

Kai Hoffman - Do It While You Can (2013)

Written by bluesever
Friday, 09 August 2013 15:33 -

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1. *Sweet Georgia Brown*; 2. *People Will Say We're In Love*; 3. *Time In A Bottle*; 4. *What A Little Moonlight Can Do*; 5. *The Masquerade Is Over*. 6. *Some Boys*; 7. *History Repeating*; 8. *Pure Imagination*; 9. *Do It While You Can*; 10. *Long Daddy Green*; 11. *I've Never Met A Guy Who's Perfect*; 12. *Make Someone Happy*; Personnel: Kai Hoffman - vocals, French horn (3, 4, 9); Gunther Kurmayr - piano; Geoff Gascoyne - double bass; Sebastiaan De Krom - drums; Gavin Broom - trumpet (4); Derek Nash - saxophone (4).

I love a good tune. I am absorbed by a catchy lyric, a phrase that sticks in my head, a combination of words which strikes a chord in my heart. I am a complete softy when it comes to a clever lyric. The meaning of the words doesn't necessarily need to be 'deep,' the tune doesn't need to be complicated- it just needs to resonate, personally, for me. I need to be able to listen to it, and repeat it, over and over again, and to love it more, every time I hear it. The lyric has to feel like the truth.

With *Do It While You Can*, I wanted to really dig into the tunes, the lyrics- to try and make a tiny scratch in the surface of that infinite world of songs & poems we singers can choose from. And I wanted to feel entertained too.

I decided before beginning the project that ideally, I wanted to write something for the album to fit with the fantastic arrangements Geoff Gascoyne and I had worked on, and the lighting-fast swing numbers. I would only include an original of mine if it fit with the theme, had a nice, catchy melody, and a meaning which wasn't too sickly sweet. However, I definitely have an inclination towards sugar, and the song I chose to include - which became the album title too [this happened much later] - expressed something I feel very, very strongly. An opportunity often only comes around once, and you have to do it while you can. I also chose this as the title in conjunction with poet Fran Landesmann's raw, rather outspoken *Some Boys* - so the title had a

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nice bit of double entendre too.

In conjunction with the extraordinary musical talents of Gunther Kurmayr, piano, Geoff Gascoyne, bass and Sebastiaan de Krom, drums, Do It While You Can not only chronicles personal moments but also some of my deeply-held beliefs. By exploring the lyrics and melodies of Make Someone Happy and Pure Imagination, I tried to share something of my inner world. History Repeating deals with that alarming realisation of the passage of time, as does Time in a Bottle - one defiant, one melancholic, whilst Some Boys enjoys a rather risqué, and very present-tense naughtiness. There are songs of anguish, and songs of almost-naive belief in the mysteries of love. And then there's I've Never Met a Guy Who's Perfect Simon Whiteside's witty, Side-winder-style boogaloo number. I say no more...

Each person has their own personal boundaries and experimental borders. Each artist must find their own way to be creative, and to really, really mean it. You have to find your own voice- and you have to love what you do.

Having been a stage performer for pretty much as long as I can remember, I wanted to produce a studio recording which, as nearly as possible, captured the energy and excitement of a live performance, with some great tunes and an amazing band. I wanted to explore the breadth of sound and emotion you can evoke within the framework of mainstream melodic jazz. This is just the tip of the iceberg, of course, but every journey has to start somewhere and have meaning for the person who's decided to travel. And I just love a good tune...

This is my first 'solo' album, and now I understand why making an album can take such a long time! I have heard stories from friends over the years of recordings which, for whatever reasons, weren't quite up to the mark by the time the physical product was in hand, and I wanted to try as hard as I could within my budget to arrive at a final product I could be happy with. I'd heard that the process could take not weeks but years- but knew there would come a moment to draw the line, say "Thank you very much," and get 'em out there. I have learned a lot, and done my best. And now it's Out There. Or it will be: March 20th 2013. So I invite you to come down to Ronnie Scott's Bar at 6pm on March 20th for the launch, get your personal copy of the album & grab a free glass of wine - you gotta Do It While You Can! ---Kai Hoffman, londonjazznews.com

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