

~~1997~~ 1997?

PAUL KELLY REPLIES FOR JUKE

BILLY BAXTER

Chris Langman and I wrote the song in 5 minutes when we were living on Hoddle Street, East Melbourne, where the tow trucks used to park waiting for an accident (usually two or three a day) out of Highett Street. Two lanes would stop and the third would always collect. We wrote the song for a laugh and for our friend Billy. And we exaggerated him. Someone from The Strange Tenants once told me it was the first Australian ska single.

ALIVE AND WELL

Under the influence of John Cale's "Paris 1919" at the time, it was written after staying up all night with an Adelaide bound friend and walking him to the bus depot. Chris Langman made up the ambulance guitar riff.

FROM ST KILDA TO KINGS CROSS

Clive Shakespeare who co-produced "Post" really wanted to put bass and drums on this because he thought it was a sure-fire single, but that didn't fit with the strict guidelines we had imposed on ourselves for the making of the record. So we kept it simple.

Originally the song was a blues and the first verse went -

"From St Kilda to Kings Cross is a 19 hour drive
From St Kilda to Kings Cross is a 19 hour drive
When you're overloaded and pulling a trailer and only
doing 35"

but I knew about the bus side of things as well and I found a better tune.

I'd like to re-record it some day with bass, drums and a tamborine.

LOOK SO FINE FEEL SO LOW

Morris Frawley came to practise in Gertrude Street, Fitzroy with a riff that I put words and a tune to. Steve Connolly adapted the riff much later. It's a Hank Williams kind of lyric and it's easy to make up new words for it each time I sing it.

BEFORE TOO LONG

Written in Surry Hills, Sydney over a fairly long period of time. I had the tune so definitely in my head that it was hard to get words to fit. They still sound awkward to me. Every songwriter should try to write a masturbation song at least once. The first few notes of the melody are the same as the traditional Irish song "Carrickfergus".

DARLING IT HURTS

The title comes from a long-standing piece of technical colour Darlinghurst graffiti. Steve and I wrote the song in an astro-turf flat on Coogee Bay Road not long after we'd both moved up to Sydney. It was just the one chord until Steve yelled out "Go to the B, go to the B." Then we added a bit from "Midnight Hour" and we had it. The graffiti disappeared when they built the freeway, but the flat's still standing.

TO HER DOOR

I had the tune lying around for years and years but couldn't finish it. I used to play it on the piano at Punt Road and make up doggerel to it like "going to the junction, trying hard to function". I always had the door and I knew someone was coming back from somewhere. I was asked to play at The New Mandarin Theatre in Sydney in 1986 at a poetry reading and I thought to myself "I'll show these poets something" and that's when I sang it for the first time.

DUMB THINGS

Someone cheated me and I should have seen it coming. Martin Armiger produced the song with a very unpleasant engineer at Trafalger Studio, Sydney. We had to record it at the same speed as the demo which Yahoo Serious had heard and liked so much he'd cut it into the work-print of "Young Einstein" straight away. I thought the demo was too fast and speeded up and slowed down in places, but Yahoo reckoned it worked great with the pictures. So we literally copied our erraticness and that's how we made the record. Of course, months later Yahoo went and put the song somewhere else in the film.

SWEET GUY

The answer to the question in the chorus is usually Dad. Plus alcohol. I always wanted a woman to sing it but the band talked me into recording it because they liked the beat.

MOST WANTED MAN

I sent this song to Aaron Neville through an A&R man at A&M Records in America but the phone hasn't been ringing. Maybe I should have changed the first line, but it's too late now. I would die a happy man if George Jones or Aaron Neville did one of my songs. It was written on a lonely Saturday afternoon during the football season in the leafy suburb of Edgecliff, Sydney. It is NOT a country song.