

Date: 22 February, 2007
(Duration: 13:12)

Tarkan: (on the phone) Hello Reinout this is Tarkan how are you?

Reinout van Gendt: Hiya Tarkan how are you?

Tarkan: Fine

Reinout: Are you currently in the studio recording some stuff I heard?

Tarkan: Yes I'm working on my Turkish pop album which is gonna probably be released this summer time in Turkey and some other regions. And also I'm reshaping the English album...reproducing some of the songs and having some featuring artists for the release in America.

Reinout: So there will be a re-release of *Come Closer* [2006 English album]...

Tarkan: Yes which is a totally whole new style with the music. We changed the music productions too, we added some new songs...a couple of...three new songs, and it just sounds different now because it's been almost a year since the album came out.

Reinout: Great we're looking forward to it. Then of course there's gonna be a new single from *Come Closer* after "Start the Fire" [the second single]. Do you know which single that is gonna be?

Tarkan: Oh, not at that moment but...there're a couple of options...maybe "In Your Eyes" maybe another song...there's a new song which is called "Nothing Like You". But this is more the American version of the album. The [original] *Come Closer* was more...more European actually sound wise, mix wise...and this one is more American, more urban actually.

Reinout: Okay, we're looking forward to it. We're also...

Tarkan: (interrupts) Thank you...

Reinout: ...looking forward to the concert of course in March. What can fans expect from the concert?

Tarkan: (laughs) Well...it's gonna be a nice musical show I think...because I don't use a lot of dancers, a lot of distracting things on stage [anymore] I like to be intimate with my fans and so I have a nice great band who can play amazingly...the sound is gonna be amazing...they're gonna listen...it's gonna be like listening to the CD. Besides that, it's gonna be a lot of dancing, a lot of moving hips (laughs) and it's gonna be a nice concert. They're gonna expect probably y'know some nice intimate shows.

Reinout: Okay, now in Holland of course we have a strong Turkish community. Have you ever considered living here?

Tarkan: Holland...No, but I like to visit Amsterdam from time to time...y'know Amsterdam is a crazy city. I like the craziness of Amsterdam, but you know I love...it's beautiful...it's beautiful there.

Reinout: Okay, now you've lived in New York for a while now and worked a lot with Ahmet Ertegün. Is that why you made an English album? Is that what made you decide to bring out an English album?

Tarkan: Well actually yes y'know. He...when I met him twelve years ago, he pushed me to do it. He said you know you have the potential, you should come to America, you should sing in English. So, that was the first time when I made my decision. So I moved to America and I learned the language. I went to school to study English, and then I met a lot of musicians and we started working on the English album. It took me years really to be able to sing like an American...or like an American singing y'know artist. So, Ahmet Ertegün's inspiration has really made this happen.

Reinout: What musicians did inspire you when you made your English songs?

Tarkan: Hmm...Well you know I like the funky stuff...like Prince, for example, his style, his music has inspired me. Of course Michael Jackson...Michael Jackson has a big impact on a lot of pop stars. When you look at Justin Timberlake, Usher and all these new stars today, they all dance like him, act like him you know, he was a big inspiration on us. Besides them both, I like Sting a lot. Musically I think Sting is amazing...amazingly talented. His lyrics are deep and you know amazing. James Brown, Stevie Wonder, Elvis Presley and y'know all these big stars have inspired me.

Reinout: Now some of those artists are still here. Is there anyone you really want to work with and are gonna work with in the future?

Tarkan: Well I'm gonna have some surprises for you with my new version of *Come Closer*. I made some nice featuring collaborations with some amazing y'know hip hop artists and some great musicians. I'm not gonna mention the names yet, but besides those I would love to...I mean Beyonce she's really hot. I would like to do a duet with Beyonce maybe. Yeah.

Reinout: Okay now you said something about hip hop artists on *Come Closer*...the version that we have. You also recorded with producer Wyclef Jean..."Aman Aman". How did that come about?

Tarkan: Oh well, at that time my manager who was Michael Lang he knew Wyclef and his company...he...he made us collaborate on this one song actually. He made it happen. And we didn't even meet, y'know we did the whole session over the phone, he was in New York, I was in Istanbul...we talked a few times and...yeah that's how it happened. I never met him... (laughs)

Reinout: (laughs) Okay, so that's how it happened. We still also play a lot of songs from the *Ölürüm Sana* [1997 Turkish pop] album.

Tarkan: (interrupts) Ah yes...

Reinout: Can you tell us a little bit about the Turkish album? 'Cause I know a lot of people are looking forward to that as well...

Tarkan: The Turkish album I'm - I'm really excited about, because y'know that's my thing. That's...the music where I'm having total control, because it's my native language, I'm writing my own songs mostly. This album is different...I mean musically it's more urban first of all it's...the beats are more simple...it's how am I gonna explain it...it's more modern than the other Turkish albums...beat wise.

Reinout: (interrupts): OK

Tarkan: And lyrically you don't understand the lyrics but lyrically I think it's in a more mature state and deeper, but you know there're gonna be a lot of great up tempo tracks where people are gonna be able to dance and sexy grooves y'know a lot of percussions...it's...I think it's my favourite album. It sounds amazing. Ten songs are ready, I'm gonna write two more songs and complete the album in two or three months I think.

Reinout: Do you have a favourite song already and will you do it at the concert here in March?

Tarkan: Nooo... (laughs)

Reinout: Not yet huh...

