

Karel Singing?.... No it's not Away in a Manger but down in the Sound Gallery Studio that's what's been going on these past months. I may not have much of a voice but I did have a lot of unrecorded songs and the good fortune to have numerous friends willing to help me get them in the grooves of a CD.

Unless you've googled me recently, most of you will know me as a comedy or concert promoter but probably not as a so called "recording artist". But since I've just finished making my own album I thought you might like to know a bit about it and myself in the process.

From the mid '60s onwards I was writing songs and making music. First alone back in Birmingham, then in Paris with Sean Street where we tried to pitch songs in the direction of the likes of Johnny Hallyday; before, between 1968 and 1976, working primarily with and within "Bachdenkel" (Britain's Greatest Unknown Group) followed by projects with Bernard Szajner and the Hypothetical Prophets, after which I returned to writing songs for personal consumption.

By 1982 I had accumulated a whole collection of original songs and though I first started working on some of them in the early 1990's, when I had access to midi and synthesizers in my own recording studio, come 1995, when I started to promote concerts and stand-up comedy, the songs went on the back burner.

As far as song-writers were concerned I was having the privilege of being on the other side of the microphones that some of the true greats were singing into.

It was in 2009 when my participation in the Rochefort en Accords festival was coming to an end that I decided as far as my own songs were concerned it was now or never.

For the festival I had assembled an impressive, multi-talented group of mostly Paris based musicians, "The International House Band", few of whom were aware that the festival organizer had the skeletons of a good many songs in his closet and that he would soon be asking them to help bring them out.

Starting in 2010 members of this Paris based contingent came into my studio to add their musical personalities to some of the sequenced songs that had been stored in my Atari computer for a score or more years.

First in was George Wolfheart who laid bass lines on almost all of the songs, then came the guitarists, the horn blowers, violinists and backing vocalists. The project was layered player by player so whenever someone I wanted to have on board was passing through Paris I'd set up a microphone or plug in a guitar and catch them on the fly. This is how Kim, H  l  ne, David, Gary, Chris, Andy, Marisa & Sonia came across the tracks. Others recorded in their own studios, Clive in Houston, Tim in London and Ronnie in la Charente. BJ and Michel, were integrated from previous recordings that had no connection with what I was doing in 2011. You could call it judicious sampling or fortuitous integration.

If George, on bass, laid down the bones Jeff on drums gave all but one of the songs their body even though he was one of the last musicians to set up in the studio some 18 months after the project began. Not the usual way of making a record but it worked because as Keith Richards says, "drummers from New Orleans are great readers of the song and how it goes."

If the record sounds as if it was recorded in the late '70s then that's the way it is meant to, since the songs were written between 1969 and 1981. Hence the album title "Informer Times".

As far back as 1977 I knew what the title of the record would be though I didn't know when or how it would be made. 35 years later it's about to see the light of the laser and I'm happy (dare I say proud) with the result.

15 songs, 79 minutes of music.

A blast from the past, and a cast from the present.

Thanks to

George Wolfheart / Marten Ingle electric - bass / H  l  ne Labarri  re - acoustic bass

Jeff Boudreaux / Chris Bell - drums

Rodolphe Burger / Clive Gregson / Ronnie Caryl / Tim Stone / Gary Lucas / Sal Bernardi – electric guitars

Terry Lee Hale - 12 string acoustic guitar / Yan Vagh - classical guitar

Rob Armus- tenor saxophone / Sebastien Llado - trombone / David Layton - basset horn

Andy J Forest - harmonica

Paul Susen / Melissa Cox - violins

Sonia Erhaud - musical saw / Michel Deneuve - cristal de Baschet / BJ Cole - pedal-steel

Emma-Jean Girard - pacifist's crossbow

Alison Young, Gabriela Arnon, Kim Richey, Marisa Yeaman, Peter Kimberley - backing vocals
and myself vocals, guitars, keyboards

The first limited integral edition of "Informer Times" will only be available to those of you receiving this email or visiting the www.informer-times.com website and the quantity of digi-packs manufactured will be dependent upon the number of you who place an order. This you can do by email or via the Informer Times website.

The CD will cost 20  including postage and packing or probably a glass of wine if you pick it up in person.

Actual payment (Paypal / check / cash) will not need to be made until the album is ready to ship.

There will be no free copies (even for the media or record companies*) only those who participated will have complimentary copies. And for the time being it will not be available as a download or accessible on the web where there is more than enough free music.

* Record company executives can deduct 20  from any advance on royalties should you wish to release the album "officially". (I am open to negotiation)

I hope a good many of you who have read this far will be curious enough to hear what we came up with in the Sound Gallery over the past 18 months or so. A lot of work went into it and care taken with the outcome.

Karel Beer

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