

Tarek Musa- Spring King

Fronted by singer and drummer Tarek Musa, Spring King have gone from strength to strength since forming in Macclesfield in 2012. They have supported the likes of Courtney Barnett and Slaves, gained loyal radio support from Zane Lowe, BBC Radio 6 Music's Steve Lamacq and Triple J's Zan Rowe. They were also the first band played on Apple's Beats 1 radio. Now signed to Island Records, the quartet released their fuzzed-up debut *Tell Me If You Like To* in 2016 and are avidly touring in 2018 with a new LP on the way.



Momentum funding is a key part of this story, enabling the band to record their debut album and to position themselves as an attractive proposition to labels. As Tarek explains:

We had just had an offer to support Courtney Barnett on tour – which we had to take. But we were sleeping on floors and recording in my house. My brother's partner had a baby and they moved back home...so we had to find a studio!

Momentum enabled the band to book studio time and build on the energy and growing profile generated by their live shows to go to the next level. Tarek explains that without this support, the band wouldn't have been able to develop and grow on their own terms as an independent act. In turn, this enabled them to develop and position their first LP just as they wanted, which strengthened their hand when labels subsequently started approaching them.

I feel like I was very lucky to be in the right place at the right time. As soon as Beats 1 happened, lots of labels wanted to sign us. We didn't think we would sign to a major but it so happened that Island were the most special. They didn't want to change us – our music or art work. We didn't want a big advance – to be over-stretched. Without the funding, we wouldn't have had this confidence or clarity.

Tarek recognises the value of independent funding to help develop artists so they are in a stronger and more confident position to shape their future. He values the role of Momentum and the PRS Foundation in giving artists an independent supportive environment and has responded in kind by participating on funding panels for the PRS Foundation (for The Writer Producer fund).

We were always proud of the funding. We say to other bands: 'apply!'

Spring King have new management and recently toured America. Although signed to a major label, they still have to fund-raise and use personal money to invest in the band's development. This, Tarek explains, is the new reality:

We needed investment support to go to America but the label wasn't in a position to do this. So, in the end we spent money we didn't have. PRS Foundation has a strong role to play here – labels will only go so far on certain deals, especially for bands.