

## **LENNIE GALLANT – WHEN WE GET THERE**

### *Notes on the songs*

#### **THE GYPSY WIND**

I think of this song on two levels in a way....In one sense, parts of the song are drawn from an ocean passage I made as part of a crew on the schooner Avenger. Three of us sailed this ship, captained by my friend Tom Gallant (very distant relation) from Mahone Bay, Nova Scotia to the Caribbean by way of Bermuda, where Tom would charter it for the winter months. I helped him sail it down a couple of times, then I'd fly back up to the real world of the Canadian cold front again. We had a few adventures (including breaking a foremast after a gale), several storms, one hurricane, and a few strange occurrences. One night while we were south of Bermuda, at about two thirty in the morning, I was doing my turn at the helm and I heard what sounded like a choir singing (it sounded a bit like about 30 Neil Young's singing the first 4 notes of "Helpless" over and over again.) I lashed the helm and went looking for the source of the sound but could find nothing to explain it. When Tom, the captain, came up to relieve me at about 3 AM, I asked if he could hear anything, and he replied it sounded like he could hear a choir. We both sat there rather mystified and listened to that sound for a while. The scene shows up in a line in the song about a choir sounding like ghosts (of the "triangle") who had been here before...

On another level...I kind of see the song as a metaphorical thing describing one's departure from a kind of fear, polarization, or an inability to move forward (or move on)...whether that fear is of the unknown, or of something like failure (oh gawd!) or just trying something you don't know anything about ...I leave that to the listener to interpret. It seemed like a good song to start with on this journey. (This is the only song that I previously recorded in French on "Le Vent Bohème.") - Lennie

#### **SEVEN YEARS**

When someone told me it was seven years since I had released a studio album in English, I almost fell off my chair. I "have" put out a couple of albums since the last studio effort, one in French and Live album so I certainly have felt busy, but the time is due for this one and given the time line, this song had to get on there....I even toyed with the idea of calling the album 7 years except that it turned out my good friend Pamela Morgan (of Newfoundland) had called her beautiful album of a couple years ago by that name. I wanted to get kind of an autumn feel with this song...haunting, stark, slightly chilled and lost, and yet warm at the same time. – Lennie

#### **I WANT TO SAVE THE WORLD FOR YOU**

This is the first single for the album...As a new father of a little girl named Amelie , 21 months this September, I must admit I think a lot more about the environment and what kind of place we are leaving behind for our children. Scientists the world over are not being listened to as they are watching dramatic indicators spelling out the environmental crises looming ahead if we don't take drastic measures now. I know no one likes to be preached to, especially in music, so I thought if the song could be lighthearted and a bit playful, maybe it might hit home where a more serious approach would fall flat....hope it helps make people think a bit....Amelie likes it anyway. She danced to it the first time she heard it! I hope she can enjoy it in her old age! – Lennie

#### **PIECES OF YOU**

This song was originally recorded on my LIVE album with 2 acoustic guitars only. I had so much response from this song that I wanted to record a band and studio version of it. I am hoping to eventually release it as a single. I wrote the lyrics on an airplane while heading to Newfoundland to write with my friend Chris Ledrew. I had already written the melody at my apartment and we thought perhaps we could write the words together. I found that couldn't wait though and finished it on the way there ...when the muse shows up he/she takes no rain checks.....sorry about that Chris...we did write others together though...on the Lifeline album. – Lennie

## **47 ANGELS ON HER FRONT LAWN**

I think this song may have been inspired by catching too many episodes of Six Feet Under, the only TV show I like to watch these days. A strange tale I came up with while driving by a concrete lawn ornament factory one day. I think I was listening to a hard luck story on the radio at the time and so... – Lennie

## **THIS PERFECT KISS**

This is a rough one.....My good friend Tara MacLean lost her younger sister Shaye in a tragic car accident a few years ago. She and her boyfriend were driving to Montreal together...they were very much in love...and I believe, rather at one with the universe at the time. Shaye pulled over to the side of the road to give her boyfriend a kiss when someone driving on the same road was distracted with the radio or something, went onto the shoulder as well, and hit them from behind... taking her life (he survived.). At the very moving service, Tara and I were talking about how some people live their whole lives without experiencing what Shaye was probably feeling just before the impact...and the song came from that conversation. (Tara's band is named after her sister.) - Lennie