Tarkan: I would but you know now piracies or internet leaks are so importantly [sic] you know ... I can't risk it. I thought about it, but some people might record it and I don't want to hear it somewhere else one day.

Reinout: Okay now it's been seven years since you've been here in Holland.

Tarkan: Yes...

Reinout: Is there anything that you want to see here?

Tarkan: Besides the concert you mean?

Reinout: Besides the concert, like Amsterdam, Rotterdam...

Tarkan: Well of course Amsterdam. I'm definitely gonna go to Amsterdam. We're gonna go with my whole band...my girlfriend [Bilge Öztürk] is coming too, because she never saw Amsterdam before. So, we're gonna spend probably a couple of days in Amsterdam afterwards and yeah we're gonna do some y'know sightseeing maybe and some shopping... (jokingly laughs) maybe one coffee shop...

(Both knowingly laugh - In the Netherlands and especially Amsterdam, the term coffee shop has come to mean a place where soft drugs are available.)

Reinout: You know you said something about your girlfriend coming along...is it hard to have a relationship when you're such a big star?

Tarkan: Well, yes...because we are difficult people...the star people (laughs) because we are living a difficult life. Fame is a really heavy burden on our shoulders and on our back and to...to be able to keep down to earth and keep sane, it needs a strong partner. And I think that my girlfriend, we have been together for six years, she is amazing because she's sometimes stronger than I me and she makes me be stronger too sometimes, when I'm giving up or when I can't take fame anymore or all the paparazzi stuff you know...and because she's a lawyer she has a...a different life. And I like that too, that balance...I'm in show business, she's in a different field and...She's very down to earth, she never acts like a superstar's girlfriend...But you know all relationships are difficult. It needs a lot of hard work to maintain it...happy, (laughs) y'know...

Reinout: (interrupts) Okay...

Tarkan: You have to work on it.

Reinout: Now-now how do you work on it? What are like the special things that you do for your girlfriend?

Tarkan: (laughs) Well...(thinks for a moment) first of all, playing games in relationships makes both sides always get upset or have arguments or y'know...fight or break up. So...I don't know...both parties should be always very careful and not offend that person and always be helpful to find solutions for the problems. But you know sometimes you have to be romantic, sometimes you have to be... I don't know...just...oh-show your feelings more. I think our secret is that we're always very open to each other. We always discuss about our problems, we never keep it inside. There's nothing we don't really tell each other. There are no secrets and I hate secrets in relationships. It just makes things wrong. And that's our secret; we're always really honest with each other. And you know sex is important...

(Both laugh)

Tarkan: Good sex keeps a relationship always good...so...

Reinout: Do you use your experiences from your relationship in your music as well?

Tarkan: Inspiration you said?

Reinout: Yeah...the experiences...do you bring that out in the music as well? Or do you write about a faked up person when you think about a lady that you have to write a song about?

Tarkan: No...Well sometimes both. Y'know sometimes just a story, for example when I watch a movie, even that story can inspire me and I'll write a song and sometimes my argument with my girlfriend even inspires me to write a song. No...It's all open...inspiration just comes to you unexpectedly. You don't know where it's coming from...sometimes God sends you some inspiration...you don't do anything really, it just happens.

Reinout: Okay, now after fifteen million albums sold and so many awards like the World Music Award, what are your goals right now?

Tarkan: My goals...well... (thinks for a moment) first of all I wanna make this English album happen in the States and y'know some other European countries and I really wanna hit the charts and make it happen. But if it doesn't happen it doesn't matter, because I'm Turkish...I like to sing my Turkish songs and I have a lot of fan base anyway...so I wouldn't care. But besides that I'm...in the future I would love to do some...I would love to participate in some projects helping the environment y'know like global warming, the nature, helping animals and you know stuff like that. I really would love to be a part of those projects, because you know this year I think the world has realised that global warming is really having a big effect on human life, and I think nobody really understands that it's urgent to help the world, so I really wanna do something about it.

Reinout: That's great. That's really important.

Tarkan: (agrees) That's very important.

Reinout: We also read about you striving for a Grammy Award. Is that true?

Tarkan: (laughs) That's just a dream. I mean I keep saying that in my interviews I say you know one day I wanna get a Grammy, but I don't really care. I mean...my fans...if my fans appreciate my music, what I do...Grammy doesn't really matter y'know...because it's not the fans who decide to give the Grammys to the people.

Reinout: (interrupts) It's the music industry...

Tarkan: Yes it's the music industry, which is important, but I don't know...it doesn't really matter. I would love to get a Grammy one day, but if not, I know that I'm a talented person...I know that I have potential to make good music and I don't need an award to really believe in myself more...you know? (laughs)

Reinout: Tarkan also three years ago we almost had a concert of you here and then it got postponed. What happened then?

Tarkan: Well I had some health problems with my knee...I had an accident and I had to get surgery...so I couldn't move or dance for a few months...and so we had to postpone it. And I really apologise to all my fans, because I didn't come there, didn't show up and they were disappointed. But y'know I hope we're gonna make it up this time and it's gonna be a great show and they're gonna be happy and y'know... (laughs) It's gonna be all okay again.

Reinout: Great. We're looking forward to it.

Tarkan: Thank you. Thank you very much.

Reinout: Tarkan thanks a lot for your time...

Tarkan: Thank you.

Reinout: ...And we'll see you on the third of March.

Tarkan: Alright Reinout. I'll see you there.

Reinout: Take care

Tarkan: Take care. Bye bye.

Reinout: Bye

(End of Interview)