

Medium Build

King of Having Fun

Medium Build's Nick Carpenter never planned for a career as a singer-songwriter to take him to great heights. But when it did — an ascent made possible on the merits of his razor-sharp and fearlessly reflective tunes, electrifying performances, and acerbic, hilarious wit — he certainly wasn't prepared to end up so close to the edge.

Now, on the heels of his breakthrough 2024 album *Country*, years of relentless touring under increasingly brighter lights and bigger stages, and recovery from the subsequent fallout that often follows fame, comes *King of Having Fun*, Medium Build's most cohesive, extroverted, and joyful record yet. An album made not in an isolated bedroom like much of his past work but live in a studio with his closest friends and collaborators, it is fueled by a fresh rock-and-roll energy paired with the artist's



photo credit: Beth Garrabrant

familiar lo-fi-meets-indie-and-country sound yet still driven by the biting lyrical insight and potent self-examination that has endeared Carpenter to throngs of fans worldwide. Sure to bring Medium Build

to a whole new level of stardom through its sheer sonic power and songwriting prowess, *King of Having Fun* is the sound of a fractured soul picking up the pieces out of the darkness of rock-



photo credit: Beth Garrabrant

bottom and rediscovering real love — for others, for joy, and for oneself.

Carpenter, who was raised in an evangelical household in Georgia and learned at an early age how to both perform and to be performative, credits the birth of Medium Build to two significant personal heartbreaks: once as an aspiring Christian at the hands of the Church, and once by the music industry as a member of an indie rock band called, fittingly, Little Moses.

“Most of my upbringing was spent learning how to perform the act of existence,” he says. “Being a good boy at church or school was how you got ahead, so the church was a place for me to perform this sort of existence to earn praise and perks. But when I found out how fucked up its inner workings are, the church dream died. And my

experience in Nashville for music was very similar. So, Medium Build was created to be a place where no one could ever take anything from me. It was born from a kill-all-accessibility perspective: Say the darkest, nastiest thought you’re otherwise afraid to say; don’t filter — all the shit you weren’t allowed to say at church, say it here. I just wanted a place where I could be ugly.”

Having tried his hand in a few different Southern music hubs, Carpenter took advantage of an opportunity to restart as far away from home as possible and moved in with his older brother in Anchorage, Alaska, in 2018, where he continued writing stripped-down, angsty, and wry songs under the Medium Build name. Adding guitar and vocals to beats or loops, Carpenter let the raw, emotional texture

of his voice shine, and when paired with the evocative, heartrendingly real nature and relatability of his lyrics, a winning formula emerged. Recruiting a production-savvy friend to help him record and engineer, the output retained a strong DIY sensibility while revealing itself clearly capable of reaching a larger audience. Galvanized by that performative religious background, early Medium Build shows were communal, life-affirming affairs, and their spectacle spread via social media and word of mouth. A steady grip of EPs, full-lengths, and singles over the next five years culminated with a slowplay/Island Records deal, bigger tours, and a move to Nashville in 2023, followed by the 2024 LP *Country*.

All the while, Carpenter, who had been bartending in Anchorage while not playing shows and had a history of drinking-to-excess amid spells of sobriety, was abusing alcohol and partying more and more. That, paired with his deep-seated approval-seeking, social-chameleon tendencies and the perils of the road, was making it difficult for him to maintain his health, interpersonal relationships, and any sense of himself. He was depressed, unfulfilled, and his bipolar disorder was then as-yet undiagnosed and thereby unmedicated. Nick Carpenter’s personal life existed in sharp contrast to the rising star of Medium Build.

“After the pandemic, my career was starting to go well,

I was in a serious relationship, and my home life was chill. It felt like I couldn't do any wrong. Got signed, put out the album in 2024, did all the festivals, the world tour. My cocky drinking started going off the charts, and my lore began to overshadow my existence. I had a full-blown panic attack on stage, ruined a couple shows. That was basically rock-bottom: waking up in a hotel room in Australia, just feeling like I could die. *I think I could be done. I played Bonnaroo, played London, met David Gray. I've done everything I thought I could do.* This little thing clicked in my head: *Nobody would blame you if you wanted to kill yourself now. You've put out a record, been successful. You've done all the drugs, had sex with anyone you want. What do you want now?* I just wasn't curious about anything anymore. I felt boredom and pressure to continue doing this thing that I wasn't enjoying. I didn't have a firm base in anything, no spiritual grounding. Something had changed. I wanted to die."

