

ALCOHOL IS THE ANSWER

MIKE SKINNER, ALIAS **THE STREETS**, DAS ENFANT TERRIBLE IM UNTERGRUND DER BRITISCHEN TANZSZENE, DER MIT DEM SPRECHGESANG, DER SICH MIT DROGEN UND ALKOHOL HERUMSCHLÄGT – ODER IST ER BRAV GEWORDEN? VIELES WURDE IHM NACHGESAGT. WAS ABER OFFENSICHTLICH BZW. OFFEN HÖRBAR IST, DAS SIND SEINE NEUEN SONGS, IN DENEN ER PHILOSOPHIERT UND WESENTLICH OPTIMISTISCHER ALS FRÜHER RÜBERKOMMT – IM GESPRÄCH IST ER AUCH NOCH EIN SANFTMÜTIGER NETTER TYP – SO WIE IHN SICH DIE MÜTTER ALS SCHWIEGERSOHN WÜNSCHEN. TEXT: ANGIEBLACK; FOTO: WARNER UK

curt: On the myspace site you introduce yourself by saying: "Alcohol is the answer."

What do you mean by that?

MIKE: Oh, it's just a joke really. I mean, I just saw it written down somewhere and thought it was quite funny. It doesn't really mean anything.

curt: But didn't you have problems with alcohol and drugs in the past? In 2006 you said you knocked all of it down. What about that?

MIKE: I gave it a rest for about a year. But – I don't have a problem with it.

curt: I've just come back from the UK and it struck me that people there drink much more than we do here. Is it really like that?

MIKE: Yeah, we certainly do drink more. You're probably right.

curt: You love going to Ibiza with your friends. What's so fascinating about the place?

MIKE: Well, it's a beautiful island for a start. But there's also lots to do for British people – Germans go there as well. It's got a really good balance of beauty and nightlife. There's a lot going on.

curt: You said it's a good place to be for stars. Why's that?

MIKE: For stars? I don't remember saying that. I think there are quite a lot of famous people there but I don't really hang around with famous people.

curt: Who are your friends you go with then?

MIKE: Just people I work with, like the guy who takes care of quite a lot of my creative things. We do a TV show called Beat Stevie. Yeah, really all of those people who work on

that and, of course, the band I play with as well.

curt: What kind of a show is Beat Stevie?

MIKE: It's on the tele in the UK, but it's also on youtube. If you do a search for Beat Stevie you'll find it. Well, they're all different really but they're just kind of about me, and what I'm getting up to. They're quite cool. It's quite creative and funny as well.

curt: What do you think is more important for an upcoming musician nowadays: to represent himself/herself on the Internet, to be played on the radio or to play live?

MIKE: I used to think that the music was the most important thing. But I think to be an artist – there is something about playing live that makes everything seem a bit more real. So I think playing live makes the whole experience a little bit more three-dimensional.

curt: You say your lyrics are important but you don't even put them on the booklet of your CD. Why is that?

MIKE: I put a lot of effort into the artwork. I don't think anyone could say that I didn't do that ... I work very hard to make the songs easy to understand as songs. I think if I was gonna write the lyrics down on paper, I'd just become a poet. It's just not what I'm into. The song should be able to stand on its own as a song.

curt: Your lyrics are supposed to be related to your life and to real life. Can you tell me more about this?

MIKE: I guess that I just want to make songs that relate to people. Songs have to be about

something. Part of my technique is to describe the small details. That's kind of how I get the emotion across. It's a technique really. It's not like I have this inner urge to just ban all this realism.

curt: What kind of music do you listen to?

MIKE: All sorts. I listen to most genres really. I'm constantly getting new music to listen to, to check it out. Listening is a really important part of what I do.

curt: When you were 15, you started experimenting with hip hop, jungle and rap in your room at home. How did your parents react to that?

MIKE: I think they wanted me to get a normal job because they were worried about whether I was gonna succeed. But apart from that they

curt: What was it like to grow up in Birmingham?

MIKE: It really instilled a lot in me, a lot of reality, and – I think – important values. I don't get too caught up in – kind of – music for music's sake, or art for art's sake... I see it as a lot of sensations. But London definitely makes it much easier for me to succeed.

curt: But isn't London much more expensive than Birmingham?

MIKE: It is, yeah! But luckily I earn pretty good money, so I'm all right.

curt: You were a student at Sutton Coldfield College near Birmingham. What did you study?

MIKE: Just electrical engineering, microelectronics ...

curt: The name "The Streets" sounds like an entire band but you've been working alone all

„LUCKILY I EARN PRETTY GOOD MONEY, SO I'M ALL RIGHT.“

were really proud and pleased for me.

curt: A while ago, in 2003, you wrote a song called "Dry Your Eyes" with Chris Martin from Coldplay. Did you ever release the song?

MIKE: It leaked on the Internet. But no, we never released it.

curt: You're going to be 30 this year. Does this mean anything to you?

MIKE: Not really. Maybe it will do once I'm 30 but I'm just always focused on music. I don't really think about my age. But I do think I've achieved quite a lot in my 20s.

curt: You were born in London, but you grew up in Birmingham, right?

MIKE: Yeah, I moved to Birmingham when I was quite young.

curt: Music-wise it would have been much easier for you to start out with your music and make a living with it in London, because that's where all the music industries are.

MIKE: It used to frustrate me when I was younger, because I didn't like it being so difficult to achieve what I wanted to achieve. But since I moved to London, like you said, it's been much easier to build something.

these years. Why did you choose that name?

MIKE: I just thought it was amazing that it hadn't been chosen before. It was supposed to be a band at the time but then it didn't really kind of come together. But I don't think it really matters what the name is, because it becomes whatever it is anyway.

curt: There's a song with the line: "I came to this world with nothing, and I'll leave with nothing but love, everything else is just borrowed ..." What do you want to tell us with that?

MIKE: Well, it just came out really. I couldn't really tell you. I was writing a song about wanting to be optimistic. But the words just sounded right and I think the great thing about that lyric is that it explains itself. There is no need. It's that simple.

curt: Do you have a favourite song on your album?

MIKE: Yeah, my favourite song is "On the Edge of a Cliff", definitely. I think the music is really well executed, it really came off. I think the chorus is cool. It really hits you and the chorus sets that up really well.