What Daniel Stelter's 'Homebrew Songs' definitely offer is the discovery of a highly experienced guitarist and songwriter doing what comes naturally: simply playing convincing songs with some outstanding musician friends.

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