

Music from the Rainforest Circus by Steve Weave 2015

When I moved to the Sunshine Coast in 2003, I packed my guitars away and didn't make any music for two years. This, after playing semi-professionally, and then professionally for most of my life up until that point. I needed a reason to do it, beyond writing songs and then recording them on a CD for people to hear. I don't think I cared if people liked it or not or if it resonated. Some songs written for a friend as a goodbye changed all that, and soon I was back into playing often and writing songs. Still, I needed something to do that I felt would make a real difference somehow. Maybe in how people lived, perhaps more in how people felt. Somehow both, in the same breath.

Then along came Deer Crossing the Art Farm; a local start up arts organization with a weird name, who had an idea. Let's just put a bunch of artists from different walks of life in the woods and see what happens. Six years later I have learned to play music through always imagining being in the Rainforest.

Spaces really do change you, and me, and art gently rips those doors off and we can be human again, together. In the woods. A visceral house of ancestry, that we are connected with on so many levels.

These songs are a gathered collection of the "musical anchors" of the show, as I refer to them; songs from the last six years of having the glorious pleasure to sing and make sounds in the best reverb unit in the cosmos, among friends and community. These songs are my life, happening in real time by being offered a creative challenge.

Great artists understand that to create is to release control and challenge one another, and I dedicate these series of recordings to all of the Rainforest Circus artists and crew that I have shared so many precious moments with, and have continually been challenged and supported, as we live like ageless children in the woods.

Enjoy,

Stev

August 2nd, 2015

My back deck, Sechelt

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The Rainforest Circus

This song was a collaboration between Chad and I, accidentally. I was trying out an accordion at my studio and wrote this melody, and Chad said he would be sending some words along. I assumed it was for the accordion song, but he had meant it for something else. I recorded the melody and we decided it fit, so we kept it and it ended up being the welcome song in the woods. Often times things in the show change at the last minute and this is one of those examples of things lining up.

Sunshine

This is one of those special songs that just came right out like it had always been there, I just was the vehicle. I needed to start making some music for the show, and I took my acoustic guitar, a new app on my phone and a little speaker out in the sunshine in my backyard. I played this beat, and started to strum and sing the line..."let the sunshine...let the sunshine in..." Really a simple song about being in the moment and feeling blessed to be in the woods playing music and thinking about that. "A pop can in the circus of your mind."

Synchronicity

A re-imagined version of a Police song. It *had* to make an appearance at some point! It was just obvious, and I avoided it for years, and then it just felt right for this show. Synchronicity. This was the welcome track for the 2013 "End of the World" Rainforest Circus.

Moonshine

This song was intended to be a song about the moon, and how people through the ages have stared at it. Kind of an idea that so many eyes have seen, and adored the same object through the centuries. It was love song made personal by having a double meaning on the line "Who loves you more than the moon?" Meaning the moon loves you back, but also can mean that you love someone more than you love the moon, which is a lot.

Pontiac

The Synchronicity Festival and Rainforest Circus is all about recognizing things that tie together and also having the art be independent from other forms, and allowing the audience to form their own connections. This was a song born out of a conversation I had with a friend around this time about our early vehicles we experienced moments in, and how life is so busy these days. Thinking how great it would be to just jump in a vehicle and go somewhere, not having to do major logistics to make that a reality. "All I need is a map and one dart to throw..." meaning of course; let's throw a dart at a map and go there. I played this song to the group and we came up with the idea of building a car (the original idea was to bring a car into the woods!) and do the scene in it, like we were on the road. A great moment is when one of our characters wanders out in front of the car, and dramatically smashes in slow motion into the car. This recording is the live version from the woods. I suppose it's a compliment to hear from people that they thought I was lip-syncing this: I actually played electric ukulele and sang along to the full studio recording during the scene. A highlight from our many performances.

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Take a chance on me

An ABBA song that my wife Tracy suggested I put in the show at some point, considering the theme of that years festival was "Chance." Originally I had gone to the studio to do a solo ukulele version of this song, and when I created a beat for it, I kind of just kept going...until there were 36 individual tracks. This music was all created on an iPad, with acoustic piano and lots of tracks of vocals. The recording is from the woods, that morphs into the studio version. This served as the exit track from the woods that year.

Cosmos

The theme song from the Circus of the same name for the 2015 performance. The artists had a production meeting, which amounts to a creative jam, where we throw ideas around - big and small. I wrote down a few quotes or words I found of interest such as "Grandmother moon" and "Isotopes," and then the next day wrote this song on my deck with a copy of Carl Sagan's "Cosmos" book in front of me. I also looked up interesting quotes on the internet and made them fit into the melody. I added some of my own thoughts about the Cosmos and ta da! My guitar happened to be in a G minor open tuning and I put a capo on the fifth fret and just started to play the riff, like it had always been there. Super quick and easy song to write, this one. Recorded over two intense days and featuring the Theremin! The recurring line is a quote from Carl Sagan: "The Cosmos is all there is, or ever was or ever will be."

