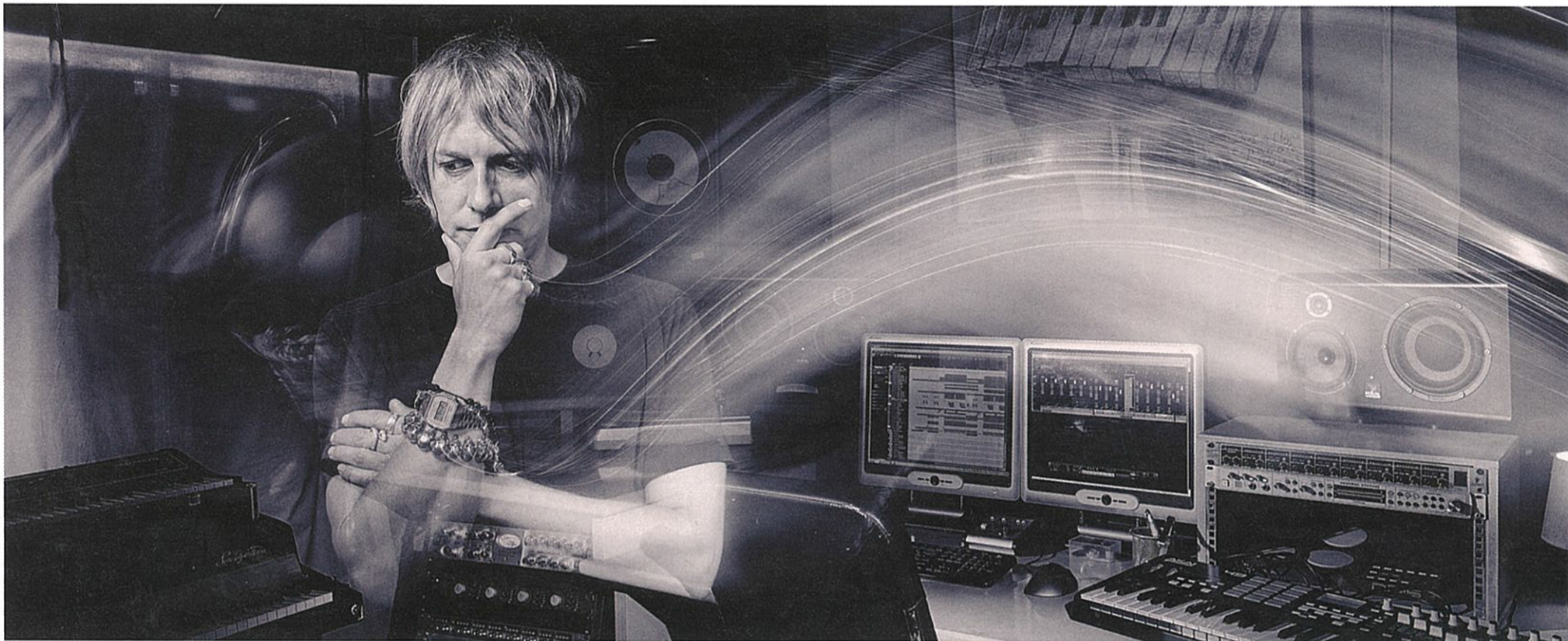


'He just had something special'

Sought after songwriter and producer Jake Gosling talks about his first meeting with Ed, helping to craft the young star's debut album and the key ingredients of a Sheeran LP



PRODUCTION

BY TOM PAKINKIS

Multi-platinum producer, songwriter and publisher Jake Gosling counts Ed Sheeran as just one of the giant names he has collaborated with in his career.

Having worked with Sheeran since 2007 across the singer/songwriter's early EPs, Gosling was also an integral part of 2011 debut album +, co-writing seven tracks and producing all but one of them.

Although the pair share the same tastes in a wide range of music, as with all who work with him, it was Sheeran's attitude that impressed Gosling the most.

"He told me how he'd just moved to the city and was sleeping on a sofa in a flat above a pub," Gosling recalls. "I was just intrigued by his passion for it all - being willing to move to London just to seek music. His drive and ambition was really strong. I was pretty blown away."

How did your relationship with Ed begin and what were your initial thoughts of him?

My publishers sent me different people and different pieces and one of those was a link to Ed's MySpace. I checked him out and pretty much straight away thought, This guy is awesome. I met up with him and he turned up at the train station with this little travelling guitar on his back and a backpack with bits and pieces in. I picked him up and we started talking about musical influences and what he was into. At the time I was working with Wiley and he was a big fan of him and the whole

urban scene. I was a bit taken back because there was this kid who had just moved to London playing guitar but also loved urban music and had a real range and diversity in his taste in music. We had similar tastes - he loved singer/songwriters as much as he loved all these other interesting things as well.

What was some of the first material to come out of your writing partnership?

We wrote a track called City together, which ended up on the album + and from then on we pretty much did everything together. He saved up some money and was selling EPs to fund his music and I was helping him, doing it for minimal cost because I really believed in the guy. He just walked in the door and I just felt he had something special.

I think at first people weren't too sure, but he knew that himself and he just had this charm and talent that was unbelievable. I just loved his individuality and his ability to think outside the box. The loop pedal differentiates him from a normal singer/songwriter as well, as does his rapping and his beat-boxing. When he said he rapped I was like, What? But he was really good. He just has something different.

We basically just kept working really hard and the final EP we did was the Collaborations EP with various different rappers from JME to Wiley and so on. And it worked out really well. You Need Me went crazy online through YouTube and there was a natural audience, people were intrigued and wanted to be a part of it.

When the EP started to chart on iTunes without a label, people started to pay attention. I'd worked with Warner before with Wiley, so I had a good

relationship with Ben Cook and Ed Howard so I spoke to them and they came to a few shows. They saw the vision as well, they let us get on with it and make the album.

You had writing and production credits right across +, how much of an affect does that sort of level of collaboration have?

He'd co-written with quite a few people and he'd write things himself as well. He'd want the best for a song. I co-wrote on seven songs on + and produced the whole album bar one track, it was pretty much me and Ed. It felt like our baby and it really started to work.

Then Ed went to America, we stayed in contact and there was talk about what happens next. Even though we'd done so much together I think Ed wanted to try something else, which I understood. He worked with Pharrell over there and Rick Rubin and loads of other producers. When he came back to the UK I spoke to Ed and the label and we thought it would be silly not to do some stuff together so we ended up doing more tracks. Thinking Out Loud was one of them - my Dad played piano on it, which was awesome. I think the thing about Sticky Studios [part of Gosling's Sticky Company] is that it's not all fancy, it's more of a home-grown thing.

Are there any key characteristics when it comes to producing an Ed record?

As a rule a lot of his stuff is built up from looped parts of a guitar riff and structured like that. There wouldn't be a lot going on, we wouldn't fill it up, it'd be sparse to capture what Ed is about - he's got a great tone to his voice, he's lyrically brilliant... And he's getting better because he's getting older, so he's got more to say.