

Album Synopsis/ Phoenix

1. Rescue Street

This song began as a slightly cynical comment on the internet dating game, but as I wrote it it became more about human relationships. Our need to be loved, the games we play, and the lengths we will go to find love.

2. Bitter

I wrote this song many years ago, and never really knew what to do with it until I had the idea of recording it as a duet. It is, essentially, a very bitter sweet love song about loving the wrong person. I was extremely lucky to have the wonderful Danni Nicholls sing the harmony with me, I love her voice, and think it lends itself perfectly to this song.

3. Don't Silence Me is a protest song inspired by the #metoo movement, it also has a personal edge to it. I found out that a good friend of mine had been drugged and sexually assaulted by a well known film director, not long after this I watched a documentary about Harvey Weinstein, as I watched I found myself reaching for a pen and began writing the song. It is an anthem for survivors of sexual assault of any age, gender, religion or culture. It is about finding your voice again and regaining control of your life.

4. A Fighting Chance.

I wrote this song in one sitting, which is quite rare for me. It was winter and I had just had a big fight with my partner, I was watching the snow falling outside, a big hole had opened up inside me and all I wanted was for him to come back so I could apologize. I guess what I'm saying it's about realising that you don't want to lose someone - I will try harder to see you and to hear you, just give me another chance.

5. Good Friday

This is a song about forgiveness, but not in the traditional sense of having to forgive. I was getting tired of people talking about forgiveness as an act, like it's something that you can switch on and off, I see it more like a landscape that you arrive at after a very long journey, all of a sudden you look around you and the landscape has changed, you are in a different place.

6. Passport

I originally wrote this song for another artist to sing, which is why it has a far more 'poppy commercial' feel than the other songs on the album, but then they didn't record it and I kind of fell in love with it, so I decided to record it myself. I love what Joby Baker (my producer) has done with it, it has such a classic soul feel to it, and I love singing it live... it's so happy! I'd still love to hear it sung by someone else though, if anyone's interested?

7. Leonards Waltz

The build up to recording Phoenix was intense. In the months leading up to it I lost my mother and also two close friends.

This song is about loss, and our helplessness in the face of death. I had gone to visit one of my friends who was dying of cancer, we spent a beautiful afternoon together and I knew it would be the last time that I saw him. The song is written from observation about that afternoon. It is also a goodbye song for Leonard Cohen, who has been one of my greatest teachers in songwriting.

8. The Wilder Shores of Love

I had read or heard a story somewhere about a Syrian Man who had fled Syria during the war and who was looking for his wife and child. What struck me most was that this man's life had been so normal before, for example he had a job, wife, kids, house. We so often label people 'refugees' and forget that they are just like you or me, only their lives have been broken by war.

9. Wedding Song (for Peter)

A good friend of mine who was getting married had asked me if I would set a poem to music and sing it at his wedding, which I was honoured to do, so the words of this song come from part of a poem by Michael Symmons Roberts, entitled The Vows. I think this is one of the most beautiful poems I have ever read and so I really wanted to include the song in the album, I am so grateful to Michael for allowing me to do this.

10. What you give will come back

This is a very simple song about giving. In an age of extreme capitalism and consumerism, I wanted to write a song that focused on the opposite of that. I truly believe that if we give willingly and with love, it will come back to us in other ways, often in ways that are far more enriching than we can imagine. As a musician who has albums on Spotify, I have had to get comfortable with giving my work away for 'free', and trusting that it will come back to me in other ways, which I hope it does.

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