He called a meeting with his team and bandmates that was essentially a cry for help. The response was immediate, and Carpenter began to slowly chip away at his path to recovery. He took a break from music, got diagnosed,

there's also the pink cloud of early sobriety and the confidence that comes with that: *I'm losing weight. I'm running a fuck-ton of miles. I'm single and I'm feeling good. The suicidal thoughts have gone away and now:*

Here I am. And so that's when we made the record."

Although it is without a doubt his brainchild, Carpenter insists he has never done Medium Build alone, and from the start he knew he wanted to make these new songs into a rafters-reaching rock record with his band together in a live room. He booked a studio for two weeks, and assembled his collaborative dream team — Paul Rogers, the musical

director; Jimmy Mansfield, the engineer; and Jake LiBassi, the atmospheric moodmaker — to lock in and steer the creative process. They often reverse-engineered from the perspective of playing the songs live in bigger rooms and arenas at the objective forefront, and added upbeat tempos, guitar solos, singalongs, and more with those specific, future rock and roll moments in mind. And



King of Having Fun album artwork

got meds, got sober, became single, started working on himself...and got better. And, in true Medium Build fashion, he was constantly writing candid, incisive songs about his experience throughout the entire process.

"It was scary to say something out loud like that," he says. "I basically spent 2025 in this weird cocoon, licking my wounds, making amends. But

yet despite the dark subject matter hanging over much of it all, Carpenter's lyrics also poke and prod at the gloaming, revealing a newfound maturity and rediscovered zest.

"You pull a guy out of the noose, squash his bipolar down, give him running and sunshine and the chance to sit at home for awhile...the songs just started falling out. These tunes feel like they were made in a padded room where I could be really honest. A lot of the record's got tempo, a lot is fun to sing. There's a playfulness, sonically, and it's a big collaboration, with six or seven people involved on almost every tune."

Throughout *King of Having Fun*, the kitchen sink of Medium Build's abilities and Carpenter's chameleon-like skill to succeed in multiple genres is on full display. "Do Something Productive" sets an early tone of anthemic power-pop mixed with modern country sentimentalism, while "Cone Off" apes the latter genre's sonics while celebrating the singer's untethered freedom. The title track is a hero's journey from darkness to light, with nostalgic revelry for simpler times sung through a George-Strait-meets-Andy-Shauf sincerity, and the achingly simple acoustic ditty "Feed

the Boys" depicts a young Carpenter in the car with his mom as they enjoy a treat on their way home. "Bird Woman"'s wall of guitars and obscure lyrics ("They're dark," Carpenter, who identifies as queer, says: "I'm watching a woman do Tai Chi while talking about a guy not leaving his wife for me") hearken to Carpenter's indie-est idols, with offerings made to Pedro the Lion, Alvvays, and Dinosaur Jr, and "Home Depot" is a '90s pop-country radio jam that tells the story of Steve, a guy who is simply incapable of being emotional without his tools. Carpenter calls "Armor" the heart of the record, with its three verses of headspinning neuroses in the arena-busting style of Harry Styles, Sam Fender, and U2. The album closes with the gorgeous "Thank You Cook" like an end credits number in a film, with brushes melting over an early-Coldplay-esque tone and whisper-soft vocals. A love song to his partner, the musician Annika Bennett (who co-wrote throughout the record and sings background vocals on several songs), the track represents a new gear for Medium Build, one that suggests that all the lows in Carpenter's past life have served the purpose of helping him to appreciate the highs to come.

"A lot of my songs come from a sense of discomfort that I then have to frame in criticism," he says. "I'm great at taking something down or writing about tension in a relationship; I've never been good at writing about how nice a relationship can be. So this record feels like the first time I was able to say, in an artistic way that didn't feel cloying, *Thank you for loving me*. Obviously, I had to lose it to be able to put it into words. That's really hard to do when you're in it, but that time and space helps you see. And I now realize I have the power to give myself all the things I need. So I'm back, I'm doing it, and I love it. This album has a genuine love song for my partner and a genuine love song for my mom; there aren't many knocking someone off their high horse. I guess it's a sign of my growth. It's maybe the best and most important thing I've ever made. I got all my favorite people in a room and we had fun. It's a celebration of life."

And, as he sings on the album's final, powerful moment — *When the love I learn from you / Becomes the love I give myself... I love myself, I am home / I don't need anything* — we, too, can take heart, knowing that Nick Carpenter is planted firmly on solid ground, at last.

For more information, please contact Samantha Tillman, Kate Rakvic, Joe Cohen or Carla Sacks at Sacks & Co., 212.741.1000, samantha.tillman@sacksco.com, kate.rakvic@sacksco.com, joe.cohen@sacksco.com or carla@sacksco.com.