## **IF I COULD MAKE YOUR MIND UP**

As I am a Gemini I'm not sure if I wrote this about someone else or about me, as I have been known to believe I knew exactly where I was going, only to wake up the next day and want to head in the opposite direction as I knew "for certain" that that was how it should be. It's the damn stars you know...have mercy on us! – Lennie

## **A DAY WITH YOU IN PARADISE**

This is a summer song that is a bit of an amalgamation of several days on that perfect beach...I'd like to tell you where it is, but, ...sorry...there aren't many places left like this. I can tell you there is a lot of PEI in this song...My favourite place on the planet. – Lennie

## **ELEVEN ROSES**

Song inspired by showing up at the flower shop 85 cents short...This song has been kicking around for a while. I tried recording it for the Lifeline album, but it didn't sound right. When we laid it down for this one it seemed to work better, especially when we dropped the tuning a half step and played it in f# instead of G major. It still felt like it needed something, I have been a fan of Denise Djokic's cello playing for some time and asked her if she would play on this one. Her performance on this song never fails to move me no matter how many times I hear it. – Lennie

## **I'M LEARNING HOW**

(To Fall In Love With You Again)

I used to run across broken ring songs when playing in a traditional music band years ago (my favourite was "Germaine" by a group named Garolou.) They are usually quite ancient beautiful songs of 2 lovers torn apart, usually because of some war. As these wars often lasted many years each lover took a half of a ring as a symbol of their undying love, (and possibly a way they might recognize each other when they next met as these wars could sometimes go on for many years, and you know they didn't have eyeglasses and hearing aids back then...)

All kidding aside, I have relatives who have lived with the aftermath of war and sometimes the person who comes home, never gets to be the person he once was, ever again.

I can only imagine what kind of adjustment someone coming home from the hell in Iraq must make these days hopefully, someday, our leaders will be more farsighted...I wrote this song as a modern take on this old theme. Sean Kemp must be mentioned for the very cool violin section on this piece. He is a big part of my live show. His wife Isabelle Fournier also plays on string parts. She is with the Nova Scotia Symphony. – Lennie

## **THERE MUST BE ANOTHER SONG**

My favourite guitar is my 1954 Martin 00-18, and I play it on this song. It's the one I mostly go to when I'm writing and it has given me many songs. Sometimes when composing it seems it's really the guitar that's doing all the creative work. A good friend of mine cared for and repaired this guitar for me for many years. I had him over to dinner one night and he talked about his life in music and the people he had crossed paths with, worked for, or played with over the years (including Lenny Breau and Gordon Lightfoot.). When he left around midnight I sat down to write a song based on what he had told me, but as I started, the song seemed to want to write itself and suddenly I realized it wasn't about him at all anymore but this "other" story came out. Since he had been the original inspiration for the song, I wanted him to be the first to hear it anyway and sent a rough recording to him the next morning. He sent me a message back ....asking how I could have known that story. - Lennie

## **WHEN WE GET THERE**

I kind of think of this piece as the sequel to my song The Fisher King from the Lifeline album...as long as we don't have all the answers, we need the questions to remind us how little we know and how important it is to look a little further than we have in the past...treat each other with understanding....take care of each other and believe that someday it will all make sense when we get there. - Lennie

## **THE INNKEEPER**

I got a call from a friend, Ann Marie Martin, who was going to do some work for me south of the border and who asked if I had any Christmas songs as she knew a high profile singer who was about to cut a Christmas album. "Not today" I said, "but I will Tomorrow." Amy and I had been threatening to work on something together and as we were in a Christmas mood we chose to work on this one. I remember the story of the Innkeeper from the traditional Christmas story and how it always struck me as so hard hearted, his turning pregnant Mary and Joseph away. Suddenly it seemed like the obvious way in to this story ...whatever happened to that guy?

The singer never recorded it as I think she was looking for something a bit brighter and I don't think she thought of it as a song for a woman to sing. I'm kind of glad about that as I got to sing it first... I have always felt Christmas as a time of redemption.....Thanks for the call Anne Marie.

It should be mentioned that the gorgeous choral/angel choir voices on the song were provided by Michelle Campagne, who possesses one of the most beautiful and ethereal voices I have ever encountered. Considering the story, and one of the main character's condition, it should also be mentioned that Michelle was 8 months pregnant when she sang her parts, which possibly helps account for that "something extraordinary" quality they have. - Lennie