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**Twilight Muse**

# Twilight Muse

New York city based, Twilight Muse features the skillful songwriting team of singer Meg Pollaro and singer-keyboardist-guitar player Andrew Shapiro. Meeting at a New York city jam session in 2019, the duo went on to perform together in the powerhouse funk cover band, Ultrasound. That experience led them to forming Twilight Muse and writing songs together, resulting in a debut album scheduled to drop in mid-June. I spoke to Meg and Andrew one warm day in April and they outlined their musical bond and the emotive works they've created...

## **METRONOME: How did you to meet?**

Meg Pollaro: Andrew and I met in an interesting way. I was invited to sit in on a jam session with a friend and client of mine. It was just a bunch of people playing music in New York's Smash studios. It was informal and really fun.

Andrew was also invited by someone. We just hit it off. I liked him from the moment I met him. We had a fun time and did a few more of those impromptu jams. It ultimately led to a greater relationship.

## **METRONOME: Did you join a funk cover band after that?**

Meg: Yeah, we did. From that jam, Andrew, and a couple of other guys asked me, "Hey, would you want to sing? We're going to start a band." I said, Yeah, let's do it. We went through a couple of different iterations of band members, but ultimately it became what we called Ultrasound.

Funny enough, we named it Ultrasound for a couple of different reasons. When the band really got started, I found out I was pregnant. The band evolved from there. We started doing small showcases with friends, to playing The Brooklyn Bowl with Darryl McDaniels of Run-DMC. It was a really fun project.

## **METRONOME: What year would that have been?**

Meg: Ultrasound got started in the spring of 2019 and played through the pandemic. Our last show was in 2021 at the Brooklyn Bowl.

Andrew Shapiro: The pandemic was an interesting time for us because we got to do a lot of work together. We recorded a bunch of covers. We did a Led Zeppelin cover song, a Fleetwood Mac song, and a cover

of the Bee Gees "You Should Be Dancing. We had a lot of fun doing those covers. We each recorded our parts remotely then I put them together and mixed them. We even did videos remotely.

We were having a lot of fun with our extra time. We continued to play out at a venue in the East Village. Then we played at the Brooklyn Bowl. That was a benefit show because Darryl McDaniels of Run-DMC has



a charity called the Felix Organization that supports kids in foster care because he was a foster kid growing up in New York City. They send kids to summer camp and things like that. We got to work with him on that, and he actually played a couple of tunes with us. We did the classic Aerosmith/Run-DMC "Walk This Way." We had a lot of fun with it. It waabout that time that Meg and I started realizing we wanted to write originals. In a really short period of time we had written seven original songs. That's what we're putting out as an album in June.

## **METRONOME: How do you come up with the name for the band, Twilight Muse?**

Meg: What's interesting about Andrew and I is that we're full-time everything: Full-time parents, full-time executives and full-time musicians. To find time to do these things is often when work is done, and the kids are asleep. It's like this twilight moment when we get to be inspired. The muse thing is, instead of a witching hour, the time that we get to be creative.

Andrew: I think the other thing we liked about it is that it had multiple meanings. Twilight is a time of day, but it's also used as a metaphor for a time in one's life.

Muse can be a creative inspiration, but also the act of thinking and ruminating on something. We liked the open-endedness of the name.

## **METRONOME: You have a new album coming out soon. How many songs will be on it?**

Andrew: Seven originals and a Cars cover. We're doing a re-interpretation of the song "You Might Think" that will be quite different. The tune is a very upbeat, high tempo song, but we slowed it down and changed it a lot. It sounds really different the way we do it.

## **METRONOME: Do you have a working title for the name of the record?**

Andrew: It's going to be called A Moment Out of Time. It's a lyric from the first single, "Dreamspace."

## **METRONOME: How long did it take to write these eight songs?**

Andrew: There were a couple that were germinating for a while like "Dream Space," and "Oh Mama," but most of them came fully formed over the last six months. They're all collaborations between Meg and myself.

## **METRONOME: How do you present song ideas to Meg?**

Andrew: I play keyboard and guitar. Most



of the structure of the songs, I would take the lead on. Meg will sing a bit of a lyric, send it to me and ask, What do you think of this? We tend to go back-and-forth and collaborate on a lyric. For some songs, Meg has written more of the lyric and for other songs, I've written more of the lyrics, but we collaborate all the way through.

## **METRONOME: L.A. producer, Dan Mackenzie worked with you on some of**

## **the songs. Were you in the studio with him?**

Andrew: We actually had three different producers that we worked with. Dan is a great producer based in Los Angeles. We did two songs with him, "Dreamspace" and "Are You In?," two songs with a New York producer named Jason Cummings at his Cutting Room Studio down in the Village, "Destination You" and "Electrify Me" and three more with another New York based producer, Will Baker, who owns his own studio out in Brooklyn called Slide Studios.

Working with three different producers was great because we got three different points of view on the music and different sounds. I think it gives our collection of songs an eclectic feel.

