

WINE ISLAND: DISC 1 - BIANCO

Stranger Blues: This a weird-arse cover of a great Elmore James song that I first discovered listening to ABC Radio's *Room To Move* program with Chris Winter late on school nights in the 70s. I thought maybe I could fuse Kraut rock and the blues and emerge undamaged at the end with a blast of Prince & faux Chicano music.

All The Pretty Women: An example of the nursery rhyme ethos I went into this record with - doggerel lyrics and mostly first takes to keep it fresh. This song makes me think of '50s music movies with the likes of Little Richard with a back end more in debt to Los Lobos, one of my all time fave bands.

Baby Please Don't Go: A few years ago some blues fan friends in Adelaide asked me to contribute to a Big Joe Williams tribute album so I went for his BIG song. I love bending great songs out of shape and trying to make them my own.

How Virginia West Was Won: More nursery rhyme built over a sample mix from another project. I had one line "he made her laugh, he made her come..." and went hunting for a story after that. A great drum performance from Hamish Stuart.

Kukuxumusu: Inspired by a visit to a clothing shop in Bilbao, Spain. I just loved the look and sound of the word and say as much in the song. There's a lot of Devo in this song versus my best Mick Taylor impression.

Rockin' '73: A song about a couple at a '90s rave so out of it they think there at a '70s glam happening. I love glam, particularly Garry Glitter though possibly not cool to name check (never confuse the man and his work). The tag is a wink (with eye liner) at Golden Years. My nickname is tag man.

Love In Motion: A cover of Iva Davies' classic. Always loved this song, it has such sophisticated elements. I have it on Hammond organ over the outro with Billy Preston and Bela Bartok on my mind.

The Road To Candelo/Aint Life Grand: You say doggerel, I say doggerel, let's etc.. An imaginary road trip to Candelo, another great sounding name that I always wanted to get into a song. Bleeds into a New Orleans reprise of *All The Pretty Women* but by a different name.

It's A Mug's Game: With apologies to D Warner, D Walker and R Mombassa. Loosely based on Reg's *The Road To Clovelly* parable and a large dose of lapsed catholicism. It must have been a bad tour after which I wrote this but it seems funny now.

Dark Was The Night: A song purloined from Blind Willie Johnson's great instrumental *Dark Was The Night (Cold Was The Ground)*. Always thought such a great lyrical image should have some words behind it.

WINE ISLAND: DISC 2 - ROSSO

The Good Baker's Dream: I'd had this title in the back of my head for some time. I wrote it very quickly, over a couple days, while I was in northern Italy playing some shows. I felt a long way from home and was remembering when I first met my wife. It's a Xmas song.

Tonight On The Great Verandah: A song I wrote over 20 years ago and put on the back burner. I remember hearing a news story on radio about the investiture of the then new Governor General (Bill Hayden) on The Great Verandah at parliament house. Only Australia, like The Big Banana, could have a great verandah, the rest was easy.

Brand New Day: My publisher rang me up to say they were pitching me for the soundtrack of the film *Brand New Day*. It got lost in the translation somewhere and I came back with this song (which they didn't want). One of very few songs I've written on standard tuned guitar.

The Badattitudes: One of those "love stinks" songs. I have occasional misanthropic moments (refer to *A Mug's Game*) and this is one, albeit with an Abbey Road backdrop. A great rhythm section performance from Rob Souter & Jonathan Zwartz and one of a handful of songs on which I play the mighty Stuart & Sons grand piano.

Pretty Violets: Inspired by Linda Jaivin's novel *A Most Immoral Woman* set in turn of the century imperial China detailing a liaison dangereuse between a famous Australian diplomat and a young American libertine. Think Elizabeth Taylor in *Who's Afraid Of Virginia Wolf* or a real, live Ava Gardner.

At The Movies/Everybody's Talkin': A song about the movie experience. Being completely beholden, in a controlled atmosphere, to the emotional cues at the director and editor's command. Yep, I'm the sniffler a coupla rows behind you at a Doris Day movie. Musically the most ambitious song on the album, if you're going to write about the movies...

Jerusalem Steps 7.45pm AEDT: My instrumental yacht rock homage to Bondi Beach. The steps in front of the pavilion are so-called for their association as a meeting place of Jewish refugees and their children who settled in North Bondi in '20s & '30s. At 7.45PM in summertime the ambience is just so.

Stay: A song I wrote for a friend (female) about the vagaries and technical difficulties of a long distance love affair (which she was conducting at the time). It freaked her out so much she wouldn't sing it so I changed one word and sang it myself.

The Dumbest War: "To my cypherene..." Sometimes a song chooses you. I had the idea of love during war time, misunderstood signals, collateral damage etc. Had the tune too but I didn't have the 'other'. Until I read Antony Beevor's *Stalingrad* where he refers to the young Red Army women in charge of transmitting coded signals - the cypherenes.

The Big Day: Pretty much written on a road trip back from the Dungog Folk Festival about a jilted suitor. When my wife looks at me kinda funny about the content of a new song I refer her to page 223 of *Tunesmith*, Jimmy Webb's wise tome on songwriting - I made it up! Musically after Randy Newman and Leon Russell.

Wine Island: Brought on by a throw away line from a young friend with a major hangover - "last night I slept on the silver pillow" - ergo I drank the contents of a wine cask then blew up the empty silver bag inside for a pillow. I said I'm having that. *Wine Island* is always a little off shore, a few glasses and you're almost there but never quite. Sometimes the journey is worth it, sometimes not.