

BJ BAARTMANS

GHOSTWRITER

A little over 25 years after the release of his first solo album *The Pawnshop Guitar Chase* songwriter/guitarist/sideman/producer BJ Baartmans steps fully into the spotlights with *GHOSTWRITER*. A record that wasn't planned, demanded or anything but just needed to be made. It happened. The time and headspace were there even kinda unexpected. Plenty of soulfood. It contains 13 songs that have easily recognizable, accessible but at the same time very personal stories, views and beliefs behind it. They cover an already more than 40 year long journey in music with 14 albums under his own name, appearances on hundreds of albumsessions and something like 4000 live performances while raising a family, dealing with serious life changing events, making but also losing lifelong friends, chasing dreams and discovering little treasures.

Making a list of bands, songwriters, players that came to mind during the sessions for *Ghostwriter* BJ Baartmans wrote down: Big Star, Slade, Wilco, The Black Keys, Lucinda Williams, Elvis Costello, The Kinks, Tom Petty, Nick Lowe, Richard Thompson. Just to give you an idea. Attending a few energetic live shows during the summer of cool young Dutch bands that BJ's connected with through his studio work also formed a big inspiration.

BJ Baartmans' last album with all original songs with lyrics, *LATER*, dates back to 2015. Released under the name BJ's Wild Verband: a collective of top notch musicians closely connected to the Wild Verband studio that BJ runs in his backyard. After that all sorts of musical sideman activities took over, touring with and producing tracks or albums for internationally well respected artists like Matthews Southern Comfort, Jeff Finlin, David Corley, Carter Sampson, Suzie Ungerleider and Dutch standout acts like Jack Poels, Frans Pollux, Hidden Agenda Deluxe. Music rooted in Americana and Jazzier styles that without too much noise has reached a consistent, devoted audience all over the world.

BJ also wrote and recorded 3 original albums with *The Space Age Travellers*, an instrumental trio that blends surf, swing, twang and spaghetti western soundtrack sounds. "Music for freaks and lovers". Around 2021 he co wrote a "lockdown" album with Iain Matthews under the name *The Matthews Baartmans Conspiracy*. As a duo they then toured The Netherlands, Germany, the UK and even Japan. In the meantime he became a (slide-) guitar instructor for the USA based company True Fire, in the company of many great players like Sonny Landreth, Tommy Emmanuel, Larry Carlton, Ariel Posen and Robben Ford.

"A ghostwriter's always got someone to blame" is a line from one the songs on the new album. The stories present themselves but then need to find a way to connect with the listener. So they can make them their own. A songwriter may be hiding behind his own characters. And then again not. They have to be real. It's an intriguing and emotionally laden world, the life in songs. Before you know it they are out there. And there's a voice to carry them. Guitars, drums, keyboards. A sound that resonates, in all its complexity. Nothing to hide behind. *GHOSTWRITER* is a rock & roll record, even where it's mellow or slowed down.

Musicians on the album are: Sjoerd van Bommel – drums, Gerco Aerts – bass, Tom Baartmans – bass, Rob Geboers – keys, Mike Roelofs – keys, Johan Jansen – pedalsteel and BJ on vocals and all sorts of things with strings. The recording and production was done by BJ Baartmans at Studio Wild Verband, Boxmeer, September 2023. Jeff Finlin and Sjoerd van Bommel especially were of great help in the process.

GHOSTWRITER will be released in April 2024 on Continental Record Services:

www.continental.nl

More info: www.bjbaartmans.nl

