

TRACK BY TRACK

FAT CAT SILHOUETTE - OLIVER WOOD

LIGHT AND SWEET

A lot of ideas for songs come to me first thing in the morning, when I'm sitting in a chair by a window with a cup of coffee and a notebook. Sometimes you just need an initial image or situation to get started. In this case, a bird outside the window, and from there it was just imagining a human-like story for him and how it relates to other scenarios where people just do human things and have human problems and make judgements. I also went through a phase of listening to different African music and was especially attracted to the 6/8 time feel and how trance-like it can feel.

WHOM I ADORE

This one was a fun and spontaneous creation in the studio with Jano, Rob Crawford, Marcus Henderson and myself. Inspired by New Orleans rhythms and a bit of North Mississippi fife and drum sound, with Marcus playing fife and Rob on a big marching drum. Jano played his signature "shuitar" and I added sparse side guitar. Was really just a jam we put together around the fife riff and some lyrics I had just started. Came together quite quickly with the four of us in a primal little circle. Later we added Brook Sutton on Sousaphone and Steve Berlin on baritone sax and we had a happy mess. Lyrics inspired by my teenage son beating me in basketball.

LITTLE WORRIES

This is another African influenced guitar part, with a story that starts at my same morning chair and window. A literal fat cat silhouette got me started, and the writing of the lyrics was an exercise in processing anxiety. This one came together with some great percussion and keyboard explorations from Jano, turning it from a little folksy thing to a more orchestrated dynamic journey. The hypnotically repetitive 6/8 feel was again the soothing inspiration.

GRAB AHOLD

This song was written with my friend Seth Walker, whose album I played it on years ago. Always loved it and wanted to do a version of my own. Jano, bass player Ted Pecchio and I played and sang it live, and I think it's my favorite performance on the record.

YO I SURRENDER

This was another fun collaboration, this time with Jano, Ted and baritone sax player Steve Berlin (from Los Lobos). The music came together live in the studio, again with all of us in a circle creating a quirky vibe together. Quirky lyrics followed quickly behind. So fun to play with amazing players who listen to each other and allow you to just trust and surrender. A very childlike process (and theme).

SOMEBODY BLUES

Wrote this one with my friend Ric Robertson. Obviously inspired by loss...and a beautiful background vocal from Tania Elizabeth.

STAR IN THE CORNER

This was written with my friend Sean McConnell. Based on the strange phenomena of seeing faint stars as long as you didn't look straight at them. I always thought that was a great metaphor for something...still don't know what. Features some strange operatic choir vocals Jano and I did in lieu of a real choir or even a horn section.

HAVE YOU NO SHAME

Written by my musical hero, the late Donnie McCormick. This song became a standard in my musical circles coming up in Atlanta. We all loved Donnie and this song. Always wanted to cover it and it made for a cool duet, with an amazing vocal by Katie Pruitt.

FORTUNE DRIVES THE BUS

Written and recorded (on a phone) in the backyard by the fire pit. Sang it to my wife as we sipped bourbon and warmed ourselves by the fire. Wife's a bit of a pyromaniac - she can really build a fire. Turns out her childhood school bus driver was named Mr. Fortune. Always loved that.