

Mp3 Matt Stamm - Where Do We Go - Ep



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Stamm may prefer to tickle the ivories when it comes to making his music just listen to his new EP,

Where Do We Go, for proof but in todays musical climate, where it sometimes feels like any Manny,

Moe, or Jacks Mannequin can sit down in front of a piano and pound out a hit single, its nice to know that

there are still a few musicians out there who can actually play more than one instrument. Stamm has

been training for life in the music biz for as long as he can remember. I was in the All-County Chorus

when I was in grade school, I played saxophone from fifth through ninth grades, and I took piano lessons

from ages seven through eleven, says Stamm. It feels like Ive always been involved in music in one form

or another. Despite such a promising start, it wasnt until his freshman year of college that Stamm began

pursuing an actual career in musicand, frankly, he blames peer pressure. There was a big gap when

sports took over for me, explains Stamm. All of my friends were joining sports teams, and youre either in

band or youre on the football team; I opted for athletics at that point, and I didnt just have time for the

music lessons anymore. I wish I stayed on track; Id probably be in a different place right now. Still, Stamm

hadnt given up on music altogether. At 17, he began teaching himself to play guitar, which came in handy

upon his arrival at Boston University for his freshman year, and, accordingly, his first team-up was with

his college roommate, Charlie Diego. Meeting Charlie, getting to know him, and having him always

playing guitarthere was always music in the room, so we just naturally fell into playing together and

writing together, explains Stamm. He was definitely the impetus for my getting starting again in a big way.

Stamm and Diego began performing for the people in their dorm, giving Stamm his first real experience

playing before an audience. The collaboration between the roommates inspired Stamm to try working with other musicians as well; one such partnership resulted in the formation of The Perfect Candidates, with fellow singer/songwriter Jon Hartstone. Jon and I really took it up to the next level, says Stamm. I had all these songs I'd written, he had his own songs, and we liked what each other had done, so when we started playing out, he'd put a guitar part or a harmony on one of my songs, I'd do the same for his, and we were able to put together a set list with our existing material. The life of The Perfect Candidates was relatively brief but consistently educational, particularly during the recording of their EP, *American Hot*, which was done with hired guns playing bass and drums for the duo. Although the recording process itself was a lot of fun, Stamm admits that the final result was stricken with a nasty case of overproduction. We were attempting to make a huge-sounding record, and well, basically, we filled every single square iota of tape space with whatever idea we had, and I learned a very valuable lesson: sometimes, less is more. It wasn't until Stamm and Hartstone moved from Boston to Miami and teamed with the Faulkner brothers Mike and Bruce, who played bass and drums, respectively that The Perfect Candidates began touring behind the EP in earnest. Hartstone, however, soon returned to Boston, which gave Stamm the opportunity to play the frontman, a role he quickly learned to relish; he also found a new collaborator in Hartstone's replacement, guitarist Mark Kondrat, now a member of the Latin-Grammy-nominated band *Locos Por Juana*. Unfortunately, it soon became evident to Stamm that Miami was not the best locale for a band like The Perfect Candidates; worse, the rest of the band didn't offer much enthusiasm to his suggestion that they relocate to New York City. They were pretty deeply rooted in the area, explains Stamm, and they didn't want to leave. But I was serious about continuing with the music. I mean, when Jon left, I had become the frontman, and not only was I playing rhythm guitar, but I was also adding an element of organ to some songs, and I'd also bought a stage piano. So when I left, I got right into my stuff, concentrating almost solely on piano songs. Stamm's debut solo album was recorded with assistance of his former bandmate, Mark Kondrat. I stayed at Mark's house and we recorded it in his home studio, says Stamm. In fact, he co-produced it; I had all the songs, but we both came up with the arrangement and instrumentation. My collaborations with Mark always seem to result in strong material. Indeed, the resulting album 2005's *I Could Be Happy Here* served two purposes: it provided Stamm with the opportunity to tour behind a product of which he was extremely proud, and it enabled him to attract the attention of a new manager (Aimee Berger), as well as new songwriting collaborators like Arnie Roman

and Russ DeSalvo. Im ecstatic to be working with A-list guys like Russ and Arnie, says Stamm. I feel like its a real step up for me. Stamm has developed a solid following as a live performer; he regularly draws sizable audiences as he plays in venues around New York City, including The Bitter End, The Lions Den, Makor, and The Living Room. In addition to his solo career, Stamm also plays keyboards in the band The Rideaways, who spend a considerable amount of time gigging around Manhattan as well. When I gig, he says, one of the best things about it is that I get to gig with some of the best musicians in the city, people who play with Regina Spektor, Gavin DeGraw, and Alexa Rae Joel. Its pretty cool. The crowds in attendance would seem to agree, given how they continue to grow in size. Its no wonder, though: with 2007s *Where Do We Go EP* which was produced by DeSalvo Stamm finds himself in the best place hes ever been as both a writer and a singer. Working so closely with DeSalvo was an incredibly positive and career-changing experience, says Stamm. Weve developed a strong friendship because of our work together. As to the material itself, its poppier than Stammans earlier material, but, vocally, hes stronger than ever, thanks to having worked with Don Lawrence, a vocal trainer whos also worked with Bono, Mick Jagger, and Christina Aguilera. These songs Ive been writing have forced me to push my limits, admits Stamm, but I love the direction Im moving in. Given the results evident on *Where Do We Go*, it seems certain that listeners will, too.

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