

A photograph of Paul Stephenson, an older man with grey hair and a beard, wearing a brown fedora, glasses, and a brown leather jacket over a plaid shirt. He is playing an acoustic guitar and looking down at it. The background is a window with horizontal blinds, through which trees and a bright sky are visible. The lighting is warm, suggesting late afternoon or early morning.

Paul Stephenson
Wireless Days

1. Sail It

in an upstairs room in a backstreet bar
two crates for a stage and a candle for light
a guy on a stool with an old guitar
twenty years on the road brought him here tonight

he's a man with a message he's gonna sing it for you
just a story he wrote with a sting in the tail
for the sailor in you when you're caught in a gale

the sea is life
the weather's what's happening to you
your body is a boat
you've got to sail it

no Wembley crowd no fancy PA
just a few woolly soulmates too drunk to recall
the changes in the speed the little bits out of tune
the scratches in the voice and the warts and all

like the guy in the corner on his fourth pint of ale
who comes down every Tuesday to get drunk without fail
and forget all his worries like the debts he can't pay
and the kids he hasn't seen since his wife went away
still he joins in the chorus in his own smoky way

I met a lot of talented musicians in the clubs and bars of Europe; and a lot of "guys in the corner" with their own boats to sail. All human life was there; but not a lot of money. Not that it mattered. We all had our sunrises and sunsets.



Paul Stephenson: vocal & guitar / Jens Kommnick: guitar
Lea Morris: backing vocals / Beo Brockhausen: accordion
Lars Hansen: electric bass

2. Accordion Arts

she is quite a weight to carry
and he's carried her everywhere
to every shopping centre
and every market square
he would hold her to his belly
and squeeze her till she sang
he'd leave her some notes to ring
and other notes to hang

in the air and in our hearts
in his favourite stretch of the northern parts
what he liked to call the accordion arts

from these cold and rainy dockyards
to the California sun
the path from the beach to the cavern
has been trodden by everyone
he would stand astride the decades
the human heart unchained
with only twelve notes to play
it's a miracle he'd arrange

I can still recall the fingers
and the goodness in his smile
for every cent a listener
for every passer-by
he would linger on his keyboard
or dance around the keys
I'll never forget the feeling
that raised me from my knees

Paul Stephenson: vocal & guitar / Jens Kommnick: guitar
Lea Morris: backing vocals / Justin Ciuche: viola
Manfred Leuchter: accordion / Lars Hansen: electric bass

The background of the page is a solid teal color. A large, semi-circular shape, also in teal, is positioned in the lower half of the page. From the top edge of this semi-circle, a series of thin, parallel pink lines radiate upwards and outwards, filling the upper half of the page. The lines are closely spaced and create a sense of depth and movement.

I'd like to dedicate this song to the memory of Jos de Rooij, an accordionist from Amsterdam who I played with for a few years in a band called "Over the Road". We started with an acoustic line-up – guitars, harmonies, accordion, snare-drum played with brushes – but played popular songs "from the beach to the cavern". Jos always had a smile and a friendly word for you; still miss him.

3. Almost

the measures of your lives
the creature comforts
helping you survive
no longings to fulfil
no dreaming of a future love
but still

there is hope
here comes the day
this is me this is now
this is here it's okay
I can hope I can pray for a soul
who has lost his way in the dark
I can almost touch his shadow
almost

the treasures that you found
trailing in the park
and on the ground
they brought you to your knees
and left you clutching straws
and losing sleep

possessions you can touch
they never seem to matter
all that much
the fleeting things you chase
deliver you a future you can face

Like the song says, this is me, this is now, this is here. It's okay.

Paul Stephenson: vocal & guitar / Ian Melrose: guitar / Lea Morris: backing vocals
Beo Brockhausen: soprano saxophone / Lars Hansen: electric bass

4. October

take a breath take your time
take a walk around the park
smell the grass smell the hay
hold the memory of this day
save the figs and the vines
from the fading of the light
wave the twigs pour the wine
on this old wives summer night

here we are in October
here we are
here we are in October again
October again

look around feast your eyes
we may never pass by again
the minute you see the secretive bird
so alone unseen unheard
this is it as you know
now the world has closed her eyes
all that's left is the news
that tomorrow we'll be no wiser

Someone told me that an Indian summer's evening was called an "old wives summer night" in their language. I don't want to name the person or the language in case I misunderstood them, but I liked the line so much I used it in this song.

