

INTRODUCING: SALME DAHLSTROM

BY GEORGE SKENDROS

Where can we find you right now and what are you up to?

I am at home here in the North East working on two projects very close to my heart - 1) A new solo album - I've been mulling over this one for a while now, digging into all kinds of inspiration from books to movies to the music of all genres to find what I want to say and how to say it. I made a conscious decision to push myself beyond my comfort zone; some really cool ideas are starting to form. It's early stages yet but I am really excited to get into the studio and start laying down some of the stuff bouncing around in my head. 2) Kelly + Saint - It's an album I am making with my very talented friend Kelly St. Patrick; she is a fabulous singer and songwriter. We've known each other for years and finally came around to doing something together. Kelly + Saint is a mix of hip-hop and electronica with a strong retro vibe and catchy pop melodies telling stories of independence and female power.

Tell us a bit about your influences.

This might come as a surprise but one of my main influences is 80s metal, it's what I grew up on. Great melodies, a big sound that can fill stadiums, lots of swagger, and larger-than-life personas. Also, I grew up in Sweden where ABBA and strong pop melodies ruled so that's sort of in my blood. In my late teens, I started getting into drum machines and programming music and started mixing those sounds with the more classic guitar based pop and rock stuff, and that became my trademark sound.

How did you start?

I started playing classical piano at age 5. When I turned 12 my older sister brought home an acoustic guitar and I was immediately drawn to it. I learned to play a few chords, enough to start putting some songs together. The next step was to form a band and start playing shows. And here we are.

What do you think is the difference between the artists of the past and today?

Today's artist does not have to be as talented as the artists of the past when it comes to singing and playing; there are so many tools from Auto tune to how you can edit songs in ProTools etc. that allow for today's artists to get away with more stuff. Don't get me wrong - there are plenty of talented artists out there today, all I am saying is that the rules for what it takes to make it have changed somewhat.

What is the highest point of your career so far? What unique thing happened to you?

It's hard to pick just one thing but if I had to I'd say when my song "C'mon Y'All" became an indie hit after appearing in a couple of high-profile TV commercials. When I made my album "The Acid Cowgirl Audio Trade" I had no other goal but to write and produce the best songs I possibly could. I knew "C'mon Y'All" was a good song when I wrote it, but I could never have imagined that it would end up in numerous tv ad campaigns all over the world, climb the Billboard Dance Chart and lead to The Wall Street Journal crowning me Licensing Queen. The success of "C'mon Y'All" gave me a job, a career that's still going strong today.

What do you think will change in the future in terms of how we consume music?

Your guess is as good as mine.

Do you remember any strange or funny incident that happened to you?

Around 2008-2009 I started receiving a lot of fan mail from Australia. The reason for it was that Big Brother AU had used one of my songs, "Superstar Car Crash" in one of their episodes where the contestants had to make a music video. Somebody sent me a link to the video - first off, it's hilarious but also, they had a guy sing (lip-synch) the lead. I was chatting with Billy (the lead singer in the music video) and asked why and he was like "we thought it was a guy singing". Kinda funny and not the last time it has happened, there are rumors out there that underneath all this make-up I am actually a man.

Do you play video games? What is your favorite?

I do and I am really pissed that they botched the rollout of the PS5 cause I was dying to get it and then it sold out and sold out again and now I feel like it's not worth it. I love Wipeout (a classic I know) and any kind of racing game really, I like Halo and Medal of Honor. I also loved playing Donkey Kong on Wiiu with my daughter.

Tell us about your latest or upcoming release.

So I already talked about my solo album and Kelly + Saint at the beginning of this interview. Those two projects are going to be my focus for the 12+ months. I am feeling really creative right now, it's gonna be a fun year.

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