

Sonic Journeys – A Conversation with Oliver Fauser of The Moonchildren

By Jake Harrison, November 2024

Jake Harrison: Oliver, thank you for taking the time. Let's dive right in with the song "Time." The song is powerful, relentless, and intense—both in its sound and lyrics. What does "Time" mean to you?

Oliver Fauser: "Time" is quite a special song—brutal, restless. When I think about it today, I'd say the lyrics are quite dark. It's about the wild times we've left behind, or perhaps still ahead of us. And then there's this degeneration of our society and the world—how quickly everything has changed, how time has just flown by. The sound of "Time" isn't typical for the band, but the song remains one of my absolute favorites. It was on the *FEEL* album, which was much harder overall than the new album *GRACE*.

Jake Harrison: Sounds like this song is a snapshot of your life and the world around you. Despite these dark themes, you seem very grounded personally. Where does this balance come from?

Oliver Fauser: Yes, I'm generally a very cheerful, balanced person, and right now, I'm experiencing the best time of my life. What I write about are things that personally affect me—things I've experienced, felt, or observed in others. It happens intuitively; I rarely set out to write about a specific subject. There will certainly be darker songs in the future if they come to me, but I hope they'll focus more on the outside world than on my personal life.

Jake Harrison: It's interesting how the themes in your songs keep recurring. You write a lot about personal experiences—what about social issues?

Oliver Fauser: Well, the themes always come back. After a good time comes a bad one, sometimes even a really terrible one, and then things go up again. One word leads to another. I mostly write about broken love stories, about the end of relationships. Everyone can relate to that, and I've experienced it more than once. I also try to address positive things, but social or even political topics are harder for me. It doesn't feel as natural as the personal stuff.

Jake Harrison: Is it important to you, as Rick Rubin once said, that the songs must first please yourself?

Oliver Fauser: Yes, absolutely. I do it primarily for myself—exactly the way I want it. I don't care what others think. When I write a song, I'm my first fan. If I like it, then I'll show it to the world. It's nice when other people connect with my songs, but in the end, I'm making the music I want to hear.

Jake Harrison: Does it move you when people tell you how much your songs have affected them?

Oliver Fauser: Yes, that's always a great feeling. Over the years, I've actually received messages from people thanking me for the words. It's very touching. But as I said, I primarily make the music for myself. If it touches others as well, I'm even happier.

Jake Harrison: David Bowie once said that a song is stronger when it has an emotional core because that's what resonates with people. Do you agree with that?

Oliver Fauser: Did he say that?

Jake Harrison: Yes, he did.

Oliver Fauser: Okay... yes, that's true. Some people pay more attention to the melody, but I also think that a song grabs people more when it speaks to them emotionally. Whether it brings back memories, speaks to their soul, or simply comforts them—the connection is stronger then.

Jake Harrison: Is there one of your songs that has particularly established this connection with your fans?

Oliver Fauser: Yes, "Been There" from the *FEEL* album. I've received some messages where people told me how much the song and the lyrics touched them. That really sticks with you.

Jake Harrison: Let's talk about the new album. How did the creation of *GRACE* differ from your previous projects?

Oliver Fauser: *FEEL* was more of a collaborative effort, a classic four-man band with drummer Martin Claas, Patrick Hanemann on guitar, and Oliver Quinten on bass. All three came from metal bands, so that influenced the sound. Consequently, *FEEL* was harder. *GRACE* has more range—sometimes harder, sometimes softer. But the biggest difference was the production. Mario Melle, the co-producer, really took the project to heart with great patience and contributed a lot to the sound. Since I did almost everything by myself and had some session musicians involved, Mario's input was particularly valuable.

Jake Harrison: You've been through a lot, especially in recent years with the loss of your parents and stepfather. Did this grief influence the album?

Oliver Fauser: Yes, without a doubt. You can't completely separate yourself from such intense personal experiences. *Grace* was certainly a vent for that grief, but it was never intended to be a "grief album," and it didn't turn out that way.

Jake Harrison: Two years of working on an album—how does it feel to finally let it go?