Paul Stephenson: vocal & guitar / Jens Kommnick: guitar
Lea Morris: backing vocals / Beo Brockhausen: soprano saxophone
Lars Hansen: electric bass

5. Bridges and Checkouts

since you ask
my mind's all over the place
especially at two in the morning
rewind replay
and play it all over again
truth so slow
to be dawning

wouldn't you prefer to believe
there was nothing you could have done
admission of doubt
the coward's way out
it was written
it will happen
as destined

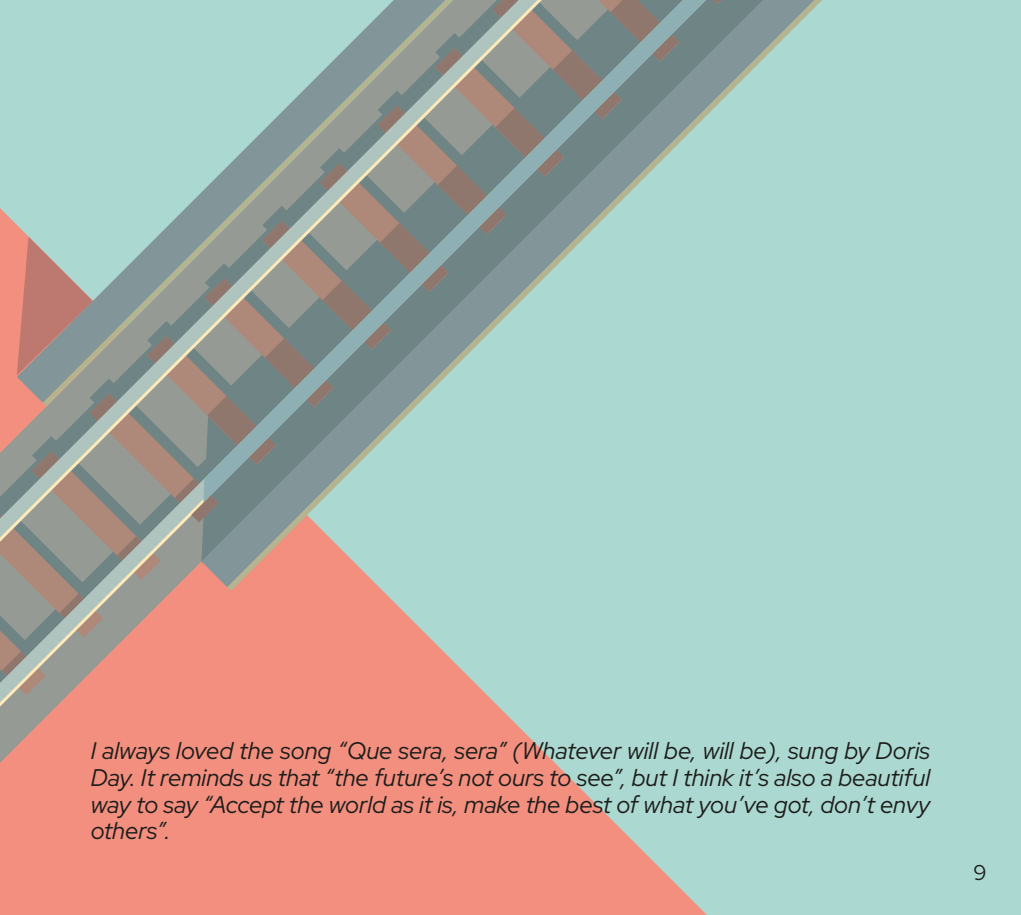
in your heart
the rocks and rolling of hopes
are tearing you down in the middle
you will you won't
you might just try it again
now it's as plain as a riddle

nothing like an orderly mind
bits and pieces strewn in the yard
the tables we turned
the bridges we burned
it was written
it will happen
as destined

here we are
my love all over again
we're settling down in the country
a life to lead
a lifetime to overcome
welcome home all and sundry

here we go the train is on time
we'll be travelling an hour from now
to bridges and checkouts
losers and lockouts
it was written
it will happen
as destined

Paul Stephenson: vocal & guitar / Jens Kommnick: guitar
Lea Morris: backing vocals / Beo Brockhausen: soprano saxophone, percussion
Manfred Leuchter: Hammond B3 / Lars Hansen: electric bass



I always loved the song "Que sera, sera" (Whatever will be, will be), sung by Doris Day. It reminds us that "the future's not ours to see", but I think it's also a beautiful way to say "Accept the world as it is, make the best of what you've got, don't envy others".

