

Writersday

“When you got a job to do, you got to do it well” Paul McCartney sang in 1973. True words, according to Sjoerd Hoogma, who lives by this motto. After working as a landscape architect with his own company this singer-songwriter picked up his guitar again to send songs into the world under the moniker of Writersday. After all, every day is writer’s day.

His career switch from a successful entrepreneur to an aspiring musician was initiated by a sold out show he played in the Melkweg, one of the main music venues in Amsterdam. Hoogma was the guitarist in a band that was put together to take part in the Battle of the Bands, a nationwide band competition. Hoogma first turned down the offer to join the band, despite having been a musician for years between the ages of 18 and 31. He was not keen on playing covers and would only join the band if they would play some original songs. Songs he wrote especially for the occasion. They accepted his offer, and ended up winning the contest, with a special mention by the jury for the inclusion of original songs.

The gig has a life changing effect on Hoogma. He is used to some recognition and praise, thanks to various prestigious assignments for his company. But with music, it feels different. The respect and recognition he receives for his songs lift him up and make his heart beam. When he performs, he strikes people. If he sings, people listen to him and appreciate what he has to say. The response he receives from the audience opens a door for him. One he never knew existed.

There’s no way back: he is a musician from now on. It’s do or die, a motto he’s all too familiar with, thanks to his spirit as an entrepreneur. He sells his company and goes back to school to study music. He starts with two years preliminary training at the Conservatory of Amsterdam, followed by a study at the world renowned Berklee College of Music in Boston, USA. He travels throughout Europe with his guitar, to play wherever the wind takes him and people want to hear him play. He makes a pilgrimage to the old music cities of the world, to be inspired by the feel, tradition and history of Liverpool, London, New York and Nashville. While in Memphis, a dream comes true when he gets to record some tracks in the famous Sun Studio’s, the holy ground where Elvis Presley recorded his first songs. The producer of these tracks is Grammy Award winning producer Matt Ross Spang.

The loneliness he experiences while travelling make him reflect upon his life. It makes him go back to the core of his existence. One question keeps coming back: who am I? It’s the single most important question that is answered in his songs. Songs that keep on coming, waiting to be plucked out of the air. “Every day is writer’s day”, as Hoogma likes to say. The result can be heard on his solo debut album Picking Flowers On The Moon (White Dove Records, 2016). It’s a record that combines the pureness and storytelling aspect of country with the light-heartedness of pop music in 14 brutally honest songs. Hoogma: “There’s nothing more beautiful than writing songs. It’s performing magic with words and sounds. And there’s so much to sing about. With music, you can make the biggest pain bearable.”

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