

DEDICATED TO THE ONES WE LOVE

Biography and Track by Track

The Blackeyed Susans have always loved songs. Sure, the focus over four albums and ten years together has been on recording and performing their own songs, but they have also relished the opportunities that B-sides and live encores have given them to interpret the work of others.

The Susans' album, *Dedicated To The Ones We Love*, pays tribute to the influences and aspirations of the band - from the penthouse ennui of Hollywood Elvis and epic Sinatra, to the street level affirmations of life offered by Big Star and The Velvet Underground. The album is like a compilation tape of The Blackeyed Susans' favourite songs - made up to share with friends.

In the spring of 2000 the band took producer Graham Lee into Fortissimo Studios in South Melbourne to record seventeen songs selected from a field three times that number. The songs spanned much of the twentieth century and were recorded in less than a week. Overdubs were kept to a minimum and with the emphasis on capturing complete performances on tape.

The challenge for the band was to somehow make this wonderful music their own, to recast the songs as Blackeyed Susans songs whilst still doing justice to the originals - and when it came to Tina Turner's *Private Dancer*... well....that was a challenge. That song has been reborn as an all-in sing along; a waltz through the world of showbiz, complete with boozy brass and a rueful tone that betrays the truth behind the lyric.

Take Care (Alex Chilton) Ardent Productions

Taken from Big Star's fractured 3rd album *Sister Lovers*, it's more than obvious in the original version that singer Alex Chilton, has done everything but take care. We first performed this song in 1989 at the close of our first shows. Dave McComb sang it in those days. It seemed a fitting place to begin.

The End Of The World (Arthur Kent/Sylvia Dee) Edward Proffitt Music/Summit Music Corp

Country artist Skeeter Davis had a crossover hit in '62 with a Chet Atkins production of this song, later covered by The Carpenters and now much favoured by backward-looking radio everywhere. The original is all bruised innocence - quite moving and well worth seeking out. Ours is a more literal, post-apocalyptic approach, that still tackles the big questions - I mean, why do the birds keep on singing?

Summer Kisses, Winter Tears (B.Wiseman/F.Wise/J.Loyd) Gladys Music/Blen Music

The Susans' fascination with Elvis was obvious from our first EP, on which we re-worked the King's Viva Las Vegas (now compiled on the Welcome Stranger album). Since then we've performed many Elvis songs, even staging the occasional tribute show under the banner, "The Susans Murder Elvis". This tune comes from his Hollywood days and the Flaming Star EP. It was rescued from obscurity by Julee Cruise and Angelo Badalamenti (of Twin Peaks fame) for Wim Wenders' film Until The End Of The World. The rhythm we've employed was inspired by David Thomas of Pere Ubu, and his song The Details Of My Fabulous Past.

American Sailors/ Too Hot To Move, Too Hot To Think (David McComb) Mushroom Music

David McComb was a founding member of The Blackeyed Susans and a source of inspiration for myself and many others. These two songs appeared on The Triffids last studio album, The Black Swan, released in 1989. They speak of Perth - our old home town - and the summer heat that sometimes overwhelms you. American Sailors details the generous hospitality the local women extend to the visiting sailors passing through the city's port of Fremantle.

She Hit Me (And It Felt Like A Kiss) (Goffin/King) Screen Gems

Perhaps the oddest song to emerge from Phil Spector's wall of sound, it apparently chronicles the relationship of the writers, Gerry Goffin and Carole King. Recorded by The Crystals as He Hit Me (And It Felt Like A Kiss) in 1962, it not surprisingly bombed in the charts. Though the sentiment may be even more unfashionable now than when it was released, it expresses a contradiction that remains true.

I Only Have Eyes For You (Warren/Dubin) Warner Brothers/Remick Music Corp

Sinatra may have recorded it first, but for us the definitive version of this song was recorded by doo-wop act, The Flamingos, in 1959. Spooky and obsessive, it immediately reminded me of The Residents' version of It's A Man's Man's Man's World. Rob refers to this as our "stalker" song and if you listen to the lyrics you'll hear why.

