

Ariel Posen – *Reasons Why* – Bio

With each successive release in his career, Ariel Posen finds his creative tide rising. In 2019, he wrote seven songs for his first album, *How Long*, and recorded them all, plus some instrumental interludes to fill things out. For his sophomore effort, 2021's *Headway*, his songwriting surplus resulted in eight songs being left off the final project. For his latest, *Reasons Why*, the Canadian singer-songwriter and highly regarded guitarist wrote 30 songs, ultimately choosing 10.

"The only thing I really go into a record thinking is how can I stay true to myself musically and artistically but try to make it better than the last one," explains Posen, who co-produced *Reasons Why* with his usual collaborator, Murray Pulver. "What it usually comes down to, more so than production and sound and aesthetic, is the songs. It's just a matter of doing a record with the best songs I have."

Reasons Why shows once again that "best" is a high standard for Posen. The new songs represent another step forward in every aspect – lyricism, musicality, playing, sonics. The songs are nuanced but impactful, deeply resonant but universally accessible. Posen blends craftsman's care with the daring do of a seasoned live player, resulting in an immersive adventure that reveals fresh merits on every listen.

On *Reasons Why* Posen determinedly defies any easy genre identification and refuses to be sealed in any sonic cubbyhole. "I classify my music as roots, which isn't the most embraced term out there," he explains. "However, roots is like this perfect definition in my mind for what I do. It takes in rock, but it's not rock. It takes in blues, but it's not blues. It's soulful, but not what people would classify as soul and R&B. There are elements of Americana, pop...It's this amalgam term that I'm trying to put out there so one day when people ask what my genre is, I can say 'roots' without any further questions.

"I think when you listen to so many different styles of music it tends to come out in your own sound."

That's been the case for Posen all his life. He grew up in Winnipeg, the son of professional musicians, with an array of music was played around the house and seeped into his soul. He started playing piano at a young age but switched to guitar not long after, eventually playing gigs by the time he was 14. "I started going down a pretty heavy rabbit hole of just trying to be the best player I could be," Posen says.

He picked up an endless amount sources and inspirations, too many to list succinctly, but that immersion was directly responsible for the eclectic path he took. "Basically, I

look at music as this entire thing," Posen explains, "not just one genre but as an open canvas where it really can be anything and everything to me."

He soon developed to a point where he became a valued hired gun for others, touring and recording in studio with countless artists including Tom Jones, Butch Walker, Scary Pockets, Lizzy McAlpine, as well as childhood friends, the Bros. Landreth, among others. But while living in Ireland in 2017, Posen felt the pull to focus on his own music, forming a band and booking shows. Performing prodded him to focus on writing songs and his originals began attracting attention, which led to even more touring opportunities. At that point, Posen was well-seasoned and had a concrete view of how he wanted to pursue a career as an artist.

"It was the right time. I simply wasn't ready before," Posen notes. "All the touring and experience I had taught me what to do as a bandleader and an artist -- and what not to do. I learned so much, and I'm very grateful it worked out that way." The world was noticing, too. John Mayer, who hired Posen to play in a commercial for his signature guitar, called him "one of my favorite guitarists." Britain's *The Guitar Magazine* declared him "one of the most toneful and tasteful players to emerge in recent years" – joining other publications such as *Rolling Stone*, Canada's *CBC*, *Guitar Player*, *Guitarist* and many more in singing Posen's praises.

Posen started working on *Reasons Why* at the beginning of 2020, and the Covid lockdown provided an unintended boon to his work. "I was writing at honestly what felt like my most peak level of creativity I think I've ever had," he says. The songs certainly reflect that: from the big-beat grit of "Man You Raised" and "So Easy" to the funky drive of "I Wish We Never Met," the modernistic textures of "Broken But Fine" to the heart-rending sentiments of "Learning How to Say Goodbye" and "Feel This Way Too," and the melodic sweep of tracks such as "Always Moving On," "So Easy" and "Time Can Only Tell."

Some, Posen acknowledges, are directly personal, others are observations. But as he amassed songs, he also honed in on a theme that unites them. "There's songs about relationships, forgiveness, pushing toxic people out of your life, mending broken relationships," Posen explains. "There's also songs about mental health and the way we have a perception about how we feel, the inner struggles we don't always let out into the world."

Posen is, of course, maintaining his regular playing schedule alongside the album's release. What's more is he's already thinking about what's next, excited to maintain the trajectory of a career that's at once still young but has the weight of a lifetime of

experience behind it.

"I just love creating and making records, and I just want to put out the best stuff I can," Posen explains. "Each time I sign off on a record it just inspires me to do more. Every project is a little time capsule of where you are right now, and each time out you try to take it another step forward."