

# Julian's TV masterclass

**M**iles *And Memories*, the new album from Dutch blues-rockers **Julian Sas**, also celebrates his thirty years in the music business. "I remember the day I saw Chuck Berry on Belgian TV," he tells me. "I was six years old. My mum watched the programme with me and saw that I couldn't take my eyes off the screen. It wasn't until I was eleven that my dad bought my first guitar for me.

"I studied my parents' record collection – Hank Williams, The Beatles, the Stones, Muddy Waters and loads of rock'n'roll – and just played along. Later, it was videotapes of the famous *Rockpalast* shows, where I could watch Rory Gallagher, Alvin Lee, and Johnny Winter. I'd put the video on slow motion and find out what the fingers were doing on the guitar neck.

"The blues for me came naturally. I studied the records, found out that the blues is the beginning of it all. I thought that if I ever mastered this music, I could play along with everything. I began to get more records, from my uncle – Howlin' Wolf, Lightnin' Hopkins and John Lee Hooker – and then the journey really began.

"I played with Louisiana Red, R.L. Burnside and Larry Garner to name a few. I was in my early twenties, a side-man, playing slide or rhythm guitar. For me it was amazing, closer to the real deal than I could ever imagine. The way

they performed was a learning school, but what I loved the most about it was the directness of feel and emotion."

How did his first album come about? "My first album was *Where Will It End*. The band were together for seven months and we talked with Ed Bos. He was a manager and he is still my manager today, thirty years and

running. He saw the band and said that we had to make an album but we only had three songs of original material. He said it was time to get serious and write our own songs. So we started writing some tunes and had half an album.

"Then he got us some studio time in Munich – three days to record and

mix and bring the master tape home. We went to the studio, played all our original songs in one or two takes, added some cover versions of songs we played live and that was it. Three days and we were back in the van, with a master tape. Thirty years later, I still enjoy its youthfulness, rawness, the vibe, and the directness of the playing. Maybe if we recorded it now, it might sound more sophisticated, but we would never capture what we had in those three days. I'm sure about that. It gave us a record deal and the rest is history."

What's the background to *Miles And Memories* – some might just release a retrospective 'Best Of'? "No 'Best Of', no way. I'm always writing new material; I'm fortunate I still have so much music in me. So writing new songs is no problem. I like to write and see where the music takes us, again and again."

And the power trio is back? "Yeah, we were a four-piece band for five years. I do love the Hammond organ and piano, but it makes me kind of restless too. I'm a fan of trios – Hendrix, Cream, Taste – and I thought it was time to come back out of the pandemic with something new. Back to my roots... we started as a three-piece and now was the time to get back to it. We're having a blast. I hope that honest music will always find a way to the hearts of people!

**NORMAN DARWEN**



Photo: Marco van Rooyen