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iSing

ISSUE 2

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SCOTT ALAN
Writing For Other Artists

DIGGING INTO
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Nurturing the
**ARTIST
WITHIN**



Scott Alan

To find out more about Scott and his music please visit: <http://scottalan.net>

Writing for other artists is a great way to get your stuff known, but how do you get started?

Scott Alan is a man who needs no introduction if you follow musical theatre. If you don't, well then jump on board! Fresh from selling out four shows at the London Hippodrome, Scott Alan is one of the top contemporary musical theatre writers in the world. He is known for writing soul-searching, honest, and mind-pondering music not only for the theatre world but also for jazz, pop and R&B singers. His incredible ability to write so openly leaves his audience members gutted as his words and melodic lines demand your attention - you can't help but walk away a better person after hearing his stories. His journey has been a difficult one and although he has had to overcome many obstacles professionally and personally, he continues on a path of honesty and real life. I caught up with him to talk about his beginnings in musical theatre, his influences, how he started pitching his songs and much more!



and didn't land in the musical theatre world until I was about 23 years old. Once I got there, though, there was absolutely no stopping me.

MP: How would you describe your style?

SA: I see my work has a combination of theatrical and pop. I grew up on both theatre and pop music and connecting the two is just very comfortable for me. I will always have a very emotional side to my writing and it will remain honest so I can see

where others would consider it leaning more towards the theatrical side. I'm totally ok with that.

MP: Who has influenced your style of writing? You used to work for Mariah Carey, do you think she's had any influence on your style?

SA: Oh, I grew up on Mariah. I have idolized her way of writing with Walter for years and along with Diane Warren, that has had a great influence on my writing style. I don't tend to write a hook

SCOTT ALAN

was well as they do but I am still learning. Working with artists such as Mariah (when I was an assistant to Ricky Minor) was a blessing because it allowed me the opportunity to watch their style of work so close up. There is so much insecurity there and in a way that was such a treat to witness because you see that everyone is fearful of disappointing others with their work.

MP: How did you go about pitching your songs to top Broadway, West End, and pop singers? How did you decide who was going to sing what?

SA: I started with Shoshana Bean (Wicked, Hairspray, Recording Artist). I fell in love with Shoshana's voice the moment I heard it. There is a funny story she tells on a YouTube video about our first meeting. She really didn't want to give me the time but she did and the rest is history. I was fortunate enough for her to introduce me to some incredibly gifted performers when she sang my song "Home" live at a benefit concert. The rest is history, really. Performers approached me to work together and I wasn't at a place to say no to anybody. Within a month my work was being performed at benefit concerts around New York and as their careers grew, so did mine.

MP: Was the process any different when you approached these artists with the idea of writing specifically for them?



SHOSHANNA BEAN SINGS "HOME"

SA: I think every artist wants to believe that you're writing a song tailor made for his or her voice but the truth is that I normally write primarily for myself. I call my music 'therapy songs' because I write when I need to release. There is so much of me in my work that it is really gratifying when an artist puts their own story into your lyric. It's easy for me to listen to, too, because many of the experiences that led to my work are extremely painful.

MP: What is it you wish you knew before you started your journey as a musician?

SA: I wish I knew that it is ok to not read music. That it doesn't define whether you are a writer or not. Early on I was very uncomfortable with that fact. I didn't want to admit it but after seeing the long list of artists who also don't read music (Joni Mitchell and Paul McCartney, just to name a few) I really start-

ed to fall into my role as a writer without needing to make excuses.

MP: If you could give any advice to future songwriters, what would that be?

SA: Trust your heart and never lie in your writing. Always find the honesty in the lyric. I would also say that it is totally normal to get to a place where you need to take a break from writing, planned or unplanned. Sometimes you have exercised all the emotion that your heart can withstand to release. Take a break. A writer writes. It will come back to you. It just may take a little time. The only harm that can be caused is your own self-doubt and fear.

MP: Who has been the most rewarding performer you have worked with and why? Who's still on your wish list?

