



Photo by Stephen Porteous

MATHEW JAMES WHITE

Mathew James White is a New Zealand born, Berlin based singer-songwriter. He is almost always on tour, performing mainly in Germany. Mathew kicked off his musical career while still at school, naturally enough in New Zealand, playing in a band with school friends in local area pubs that could only be described as 'toilets' & constantly arguing with police who would invariably come & check everyone's proof of age at the concerts. 'The whole band was under drinking age' Mathew points out, which was fine, as long as we didn't drink of course. 'One night this cop just wasn't buying my story that I was playing in the band when he came up & asked me for my ID during one of our breaks. A drunk local (ironically & luckily) came to his rescue & the show continued.

His move to Melbourne, Australia in 1988 continued his string of Australasian toilet appearances, this time playing a multitude of solo gigs to crowds that largely weren't listening. Two years of that almost brought on early insanity, only to be replaced by near death through food poi-

soning on a four month cruise ship stint, performing cover versions of some of the worst tunes ever written. The passengers, mostly over the age of 93, loved it however.*

After a good feed & relocation to Sydney in 1992, Mathew was hired to play guitar for his country singing cousin, major label signed, Shanley Del on various tours up & down the east coast of Australia. 'A thoroughly enjoyable experience' he recalls. This was soon followed, in between more solo gigs to the shit hole frequenting non listeners, by the formation of funk band Vibrus, with another cousin, Shanley's younger brother Tam Morris.

The band toured spasmodically for a few years, mostly between Melbourne & the Northern NSW coast & released a self titled, self funded EP, which although gained a few spins on Australia's National youth radio station Triple J, together with a few live radio spots here and there, was effectively the death of the band. With the various members of Vibrus telling each other to basically 'bugger off'**, it was back to the world of the solo cover gig for Mathew. However there was one venue, two minutes walk from his flat in the inner city Sydney suburb of Woolloomooloo, appearing like a shining beacon in the quagmire. That effectively

commenced Mathew's solo career proper. Every Wednesday & Sunday, crowds would cram into the tiny Old Fitzroy pub to hear Mathew play his new offerings. 'I'd play for 4-5 hours a night at this venue. The pub manager was right into it, very supportive of the arts. This gig was a great opportunity to try out new material.

After a year and half of entertaining the crowds at the Old Fitzroy, Mathew left the shores of Sydney for London, where he spent most of his first year playing at open Mic sessions & in doing so, generating some key connections. Year two of Mathew's London experience saw the formation of his band Hamilton, with a bass playing friend from the crap office job he held down 3 days a week, for the entire six years he lived there. Hamilton, performed a host of small gigs in London at places such as the Borderline & very popular cellar venue, the Kashmir Klub, but like Vibrus, nothing really fired. The band was getting more and more into home recording towards the end of its existence though & these home recordings effectively become what was Mathew's 2004 debut - That's Just Me'. A twelve track, pop - rock orientated effort, featuring the much loved 'Jessica' - co-written with hit writer Alex Von Soos & produced by hit producer /

engineer, Steve Lyon, I'd Give You Flowers, co-written with former Hamilton band mate Luke Juby & The only acoustic track on the album - 'Fly Like a Bird', co-written with producer of big hits all around the world, Martyn Phillips. The later, a collaboration that continues to this day.

2005 saw another moment of further International relocation for Mathew, as it was becoming increasingly apparent that his future lay in mainland Europe, Germany in particular. Armed with a newly acquired dual New Zealand / UK citizenship, a guitar, suitcase & 1000 copies of 'That's Just Me', on the Eurostar he got and straight into solid touring he went, a situation that has remained unchanged ever since. Through his extensive touring, selling out of 'That's Just Me', a move, after a brief residence in Munich, to Berlin in September 2006 & fans constantly telling him that while they were into 'That's Just Me', they would love to hear him make a purely acoustic album, Mathew began work in March 2007 on 'Acoustic Guitars and Ooh La La's'.

The album, recorded exclusively on his laptop, in his bedroom and edited on various trains around Germany, is a refreshing stripped down effort, featuring a further collaboration with Alex Von Soos - 'These Days', World In Your Pocket, a co-write with another hit maker, Joe Cang who Mathew met during a mutual gig at the Kasmir Klub some years earlier & who would later become Mathew's yoga teacher & dietary advisor, 'Make It Click' a co-write with up and coming teenage singer / songwriter Calire Toomey,

'All Makes Sense' co-written with Swedish singer / songwriter Josefina Sanner in Bjorn from Abba's Stockholm cafe during a tour there in 2006 & the crowd pleasing solo funk guitar effort that is 'Daylight in Your Life'. The CD was released on his own 'Kiss The Frog' label in early 2008 & to date, has sold twice as fast as his 2004 debut.

Mathew's band project 'Mpath' - the collaboration with Martyn Phillips (who's string of success we won't bore you with here, but if you want to look it up, consult their Myspace page) & German drummer Phil Renz, released their debut album 'Gravity' at the beginning of 2009. The album features the crowd pleasing & often concert ending 'The Final Song', as well as 'Hard Job Loving You', 'Haven's Green' & 'Faithless'. Mpath also released an EP in 2007 called 'Semi-Naked' & a single '(Who Will Get The) Marvin Gaye in 2008.

*The ship in question, sank after catching fire off the coast of Somalia, two years after Mathew's contract was up. The fire's cause was due to insurmountable fat deposits, formed like steeltights on the kitchen roof, becoming ablaze.

**Vibrus, settled their differences just before Mathew departed for the UK, by doing an Oxfam charity show & spending the remaining funds in the band bank account on a night out that no band member can vividly remember.