Oliver Fauser: It felt great to finally release it. I really just wanted to make a good final album. I jokingly called it my "legacy work." That was my goal. Now that it's out, I'm already writing new songs. So, it goes on. I just wanted to be truly satisfied with the result—don't ask me if I am (laughs).

Jake Harrison: (laughs) That's probably the eternal question for every artist. But if you're already writing new songs, it seems the creative flow hasn't stopped. Do you think your style has changed significantly over the years?

Oliver Fauser: No, not really. I think I found my style when I started with *The Moonchildren* in 1986. The songwriting has stayed the same, and the process of creating the songs is also unchanged. What has changed are the better recordings and the fact that I now know more guitar chords (laughs). But fundamentally, nothing has changed. The approach is the same, just with more experience.

Jake Harrison: What about your work as a visual artist?

Oliver Fauser: I was active in the art scene for many years, until Covid-19 came along. Right now, making art doesn't mean much to me personally, but it's still important, and I still enjoy going to exhibitions or museums. Maybe there will come a time when I return to it more— or finally finish my book. Ultimately, I don't mind, as long as I can stay creative, as long as I can play. Life is my playground.

Jake Harrison: In your career, you've touched on so many different creative fields—from music to visual art. How do these different art forms influence each other? Does your visual art sometimes play a role in songwriting, or vice versa?

Oliver Fauser: Artistic activities always flow into one another, whether consciously or unconsciously. When I write music, I often have visual ideas in my mind, and conversely, a picture can spark a song. But I think music, for me, currently holds the deeper emotional power.

Jake Harrison: You mentioned you're writing a book. What's it about?

Oliver Fauser: Hmm, I started it years ago, got halfway through, and then somehow got sidetracked. But I know how it's going to continue and end, and one day I'll finish it. Just when? I don't know. (laughs)

Jake Harrison: Well, hopefully soon! (laughs) Do you think you'll continue doing everything yourself, or will there come a point when you want a professional team behind you?

Oliver Fauser: Honestly, yes, but only if it aligns with my vision. There are definitely advantages when experts handle things, and if more money is involved. I've learned a lot from the album release, and a lot has changed since the last one, especially when it comes to digital distribution. I enjoy it, but sometimes it's exhausting. If someone approaches me and is interested in supporting me, I'd consider it and make a decision. I'm open to it.

Jake Harrison: What drives you to keep making music?

Oliver Fauser: It's my inner playground. The drive to make music that I like to listen to. And simply the fact that I can't do anything else. It's in me, and it needs to come out.

Jake Harrison: Oliver, thank you for the conversation.

Oliver Fauser: Thank you as well!

Trivia:

The album *Grace*, released in February 2024 on the MotherMoon Recordings label, includes 14 tracks that Oliver developed independently as both composer and producer. Mario Melle, the co-producer, played a key role in shaping the sound and mix of the album. Oliver also filmed and edited all the videos for the songs himself. Nine of the songs already have visual representations on YouTube, with two more to follow. The album's distribution is handled via MuscHub.

Many of the tracks on *Grace* address personal experiences and deep themes such as love, loss, addiction, and personal renewal.

Notable songs include:

Grip: A love song that deals with themes of drug addiction and the struggle to overcome it.

Grace: A love song for Oliver's partner, Nadine.

Never Let Go: A song about a couple who have been together since their youth and maintain a lasting love.

Fab: A song about the breakup of a once-perfect couple.

Hole: A song about a toxic relationship with an ex-girlfriend.

Coma: A love song that metaphorically speaks about drug addiction.

When I'm Gone: An emotional song about the anticipated end of a relationship.

Here and Now: A song in which the singer struggles with the thought that his ex-partner has a new lover.

Queen of Bleach: A story about a once-beautiful and popular woman who relied too much on her beauty and was destroyed by drugs and life.

Other notable songs from Oliver's earlier ***FEEL*** album include:

Time: A rock song that ends in chaos and reflects the feeling of destruction and the state of the world.

Been There: A heartfelt ballad about the ups and downs of life.

Wish You Well: A farewell song to an ex-partner.