I Found A Reason (Lou Reed) Oakfield Ave Music

Taken from their 1970 album Loaded, this was pretty much the end of the road for The Velvet Underground, drummer Mo Tucker taking maternity leave and Lou Reed departing shortly afterwards. Nevertheless, it finds Lou in an unusually optimistic mood and has an amusing spoken monologue to boot. I can remember a time when The Velvet Underground were arcane knowledge. These days it seems they are common knowledge...I guess that's a good thing.

Sleepwalk (J. Farina/A. Farina/S. Farina) Carbert Music/Trio Music Co

Dan introduced the band to this song one night at Tony's bar in Little Italy, near the corner of Mulberry and Broome. The walls there are covered with photos of Tony and his pals, Frank Sinatra and Ronnie Reagan amongst them, arm in arm, smoking cigars. The jukebox is full of Frank and Dino and Tony and this song Sleepwalk by Santo and Johnny. Santo plays guitar and Johnny plays steel. Together, they wrote this with their sister Anna. It was a huge hit in '59 and has graced many a compilation since.

Plastic Jesus (G.Cromarty/E.Rush) EMI U Catalogue Inc

Rob first heard this song performed by Paul Newman in Cool Hand Luke and was intrigued enough to track down the lyrics on the net. What he found was pages and pages of verses contributed by the many who had sung the song in the folk clubs and coffee houses of the sixties, where the song was something of a standard. We used the lyrics from the movie and took great liberty with the music, adopting a more reverential approach than is usual, in the hope that we could draw out something new.

Everyone's Gone To The Moon (Ken King) Marquis Music

From Nina Simone's "And Piano" album, or Nina Goes Mad as it is more commonly known, such is the unhinged nature of some of her performances. A great exponent of the interpretive cover version, Nina has a unique ear for arrangement. Her version of this song, made popular by Jonathan King, is wonderfully confused. King went on to produce the Bay City Rollers and 10cc and claims to have discovered Genesis.

The World We Knew (H. Rehbein/B.Kaempfert/C.Sigman) Control/Doma Editions/Control

Frank Sinatra released this as a follow-up to Strangers In The Night in '67, complete with a fuzz bass introduction that we have lovingly recreated here using the same distinctive Fender 6 guitar. We first attempted this some years ago with The Blackeyed Vendors of Paradise but abandoned it after a few shows when we realised how demanding it was. Certainly it was one of the most challenging songs of this collection and not least because of the vocal melody. Frank meant a lot more to Rob than "a saloon singer with good phrasing" after he tried singing this one. (Note lounge legend Bert Kaempfert's writing credit)

Quasimodo's Dream (Dave Mason) Festival

The Reels did great cover versions. Their "as seen on TV" K-Tel covers album, Beautiful, was full of classic songs, easy-listening electronica, and the sad, sweet vocals of Dave Mason. He could write a song too, as evidenced by this cryptic piece of mellow drama which was a big hit in Australia in the early eighties.

I Threw It All Away (Bob Dylan) Big Sky Music

Great ballad from Nashville Skyline. Easy to forget these days that when Bob released this album of country love songs in 1969, he was accused of selling out to the right wing conservative establishment of the day. Johnny Cash's appearance on the record did little to quell the disquiet. In his defense Bob said that he had always enjoyed country music and in particular, the voice of Cash.

State Trooper (Bruce Springsteen) Springsteen Bruce Music

We first recorded this song in '95 and released it as a bonus track on the Let's Live single as a kind of homage to the New York band called Suicide. We've played it a lot since then and the arrangement has evolved quite dramatically, hence it's inclusion here. The song comes from Bruce Springsteen's most intimate album, Nebraska, a collection of songs he recorded at home on his four-track. It's as far away from "The Boss" as you could imagine.

If I Can Dream (Brown) Gladys Music

Triumphant and exhausted, Elvis closed his '68 Comeback Special with perhaps the greatest performance of his life. He lost himself in this gospel song - his voice hoarse, cracked and close to breaking, eyes shut, swinging the arm, he's got the white suit and the name up in lights behind him. They released this as a single backed by Edge Of Reality. It sold a million copies. Somehow it's always left off the "best of" compilations.

Private Dancer (Mark Knopfler) Straightjacket Songs

I always liked the chorus of this song. I thought it was about the music business.