6. Once Not Twice

I love you anyway
better than anybody else can say
you're a picture I can't help liking
a yellow boat on a blue bay

I love your eyes
wider awake and make-up free
you're so comely so back to nature
I can't believe what I am seeing

and when I tell you you're beautiful
and when I take your hand
it's not me just being nice
thinking further than the moment
you can choose me
you can lose me
once not twice

I can't do anything
I feel like a rabbit in your headlight gaze
for a moment frozen in time
a yellow spark in a blue haze

needles and pins yeah
inside and out and head to toe
for a minute take over my body
not to talk about the fire below



People say it's ridiculous to think there's only one person on this earth who can be your soulmate when we apparently have several billion people to choose from. But I've met many people who did get lucky and found "the one". It's just that holding on to that person is a different story...



Paul Stephenson: vocal & guitar
Jens Kommnick: guitar
Lea Morris: backing vocals
Beo Brockhausen: soprano saxophone
Lars Hansen: electric bass

Jens Kommnick



7. Orphan Earth

I'm floating over this land like a cloud
I'm floating over this land like a cloud
I know it should be banned
and it shouldn't be allowed
I'm floating over this land like a cloud

these feet don't carry me to work each day...
it's not that I want to shirk
and I wouldn't mind the pay...

there's dignity in working for your bread...
in caring for the kids by the woman
that you wed ...

but half the world has much more
than it needs...
and the other half is left to fight for scraps
and bleed ...

better than this
much better you deserve
motherless child
sweet orphan earth

from the water of life
to the forest that we burn
so much you give
for so little in return

we leave the land we touch
in dreadful shape...
who can blame the kids
for wanting to escape...

I'm floating over this land like a cloud...
I know it should be banned
and it shouldn't be allowed...

Paul Stephenson: vocal / Jens Kommnick: guitar
Lea Morris: backing vocals / Justin Ciuche: viola
Manfred Leuchter: Hammond B3
Lars Hansen: electric bass

*It would be nice to leave the planet in better shape than it was when we landed on it,
but human nature being human nature, it looks like it's going to be an uphill battle.*



8. Under the Weather

as I walked out
to a golden evening sky
mindful of the hardships
and the toil of weeks gone by
days of wintry gales
and other phenomena
finding out
what it's really like to be
under the weather
under the weather

the boughs are laden
the birds are on the wing
a land for sure of plenty
such a many splendored thing
this is quite a change
if only occasional
now you know
that you'd never need to be
under the weather
under the weather

and all those maidens
so pleasing to the eye
graceful with their bounty
to a sailor such as I
no more walls of ice
or similar obstacles
free to sail
with the angels of the sea
under the weather
under the weather

Paul Stephenson: vocal & guitar

Jens Kommnick: guitar

Lea Morris: backing vocals

Justin Ciuche: viola

Beo Brockhausen: soprano saxophone

Lars Hansen: electric bass

Captain Cook doesn't actually get a mention in this song, but I was thinking of him and the men who sailed with him in those little wooden ships when I wrote it. Having (sort of) followed in his footsteps, but in a huge Airbus, my imagination failed me, and I preferred to wonder what it was like once they got home (at least those who, unlike the Captain, got home in one piece).

9. Feels Like the 70s

feels like the 70s again
flared jeans, kaftans and platform shoes
who could care
there's a world
of opportunities there

feels like the world's at your feet
you can take any road that fits the bill
you can choose
you can go
anywhere you will

who cares if the picture's blurred
if the colour's faded
and the bell's unheard
isn't that just the time machine
playing tricks with your mind
messing up your dreams
if only ...

walking home from the church I knew
saying prayers to a god unknown to you
holding hands
through the fall
believers all

the noughties and teens have passed by
hardly noticed the changes till too late
now I'm here
where are you
do we walk or do we wait

it could have been such a different tale
if the light was green
and the boat had a sail
still I wander through a drunkard's dream
with a private ghost
by a silver stream
if only ...

Paul Stephenson: vocal & guitar / Jens Kommnick: guitar

Beo Brockhausen: soprano saxophone, Memotron / Lars Hansen: electric bass

Luckily, I have hardly any photos from the 70s, and definitely none of me in a kaftan and white bell bottoms. Also luckily, I lived through the 1979 Winter of Discontent in the UK but was blissfully unaware of its horrors as I never read the papers. Happy days!