## **METRONOME: Why did you choose to work with three different producers?**

Andrew: We just wanted to get different perspectives on what we were doing and get slightly different sounds. Dan in L.A. is amazing, but it was harder to work remotely. We actually went out to L.A. together to work on those two songs. Having two producers that we really liked here in New York was quite helpful and made things easier.

## **METRONOME: How did you meet Dan, Will and Jason?**

Andrew: We knew Will Baker from before because he did some work for us with our cover band, Ultrasound. We did some recordings during the pandemic with him, and did a couple of live recordings at the Brooklyn Bowl and Will worked on those.

Another musician friend of ours introduced us to Jason. We had heard some of his work and liked it and wanted to do a song with him. We thought his sound was perfect for the song, "Destination You."

These guys are incredible musicians, so they played a lot of the instruments on the tracks. We really liked what Jason brought to "Destination You." He used an E-Bow on his guitar that was really amazing.

## **METRONOME: Meg, I understand you grew up in a musical family. Have you been singing since you were a kid?**

Meg: Oh yeah. My mom was actually a singer herself. She was in a band when she was young. Beyond that, she just loves to sing. So I was exposed to music at a very young age. She would be cleaning the house,

blasting the music and singing. I would be doing it with her and it became something that I really loved to do.

I never had the full confidence to go and do something with it in a band though, so I just wrote a lot and was the queen of karaoke. It was more for fun until I met Andrew. He had awoken this thing in me that made me think I could do this. We started doing it together, and it became a really great thing.

**METRONOME: I heard a lot of excellent instrumentation on these tracks. Who handled the guitar and drum parts?**

Andrew: I played most of the keyboards and some of the guitar parts. Dan Mackenzie is an unbelievable guitar player and bass player. He can play anything. He played the saxophone on the song, "Are You In." It's the same with Jason Cummings, so we worked with both of them for these tracks.

Then we had live drummers come in, Chad Fischer and a guy named Rich Monopoli. The rhythm sections were really strong, so between the excellent drummers we had and the solid bass playing from Dan and Jason on the tracks they played, it sounded great.

**METRONOME: "Dreamspace" is an excellent tune. Who wrote that one and how did it come together?**

Andrew: Like all collaborations, one of us comes in with more of an idea than the other one. "Dreamspace" was inspired by the notion of an imaginary place where you're connecting with someone away from all the pressures of the world. Obviously, there's a love story there and Meg's vocals added so much to that as did the guitar playing by Dan Mackenzie. That one, to us, channeled a '70s Laurel Canyon sound, a bit of Fleetwood Mac, and '70s duets that you'd be familiar with.

**METRONOME: "Destination You" was the strongest cut of the album. It's definitely a future classic. Who wrote that and what was it about?**

Meg: "Destination You" was one of the songs that I started with and then brought to Andrew. It was at a time when my daughter was still being bottle-fed. I would have these 45 minute sessions with her before bed, and drift off and start singing to her. It dawned on me about these moments in time and how fast they go by. All of the things that life encompasses. Your relationship, your love, your children, your work, all those things. It all leads back to you. I think it's a great song for interpretation.

**METRONOME: "Audacious" was a great adult contemporary pop tune. What inspired the writing for that?**

Andrew: We just went back into the studio last week and finalized the track. We brought

in guitar player, Joe Colgan, that we've been playing with live. He's just blown us away. We went back to the studio and re-cut it and added a guitar solo and had him play throughout the song.

Joe is a super talented guitar player and well known in the New York area. He plays with a bunch of bands and does a lot of session work. He added a lot to that song. He also did a solo for "Oh Mama."

Meg: We were messing around one day in Andrew's studio and came up with that. We thought, is that silly or is it great? We got hooked on the riff and then just started storytelling. There are a lot of things that we say in the song that are true. There's a bit of language between Andrew and I. Then we went deeper and thought about the rollercoaster ride of a relationship and what's exciting about it- we're arguing and everything, but we're so great together. It may be toxic, but it's exciting. Some of the greatest love stories are toxic love affairs. We tried to create a different lens for those types of things.

**METRONOME: The song "Oh Mama" sounded really personal. What is that about?**

Meg: I wrote a good portion of that song without Andrew about six or seven years ago. My mom is someone who has battled with addiction. She's been my absolute hero, my entire life. It was a really difficult thing that I was going through. so it was therapy for me to write the song. Then, with Andrew, the song became way more powerful. I remember doing it for the first time with the band, it was a pretty emotional moment for me.

It's a very personal story to me. Addiction is something that gets everybody. I think it's a song that people can really relate to.

**METRONOME: Who is in the band when you play live?**

Andrew: We just played a show at the Bitter End with a great band: Rich Monopoli on drums, Alan Cockern on bass, Simon Wasserberger on rhythm guitar and Joe Colgan on lead guitar, along with Meg and I. We had a lot of industry people come out to see us.

**METRONOME: When is the street date for the new album?**

Meg: We're targeting the middle of June.  
**METRONOME: Will you be shooting any videos for the songs?**

Andrew: Yes. We have a video that we're working on now for the song "Are You In?" We shot the entire Bitter End show with an incredible video crew, so we'll have some live video as well.

--Brian M. Owens



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