SA: Oh that is an impossible

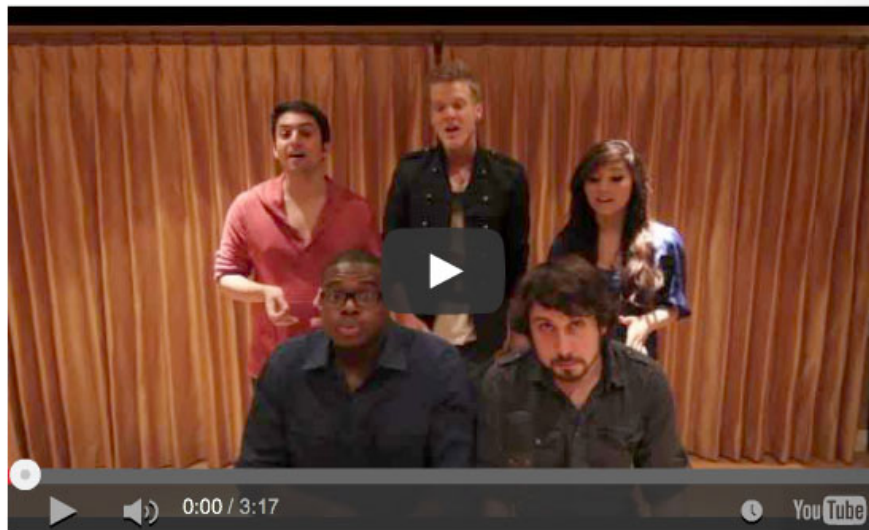
SCOTT ALAN

question to answer. I have had so many performers that have been a reward to me in my career and to single them out would be incredibly difficult. I am just very fortunate when it comes to artists who are able to emote music in the way the artists I've worked with can. I still dream of working with Tina Arena (an Australian Recording Artist). That is still my number one performer I hope to have lay down vocals to a Scott Alan song one day.

MP: *What's next for Scott Alan?*

SA: I really don't know. Life takes you on incredible journeys. Sometimes they are frustrating paths that lead to nowhere and sometimes they are beautifully mapped out. What's next for me is still unknown. I used to be concerned by that and I'd be lying if I said I didn't still wonder what tomorrow is going to bring me but I'm getting more comfortable with only knowing 'what is now for Scott Alan'. ■

Check out Scott's latest album
Anything Worth Holding On To
available on iTunes



PENTATONIX SING "LOVE, LOVE, LOVE"



OLIVER TOMPSETT SINGS "LETTING GO OF YOU" @THE LONDON HIPPODROME

MINDY PACK



WHO IS SHE? Mindy Pack is a voice teacher, performer and entrepreneur and resides in Salt Lake City, Utah. She is also the creator of the highly successful singing voice training app
<http://voicetutorapp.com>.

WEBSITE? <http://SingOutLoud.com>

THE ULTIMATE RESOURCE FOR SINGERS

iSinging

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The Vocal POWERHOUSE

THAT IS WENDY MOTEN

WENDY MOTEN

Known for her powerful vocals and stylistic versatility, Grammy nominated, Wendy Moten, is the “singer’s singer”. Her vocal range and professional credit list are equally as vast. When it comes to vocal style there does not seem to be a genre she can not handle whether it’s gospel, blues, R&B, jazz, rock, pop, Latin or country. Her career to date has spanned from solo artist - signed to EMI in 1992 with top 10 hit “Come In Out Of The Rain” - to touring as a feature and backing vocalist with international artists such as Julio Iglesias and Martina McBride to musical collaborations with artists such as Michael Bolton, Kenny Rogers, Eric Clapton, Buddy Guy and Joss Stone. Wendy has carved a solid and ever-lasting reputation in her industry.

iSing’s Mindy Pack was fortunate to be able to catch Wendy between current tour dates with Martina McBride so we could find out more about her singing journey and how she has maintained such longevity.

iSing: How did you get started as a professional singer?

WM: Well, I got started singing lead at age 6 in church. My father was the minister of music and all 5 of my siblings had to sing or play an instrument. When I was a teenager, I worked at a Memphis theme park called Libertyland. It was a great practice ground for

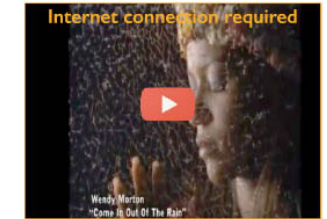
young and up and coming singers and musicians - we would perform musical shows 5 days a week, 3 times a day during the summers! It was an amazing time and the beginning of my musical journey.

When I was 21 years old, I got in my first band called MVP, which was very popular in Memphis. We played at a club/restaurant called Captain Bilbo’s. We were considered the band with the best musicians, singers, and show. I played in that band for 3 years then got my first major tour as a backing vocalist for my close friend Kevin Paige who was an artist on the Chrysalis/SBK Label. He was the opening act for Debbie Gibson at the time, and she was touring stadiums then.

After touring with Kevin, I got my very own record deal at EMI Records in NYC. I was singing a jingle in the recording studio one day for Niko Lyrus (Studio Owner) and a friend of his named Dick Williams dropped by. His friend liked what he heard and asked who I was and what I sounded like live because he thought he could get me a major record deal.

Of course, I laughed it off. So that same night I “sat in” with Niko’s band. I sang some Whitney Houston and Aretha Franklin and he assured me that night he would definitely be able to get me a major recording deal.

About three months later he returned to Memphis and had me record 3 songs. “Come In Out Of The Rain” was one of them. A few months later, he had a nice bidding war going on between 3 major records companies. Crazy, right? That started it all.



