

STEPHEN hunley

The other side of never
Cut x Cut

Debuting his first national recording, **THE OTHER SIDE OF NEVER**, singer/songwriter and stylistic vocalist **Stephen Hunley** presents a masterful conception of blues, rock and soul origin infused with a seamless contemporary AC/pop edge. The contemplative storylines supported by the simply brilliant arrangements of “Elizabeth” and “Oklahoma” matched by traces of the Beale Streeters and the 70s soul-era in “Call Me Baby” and “Speakeasy” reveal Hunley’s depth in musicianship weighted by “must listen” lyrics lend an alternative yet conflicting insight to heartache, honesty and good times. **THE OTHER SIDE OF NEVER**—an album full of texture wherein each and every word and note is deliberant and with purpose...or is it?

Sounds Like: Amos lee, Allen Stone, Jason Mraz, Marc Broussard, Ellis Paul

“Oklahoma”

A bright-eyed unbridled spirit flees the comfort of Small Town, USA in search of “wide open spaces” only to succumb to a broken heart and broken wing in Tennessee. Returning home to “what you know” and “where you come from,” the woebegone “arrives home” once again in Oklahoma—asking herself why she ever left. With a reflective and somber acoustic guitar confronting life-lived scars, the cricket shakers and weeping and swaying strings evoke this emotional ballad leaving lyrical interpretation up to the listener to personalize and define their own love lost. “Oklahoma,” has “movie soundtrack” written all over it.

“Oklahoma” is very personal to me; it was difficult to write; it’s difficult to sing, and difficult to tell the story about how the song came about. Sometimes we go out searching for something, when that something was “right here” all along. I leave it up to the listeners’ perspective and discretion.

“The Other Side Of Never”

The “Peg”ged horn opener (recalling Chicago and Steely Dan) exemplifies the optimistic message that money can’t buy happiness and hope is priceless. The sentiment reveals the unconscious decision to make lemonade out of lemons and fill the glass half full.

To me, it’s simply about making a conscious personal effort to overcome negative thoughts with positive and pessimism with optimism. What triggers our choice is different for everyone. I’m interested in what this song will mean to the listener. “Just like a flame, faith came, and it burned that old house down.” The cool, retro production will take you back in time.

“Love You In The Dark”

A love-is-blind affirmation proves love is true. As the ivory keys embrace the acoustic picking, a meant-to-be love light shimmers in a magnetic attraction to enable a serendipitous romance to overcome any life circumstance, night or day.

I was watching television and the power went out and the thought entered my mind “what if everything went dark? Could I still love? Would I be able to find love?” And I thought, “yes” —because true love comes from within...from the heart. “I’d still find it (love), if I had to love in the dark.”

“Come Back Home”

The stark, stand-alone vocals and solitary guitar introduce the tender and lonely desperation and plea to the one that got away. The melody build is convincing in the hope and will for her to “come back home” and the return of “better days” in a new season with new reason.

I’m not sure why, but I’ve always been moved to write and sing songs about heartbreak. Songwriting serves as a tool for me to work through my emotions; the process for me wasn’t so much about writing the song as it was about working through my feelings of heartbreak and loss...and “Come Back Home” was just the “beginning.”

“Elizabeth”

A cloud-nine profession of a one-of-a-kind love for a heart on the run, “Elizabeth” is a “dancing in the rain,” feel good, hopeful tune with an optimistic and anticipated turn around.

The storyline highlights an attempt to persuade that potential someone (“the one”), who is heading in the opposite direction, to turn around and head back my way! The melody is happy and “vibey,” while the lyrics are desperate.

“Something’s Wrong”

An honest look at an upside down society questioning the righteousness of reality, “*Something’s Wrong*” addresses the powerless, homeless and addicted—the elements and downfalls of today’s order of people. The piano heightens Hunley’s commitment and vocal delivery as the organ and electric guitar accent the despair of our world as it turns.

With a bit of a 70s rock vibe, this is a commentary surrounding addiction without boundaries. Addiction is not exclusive; it doesn't care what socioeconomic class you're from, what part of town you live in, nor your race or your gender. The devil will sit-in-waiting on the shoulders of the weak.

“Speakeasy”

A groovy, lustful and “easy” invitation to simply enjoy a “hush-hush” tete-a-tete.

With a funk/rock vibe, “*Speakeasy*” is an open invitation to have an affair and keep it under the covers. “*Whatcha’ Papa don't know...can't hurt Papa.*” The horns will hit you right in your grill!

“I’m Not Who You Think I Am”

An unlikely perspective voicing a brutally honest and guilty admission of unintended adultery at the hands of a Memphis temptress. A penance apology upheld by church-bell piano and a fretful organ.

The very candid lyrics introduce a no-good S.O.B. who admits he ran around on his lover with another in a moment of weakness. This tune has a definite groove with a cool counter melody on the keys. This is a fun song to perform live.

“In An Instant”

Living lonely in black and white that fades to gray while a bright world evolves around “her,” the commanding track is drenched in color lyrically, melodically, instrumentally and in production. This tune will be the No. 1 “instant” replay.

The words fell out of the sky when I wrote this song and the storyline just came together. To me, this song is about living inside of regret and not knowing how to get out. (But, it's completely open for interpretation and I am excited to hear what people have to say.) The character in this song seems to have lost all control and the world is just revolving around her; she has an awakening and wonders what happened to her life. “Where have her dreams gone? Why couldn't she walk in those blue suede shoes?”

“Do The Right Thing”

The heartbeat and theme of this storyline depicts the “hurriedness” of the folks walking up and down the New York City streets on a busy Monday in an industrial and impersonal “world that’s a mess.” With “whoa-whoahs” and “hey-heys,” “*Do The Right Thing*” is a bluesy call to attention and appeal to simply visualize one another as equals, in good heart, in all things.

Another personal commentary about society put into music from my perspective: the rich say the poor are lazy; the poor say the rich are greedy—people pointing fingers to a bridge that leads to nowhere. Whether it is sloth or greed, to me, all sins carry equal weight. We need to open our arms and love each other, no matter the struggle, to pick one another up not tear one-another down.

“Pictures In Her Mind”

A diary of the day-to-day journey to overcome inner turmoil and addiction, she turns to *Alice In Wonderland* for a better daydream tomorrow aboard the *Starship*. A painful observation of a “mind crazy”—the venture to understand a mind in madness and a body and soul adrift—leaves onlookers lost for words and action.

Our family has endured addiction and substance abuse over the years. This song—a tough one to write—is really more about me trying to understand the addiction rather than the abuse itself. I tried to write it without judgment. It's just me seeking insight about what is going on in someone else's mind while they dance with the devil to take that next drink or the next hit. I've been in situations where I have felt powerless to help; maybe “Pictures In Her Mind” will matter.

“Call Me Baby”

The seductive guitar/trumpet intro lays the groove ground for the swagger and sway melody while the vocal slides slither across the entire track. Hugged tightly by the snare, the electric guitar keeps the composition contemporary against the signature horns and classic organ. Lighting up this pouting, pining plea, the grand finale is grander than grand in its memorable finish.

I was listening to a lot of Motown and Blues when I wrote this and “Call Me Baby” is what “arrived.” This song is a simple Blues shuffle about a girl who is just plain hard to get. I was struggling to write the bridge, and my producer, Burton Akers, took it in a completely different direction to nail it.