

The Time's Never Been Better - About the Songs

Leavin' Alice is a coming of age song - a feel good "moving on" story of a young woman who leaves the town she grew up in, in search of a better life. "For the first time in my life, I'm finally feeling free..."

Better Off is the fun story of a woman who finds out on the 6 o'clock news that her man has left her. A bit of the wild side of life... A robbery, an escape, an abandoned car, a cold trail...

Salt Water... Bit of a world beat tune. Lost love. "Salt water burns my eyes, salt water wells from within.... Salt water, what will the tide bring in."

Did you ever wake up and wish you could start over? **The Wrong Train** is a fun look at that kind of day - or life. Ray Legere jumps right in with a fiddle intro that will make you want to dance. Dick Smith featured on the banjo. "Shoulda' bought the Buick, or perhaps the Oldsmobile, this second hand compact just don't have the right feel..." This fast pace bluegrass song will get your toes tapping!

Far From Yesterday is where she wants to go. Full of optimism, she takes to the street at 17. "No more excuses, they wear thin - no more lies, they won't win her over. She never fit in their plans." The dobro really sets this song up nicely.

Billy's Song was written after having watched a documentary on TV about kids who are bullied. "No one ever knew what Billy was going through, or the world he built inside of his head.." What happened to Billy is up to you. Tracey and Marty's harmonies are particularly sweet on this one.

Cash and Carry is a tongue in cheek look at the story of a couple of would be thieves who tried to break into an ATM machine in North York Ontario using a backhoe - and blew it. (Surprise, surprise!) Based on a news headline of the same name. "Where'd you get that crazy idea that you could figure it out, what gave you the thought that you were a genius, that dogs wouldn't bark, you couldn't be seen in the dark, draggin' it back to your hideout." Fun to note that Phil Demetro of Lacquer Channel said "I remember this... It was right down the street from here. They ended up pulling the whole wall off the building! This song is great!"

A young girl from Lanark county, a young lad from Lennox. **Blueberry Hill** is a love story that will take you to highway 7 at Kaladar, Ontario, and along the Skootamata River . It tells the story of an elderly couple who have spent their lives in this rocky, harsh land where little grows but blueberries and wildflowers, and one can "hear the phoebe's sing, and marvel at the wingspan of the Great Blue Heron as it glides across the lakes, over the rushes in the spring." Beware... this song has brought tears to the eyes of even "big guys".

Yesterday's Promise tells the story of John Green and Catherine Mulcahey, who came from Ireland in 1823 and homesteaded near Shipman's Mill's Ontario, now known as Almonte. This true story, inspired by Donald MacKay's popular history book "Flight From Famine" brings a celtic flavour to the CD. 500 souls, eight weeks at sea. The people, places and events are real, from the Blackwater in Ireland, to Peter Robinson - the namesake of Peterborough Ontario - the journey from Prescott to Shipman's Mills, and the granting of land. Duncan Gillis' Irish flute intro carries you into the story and places you there on the land and seascape.

The Farmer's Protest. In the spring of 2000, Canadian farmers came into major cities on tractors and trucks to protest the government's position on international situation of agriculture trade. This is the farmer's perspective. "Desperation's settin' in, our patience is growing thin, our backs are up against the wall. Don't you give a damn, don't you care at all." Lots of emotion.

Falling (Midnight Rendez-vous) a deliciously sensuous encounter. Sparse, well chosen words, paint a vivid scene. Dobro, guitar and bass. Sweet and simple.

Since the Day She Was Born is about change. A teenager trying to deal with the questions and uncertainties of moving from the only home she has known, and a mother's advice. "Life goes on making memories, you don't trade the old for the new. You keep what you've got, and build many more, and those dear to your heart remain true."

The Time's Never Been Better is an optimistic swing tune that leave's you feeling like life's pretty good. This song was written for someone who needed a little encouragement to move on. "I see a whole lot of promise, got a song in my heart, with a hook that will get you right from the start." We were having so much fun with this one, we let the tape roll as the guys carried on their musical jocularity. The hard part was having to pick where to end it.

When I Love You... The pure combination of love and lust. Speaks for itself.

We recorded live at Sound of One Hand Studios in Ottawa, over 3 days at the end of Sept/early October and a few evening sessions as well. Al Bragg produced the CD. I'm very very happy that Al took this project on - he's amazing! I was very fortunate to have a cast of excellent musicians with me... Ray Legere (East Coast Music Award winner) on mandolin and fiddle, Steve Piticco (one of Canada's most amazing guitarists - of South Mountain) on guitar, Ken Kanwisher (who has become a mainstay in local recording sessions) on acoustic bass, Junior Barber (of the Gibson Brothers) on dobro, Dick Smith (of bands such as the great Country Gentlemen, and currently the Mike O'Reilly Dick Smith Band) on banjo, Tracey Brown (of the Family Brown) and Marty McTiernan on harmonies.

Also appearing are Duncan Gillis (of Shindigo) on wooden flute and bodhrán, Ray Adams (of Bytown Bluegrass) on mandolin, Mike O'Reilly (of the Radio Kings, Cody, and The Mike O'Reilly Dick Smith Band) on harmony and Pete Newsome on acoustic bass. OH YES - and I'm playing guitar on a couple of numbers and acoustic bass on one as well. AND even John Dooher (Sound of One Hand) got in on the act, adding tasteful percussion to Salt Water.