COME IN OUT OF THE RAIN - WENDY MOTEN

iSing: What are the common misconceptions singers have about the music industry?

That it - success, popularity, fame - can happen over night. There is always a great deal of preparation.

iSing: Any lessons that you think still have to be learned “the hard way”?

WM: Well, you MUST take care of your instrument. You don’t want to learn that the hard way. If you are a singer and you want to be a professional singer full time, your instrument has to be there 100%. Only YOU know what “taking care of your instrument” means.

iSing: How do you keep your voice in shape for touring and

WENDY MOTEN

performing?

WM: Well, I try to get as much sleep as I can and warming up doesn't hurt. I keep my head and throat covered on most flights and if ever there is a draft somewhere, I cover up.

iSing: If you could duet with or sing back up for anyone, who would it be and why?

WM: I think I would love to sing a duet with Adele. She has one of the best voices today.

iSing: Your new album, *Timeless*, is quite different in style to your past albums. What was your inspiration for this move into jazz?

WM: I've been pretty eclectic as a singer most of my life. My sessions came out of singing big pop and R&B ballads because that was the standard at the time with the Whitneys and Mariah's. But I love all music. The producers of *Timeless* - Wendy Moten Sings Richard Whiting, Paul Brown and Mark Nordman from Woodward Ave Records, were going to have me sing on the RW Project as a guest in the beginning, then they decided to make it my project. It was a very exciting decision. Only then did I realize that I love that style of music. I got my first ear training from watching TV and memorizing theme songs. My favorite is the Perry Mason original theme. I still get goose bumps.

Anyway, I remembered watching those old movies as a kid and listening to early Ella Fitzgerald, Doris Day, Julie London and Nat Cole. This project is a gift.

iSing: You have had a long and successful career and don't seem to be stopping anytime soon. How do you maintain motivation?



SO CLOSE TO LOVE - WENDY MOTEN

WM: I LOVE what I do and I never forget that every opportunity is a blessing or a gift. I don't take it for granted and I do my ultimate best.

iSing: What is the most challenging professional thing that you have had to face and overcome to date?

WM: I had the unique chance to perform with the Memphis

"I LOVE what I do and I never forget that every opportunity is a blessing or a gift."

Symphony this past December in Memphis. It was the first time I had ever performed alone with a 200-piece orchestra. I did not want to fail in my hometown. I had to make sure I knew my music and my voice were in "tip-top" shape. The Memphis Orchestra and Chorus already have an amazing reputation and I did not want to be the weakest link. I just made sure I was prepared and I also reminded myself to have fun and make sure I keep this memory close. My most challenging song was "O Holy Night" ("Cantique de Noël"). No one expected me to sing this in its original state. Nobody knew I had a classical background :) The more music you are able to sing or study, the longer and better chance you have of staying in the music business.

iSing: What's the funniest or most embarrassing on-stage experience you've had?

WM: Oh my. When I was about 17 years old, I was performing at Libertyland theme park in the summers and one of the songs I had to sing in the show was "Somewhere Over the Rainbow". One Saturday show day, I completely forgot the lyrics. Embarrassing! I watched the young kids and their parents happily sing along in the beginning then I watched them become mortified. Of course my show mates and crew were laughing uncontrollably. I didn't think I would ever re-

WENDY MOTEN

cover. I laughed a little too, then jumped back into the song. It feels like it happened only yesterday.

iSing: Do you have any advice to singers who want to be an artist?

WM: I tell people today that it feels like the western 'Wild, Wild, West'. Everybody is looking for the "gold". Because of this, there are no real music boundaries. You can sing what you want, record what you want and even generate your own fan base. The more independent you are, the more fulfillment and artistic control you will have. I know it's hard supporting yourself on music alone, but you have a better chance of going it alone than waiting on a major record label to come and find you.

iSing: What's next for Wendy Moten?

WM: The sky! I want it all. I want to continue to create great music by writing, producing, and singing well. I've got a few more Wendy Moten projects coming out. The

best thing that could have ever happened to me was learning how to use ProTools and Logic. I get calls all the time from people all over the world asking me to sing on their recordings. The budgets of the old days that were big enough to fly me in, put me in a hotel and get me a rental car have come to an end on a lot of levels. Since learning how to record and edit my vocals, I can

take a little more time to record some great ideas and then let these artists pick and choose, which parts work best for them. This way, they are not wasting their budgets on expenses and I can get up and record whenever, even in my pajamas. It's priceless! ■

<https://www.wendymoten.com>

Recommended albums



MINDY PACK



Mindy Pack is a voice teacher, performer and entrepreneur and resides in Salt Lake City, Utah. She is also the creator of the highly successful singing voice training app <https://voicetutorapp.com>.

WEBSITE: <https://SingOutLoud.com>