**M O R G X N**

The reason indie pop-soul singer morgxn left his Nashville-home for Los Angeles was to find “space to think, breathe, and be with myself,” he explains. Within weeks of the move, he had a fateful encounter. An acquaintance invited him to a music party and asked, “‘Do you want to meet Stevie Nicks?’” Of course, he did. “She gave me advice that I have taken to heart ever since. She told me, ‘You have to keep moving. This world will walk over you if you don’t just keep going.’ When you fall down, get up, keep moving. That changed my life.”

With that resilience in mind, morgxn named his first album *vital* (out 5.18.18, wxnderlost / Hollywood Records). All cascading synthscapes and cool beats, it nimbly navigates the expanse between everything devastating and joyous about the human condition. “Early on, I banged on doors for a long time, to have people listen to me. What I needed to do was just make the music I needed to make,” says morgxn, who just finished touring Europe with X Ambassadors. “It wasn’t about waiting for an opportunity. I made that opportunity.”

“home,” his breakout song, anchors *vital*. The exhilarating chorale has clocked nearly 7 million Spotify streams, won him opening slots with Skylar Grey and Miike Snow, and even inspired a partnership with the Covenant House, a charity for young runaways. (Its artful video features a teen’s liberation from grim suburb to glittering, free-spirited club.) “Home is more than the bed you lay in. It’s literally the adventure of finding the place that makes you feel alive,” he says. “The song is about having a feeling of belonging, who I am in the world, what I have to say.”

*vital* can be stinging in its honesty. The title track is at once a dirge for his late father and a paean to his great love of music (“You’re vital to my motion/You’re the one that keeps me open/When I feel like I can’t move/You come and pull me through”). Meanwhile, the fluttering, falsetto’d “translucent”—the album’s first single—exposes a lover’s artifice (“I came here lookin for my hallelujah…but your walls and edges start to show the truth”). Making music can be morgxn’s therapy or escape. At times, it’s both.

Even from a young age, morgxn defined himself through song. He began by singing at home with his mother and his grandfather, who was a vaudeville performer, while his father encouraged him to play piano. By age 8, morgxn became the youngest member of the Nashville Symphony Choir, was “killing it” in the gospel choir, acting and doing anything he could to “get out of the house and into a song.”

At age 9, morgxn penned one of his first songs, “I’ll Always Be Here for You.” “It was about the most stalkery form of love,” he says, laughing. “Like, ‘I’ll never not be standing right next to you.’ I wrote love songs knowing nothing about love.” Years later, he composed “me without you,” a fractured ballad featuring the truly gutting observation, “I don’t know love without mourning.” Says morgxn: “That was the love song I’d been trying to write my whole life. There’s nothing like loving someone so much that it hurts when they’re gone.”

After college, morgxn made his way to New York to pursue theater, appearing in the acclaimed musical “Spring Awakening” but found that, even on the biggest stage in the world – Broadway – he felt empty. He also realized that he was losing himself in characters while singing and playing others art. “I wasn’t expressing anything anymore by telling other people’s stories,” he says. “I needed to sit in myself for the first time ever, speak from my point of view.” So he debuted original material at New York’s prestigious Joe’s Pub and started writing sessions with various producers, to little avail. One particular writing session, in London, fizzled out when he got deported for lacking a work visa.

“I came back to the U.S. with my ass on the ground,” he says. “Someone recently tweeted at me that Subway was playing “home” in their stores. I didn’t expect to have such an emotional response to that. There were times when I bought one sandwich, making it last the full day, because it was filling and cheap.” After scraping together some cash, he ultimately made his way out West.

“After I came to L.A., I wrote “xx” and felt my whole universe shift,” say morgxn, of the cooing, blissed-out track (pronounced “kiss kiss”). He recorded *vital* primarily with producer Ryan Marrone (M83, Nicki Minaj). “He pushed me really hard through the process,” morgxn says. “With ‘xx,’ I remember him leaving the room with this song looping on the computer. He was like, ‘Keep going. Keep going.’”

It was Marrone who suggested the cover of “Boys Don’t Cry” by The Cure. “I looked at the lyrics and started crying,” morgxn says. He recorded it just after his father’s passing. “What was magical was that Ryan turned off the lights, played the guitar line, and we recorded it in a small, 4’ x 4’ room. I will cherish so much about making this record. These are moments you can’t engineer.” Still, other moments weren’t as effortless. “roots”—a mournful, nearly a cappella precursor to “home”—went through 20 versions, before morgxn decided he liked the very first one.

“The record was very much shaped by time and just life,” he says. The contemplative, mid-tempo “bruised” and the piano ballad “carry the weight” broach the topic of moving on. “There’s a bit of our heart we’re trying so much to protect,” he says. “I’ve struggled with that. To just accept the fullness of who I am.”

Though much of the *vital* is inspired by loss, it’s actually the sound of morgxn practicingthe Tao of Stevie Nicks. “When you hurt, accept the pain and keep moving,” he says. “Music has been the constant in my life that has kept me going. This record literally gave me the ground to walk on again.”

**vital**

1. translucent
2. me without you
3. carry the weight
4. alone/forever (ft. The Naked & Famous)
5. xx
6. vital
7. bruised
8. harpoon (how does it feel)
9. roots
10. home
11. boys don’t cry

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