Matthew Mayfield – A Banquet for Ghosts (2012)



01 – Ain't Much More to Say 02 – Take What I Can Get 03 – Cold Winds 04 – Track You Down 05 – Heart in Wire 06 – I Don't Know You At All 07 – A Banquet for Ghosts 08 – Carry Me 09 – Always Be You 10 – Beautiful 11 – Safe & Sound 12 – Thief (Bonus Track) 13 – Heart in Wire (Edit)

My journey started in 1992 when I fell in love with Guns N' Roses after seeing Slash get up on the piano for the finale of "November Rain." When I was 9, I decided I was either going to be a bank robber/surfer or play in a rock 'n roll band. I'm not brave enough to ride the big waves and not radical enough to rob banks, so here I am with a guitar in my hand. I think my mother is very happy with that call.

As a kid, I gravitated toward three things: songs, swagger and spectacle. When I turned 11, I got a bright red Gibson Les Paul, which I took all over my hometown of Birmingham, AL – talent shows, birthday parties, middle school dances, and all the other glamorous gigs you book when you're a kid who just wants to play all the time. I was enamored with over-the-top rock stars that were pushy and unapologetic because they were that good. I was drawn to the weight and chops of Jimmy Page and Stevie Ray Vaughn, and the soul and grit of Bruce Springsteen and Eddie Vedder. I couldn't get enough. As the fascination grew, I quickly started writing my own songs.

At 19, I quit school, started a new band, played every dive in the Southeast for 50 bucks and beer, and eventually signed a giant record deal with Epic Records in 2005. We spent lots of their money making a big record, opening big tours, and believing big promises. The wheels eventually fell off, and we realized this isn't about overnight success. You have to grind it out for a LONG time. You have to work your ass off just to get by. You have to keep paying your dues and keep paying your dues and keep paying your dues.

In 2008, I decided to go solo and take the DIY route. It was time to own it. The thrill of any success and the weight of any failure would be on my shoulders. I wasn't going to hide behind a band or pretend it wasn't my name on the marquee. I was ready for another season. I recorded The Fire EP in August 2008, and the reset process was in full effect. I self-released 7 more EP's over the course of the next year and a half. I toured in my car, shared bills with some incredible artists, and made some new friends. I had a couple of songs placed on Grey's Anatomy and made it to number 1 on the iTunes singer/songwriter charts a few times. By May of 2010, I had a list of 30 tunes that I still hadn't recorded. With the help of fans, Pledge Music, and producer Paul Moak, I had the team and the resources to make my first full-length album. I headed to Nashville to make the record I've always wanted to make.

Now You're Free is everything I want it to be. Honest, anthemic and diverse. The songs are full of hope, which in some ways is very new to me. They are the sound of a fresh start. I'm excited about attempting to change something with this record. It could be someone's mood for a few minutes, the temperature in their room, or the way they watch the sunset driving down the interstate. Music has changed everything for me. I want to be a part of that for other people.

So here I am. 27 years old and still climbing the ladder. Partially because I love it, partially because I'm addicted to it. I still tour in a van. I still rummage through the gummy worms at 4am fuel stops. I still look out the window for hours because I can't sleep in a moving vehicle. I still miss home. And I still dream.

A wise man once sang, "I know it's only rock n roll…but I like it." I hope you do too. ---MM, matthewmayfield.com

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