Underground

I worked with the Funkdealer on this one - a Roberts Creek based DJ. We got together and messed around some and this riff came out of a jam. I improvised some lyrics and later went and listened to the recording, kept a few and wrote some more. The lyric "why'd you have to make us laugh, then have to go away?" was most likely about the passing of Robin Williams, which had just happened a day or two before the recording. This song was then transformed in the woods by being the opening number played on a large hanging piano. Not many musicians get an opportunity to do this kind of thing, and I will be eternally gratefully to Rob Studer and Beth Hawthorn for the piano and our tech and rigging crew for not only making this happen, but for encouraging me to always go big. The logistics of getting a 600 pound piano sounding board into a rainforest, up between two trees and secured safely was no easy feat, but they made it so. This version is the original, and served as the exit from the woods during the "Underground" show held in 2014.

Lucky

This is a song by the group Radiohead, performed on ukulele with additional instruments recorded in the studio. This is the live version from the woods where I played drums and sang live to the studio track with the vocals removed. Singing in the woods is just so powerful. You can hear echoes like no other and when it is shared between a large group it's pretty special. I'm spoiled, really. This was performed live while watching Keely climb and swirl and fall through a giant silk suspended in the canopy. I don't ever plan to do other artists material during the performance, but sometimes a song just screams its way in to the show if it fits.

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Little Red

Each year the artists gather together to dream up a concept for the show, share ideas and head to the woods to walk and talk about what scenes would work where. Often times I will bring an instrument with me, and on this pass through I had my acoustic guitar. One of our actresses, Lani, was talking about how she was going to be a bride of sorts wearing a red dress. As we walked I improvised this song and lyrics. Later I wrote down the words and recorded it. It didn't end up making it into the show, but I've always thought of it as part of that show. "A troubled girl, in a troubled world: that makes two of you."

I just Know

Written in one shot on my apartment size piano in my studio. Later re-imagined in the woods on a beautiful electric vibraphone. The logistics of bringing a piano into the woods (the same year I requested we hang the back of a piano between cedars) was too much so this was a good alternative. During the 2014 "Underworld" show I tried to be as acoustic as possible, and this song served that purpose well. This is a studio version featuring Ian Kirkland on the piano, and Nicholas Simons on the cello. Everything will be ok, especially in the end.

Planks for Coming

A song written with a friend during a camping trip for a family of German tourists. It went like this: our group of campers were obsessed with the "planking" craze: the process of lying straight on something. Anything and everything. We were planking a car when they pulled up and we struck up a friendship during a great day at Klein lake on the dock. They said they wanted to come back later and hear us Canadians play guitar around the campfire, so we wrote this song and set up a mini Rainforest Circus in the woods to surprise them, complete with the kids doing a glow stick jam. During this trip I was busy cutting out vinyl record covers to be later placed throughout the Rainforest Circus trail, so we had those with us. They absolutely loved the song and I thought it would be a good fit for the ending of the show. The lyrics all dealt with conversations we had throughout the day. I later sent them this recording; an original song penned just for them, and now, for you to enjoy!

Love you, goodbye

As with many things with the production of the Rainforest Festival, I use things that are lying around that I've previously recorded, and will remix them, or will use something that is written around that time on whatever instrument I'm currently inspired to play. The chorus of this song was written as a letter to a friend where I said "love you, goodnight." And I think I wrote it three or four times, and ended up singing a melody to it. Later, when we were working on an ending scene, for our show "The circus at the end of the world," I thought, "ok, I'll just switch the lyric to "love you, goodbye." I imagined the crowd and us singing something positive - it being the end of the world and all...and wrote the verse. This recording is from the last show of that year in the woods. Signing this in the Rainforest with the sun coming in through the trees, and our beautiful dancers in white coming slowly down the hill with white balloons affixed to their heads while I sing this on the piano is one of my favourite memories of all time. I think about it often and it always fills my heart.

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Closing Theme

I always like to do an exit from the woods track, and the “end of the world” show was no exception. I tried to create something circus-like, that kind of re-set folks for their journey back out into the day. This was a simple fun thing to do using an old tiny casio keyboard, a sampler, and synthesizer. The Circus affords me so many opportunities to create music that challenges me and keeps me always trying to do something I’ve never done before. I remain, grateful.