

NOWAND

CAPE TOWN – BERLIN



Mark Bahlig, a South African-German artist, initiated a major shift in his life in 2016 sparking his transition into the world of music. With his project NOWAND Mark's unremitting passion and commitment to creating music that moves the soul drives him forward in a neverending quest to explore his inner realm and reveal it to the world. Embracing vulnerability to dig deep into his creative side, his multi-faceted productions are equal parts emotive and compelling. Mark's music encourages you to move your body while being transported to a liberating world; meditative, cerebral and nourishing. Now primed to unveil his labour of love, the NOWAND project is all set to make its long awaited entrance on the electronic music stage.

Born in Johannesburg to German immigrants Mark's life has involved extensive travel, studying fashion and industrial design, working as a product and graphic designer, training and working as a counsellor - soaking up all the richness of life. Stints in England, America and Switzerland have given him a broad view of the world and every step of the way music has been his companion, soundtracking a life that has been shaped by an abundant accumulation of human experiences.

A pivotal moment in his life came during an intense emotional period, not long after his mother's death. While on a business trip to Germany in 2014 he hit rock bottom, breaking down when he visited relatives in Hamburg. Realising that he had fallen prey to addiction, he made the decision to seek help and instigate positive change.



In the midst of all this turmoil Mark experienced a tremendous surge of inspiration when various lyrics began to spontaneously materialise in his mind. They evidently revealed his inner state of being and at the time he could not have imagined that the song, 'Running Into You', would mark his emergence as a musician.

A year and a half later, and well into his recovery process, Mark got together with Argentinian-born friend and musician, Gustavo Fasani, in Cape Town and they started exploring together - bringing the song to life. Their initial acoustic sessions involved Gustavo on piano with Mark singing into a microphone. Soon, new songs began to emerge, shifting into more electronic forms when Gustavo started experimenting with an analogue synthesiser. Their common love for synth pop, club music and electronica began to permeate their

recordings forming the basis of NOWAND's signature sound. In a moment of serendipity, they were sent on a path that led to Berlin.

After discovering world-renowned sound engineer and producer, Hannes Bieger, through an Electronic Beats TV feature, they knew they had found the person who could assist them with taking their project to the next level. This sparked the beginning of a highly fertile creative partnership that would form the bedrock of NOWAND's output and over the course of three years they made frequent trips to Hannes' studio in Berlin.

Fairly early into the project another significant collaborator, Jason Birkwood, came into the mix. He was inspired by NOWAND's creations and wanted to get involved. With extensive experience in artist and events management he initially took on a managerial role, looking at the business side of things. However, being a music producer in his own right, it wasn't long before Mark and Jason also found themselves in the studio - refining, composing and creating together.

Going back to his ancestral roots is a key part of Mark's musical journey, especially as his father had fled East Germany via Berlin in 1961. In the German capital Mark recorded new material, conceived new ideas and refined his recordings to achieve optimum sound quality and arrangement. It was a period of sustained growth and self-discovery for Mark, both personally and musically, observing a true master at work, while also finding the confidence to impart his own knowledge and intuitive wisdom.

Mark has always had an affinity with poetry and lyrics, which comes through loud and clear in his music. He expresses heartache and sorrow, elation and wonder, conveying the full human experience as recounted by someone who has lived everything he sings about.

The NOWAND project is centred on music that incorporates elements of new wave, deep house, techno, dub and blues, as well as the timeless sounds of the eighties and nineties. What emerges from this vibrant cocktail of influences is emotive, accessible and deeply personal.

Mark doesn't shy away from exploring difficult subjects in his lyrics, many of them autobiographical. His maturity has given him the ability to find a distinct voice from the get go; melancholy synths glide over dour bass lines as heartfelt vocals tap into your emotional centre. Stirring string arrangements combine with crisp beats, and the atmosphere is pensive yet alluring.

In his ongoing voyage of discovery and renewal Mark has excavated deep trauma, explored his multi-layered personality and found salvation in making music. For both Mark and Gustavo, the NOWAND project has provided a channel for catharsis and regeneration, now their intention is to provide the same outlet for their listeners.

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