10. White Lies

you need somebody to say you're right
to say it's sunny in the middle of the night
someone believing the world goes round
to lift you up when the chips are down
me too me too me too

you need a lover to say you're the best
you're doing fine when your life's in a mess
the consolation that you're doing all right
that white is black and that black is white

the white lies to keep those wolves away
pretending only you can see
in your eye the fear of yesterday
is real enough to make me see
to make me believe



Paul Stephenson: vocal & guitar / Jens Kommnick: guitar
Lea Morris: backing vocals / Beo Brockhausen: bowed psaltery
Lars Hansen: electric bass

We all need a little comfort, don't we? A few words from a friend that might not be quite true, strictly speaking, but that remind us that we're not alone and that, with a little help, we'll feel better in the morning.

11. Wireless Days

are you receiving me
do you hear me loud and clear
or do these wireless days

leave you too far from here
I can turn all those dials
right up from one to ten
but I can't turn back time
much as I'd like to be back when

we had the boots
and the hats and the smiles
and we stood underneath
the waterfalls
to grow young in some style
and though bikes
were never our thing
we stood in awe of the best
in the town of Invercargill
the fastest in the west

you were so pensive there
in Chinese garden space
I felt a fool of course
in front of a Monroe face
we saw a long boat too
it looked like a work of art
as drawn by Captain Cook
when he was a-sailing in these parts

he had the boots
and the hats and the smiles
and he stood underneath
the waterfalls
to grow young in some style
and though trees
were never his thing
he stood in awe of the best
as he sailed off Stewart Island
and headed out west

we had the boots
and the hats and the smiles
and we stood underneath
the waterfalls
to grow young in some style
and though boats
were never our thing
we stood in awe of the best
and we boarded one too many
and headed out west

Paul Stephenson: vocal & guitar
Jens Kommnick: guitar
Manfred Leuchter: accordion
Lars Hansen: electric bass



I came back from New Zealand wondering what those early navigators were thinking, as they sailed the roughest seas in the world, looking for a land that most people didn't believe existed. And what drove Burt Munro to take his souped-up motorbike from Invercargill, at the bottom of New Zealand's South Island, to the Bonneville Salt Flats, in the United States? Where, against all the odds, he broke the world land speed record. It was such a thrill to see his bike in, of all places, a hardware store in Invercargill. I really felt the days before the Internet have a lot to tell us about human nature...



Recording and production: Günter Pauler

Studio assistance: Leonora Schulze

Premastering: Hans-Jörg Maucksch

Artwork and design: Emre Meydan

Painting on page 10: Kate Simms

Photos on front cover, page 3: Zulmira

Photos on pages 6, 11, 20, 21: Emre Meydan

Photos on pages 12, 14: Paul Stephenson's private collection

Photo on page 22: Frank Meadow Sutcliffe, "The Dock End, Whitby", 1880



For some reason, it seems to have been a long road that's led to this album. I don't have the space here to thank everyone who helped me along that road, but I have to say an extra special thanks to all the musicians, especially Jens, who added a new dimension to my songs, and Lea, who uses her beautiful voice so creatively; to all at Stockfisch, especially Leonora and Emre for all the personal attention, and, of course, Günter, for making it all happen; to Kate Simms for the painting of the heart and all her other beautiful artefacts that decorate our walls; to our best friends in Amsterdam, John & Anneke, for all their love and support over the years; and, last but not least, to Zulmira, for standing by me through thick and thin along the road. Love to all.





1. Sail It 2:45
2. Accordion Arts 4:59
3. Almost 3:36
4. October 3:44
5. Bridges and Checkouts 3:29
6. Once Not Twice 4:04
7. Orphan Earth 3:54
8. Under the Weather 2:50
9. Feels Like the 70s 3:09
10. White Lies 3:27
11. Wireless Days 4:30

total running time 40:48

all songs by Paul Stephenson (BumaStemra)

Recording and Production: **Günter Pauler**

Studio Assistance: **Leonora Schulze**

Premastering: **Hans-Jörg Maucksch**

at Pauler Acoustics with B&W 800 D3 monitors

Front Cover Photo: **Zulmira**

Artwork and Design: **Emre Meydan**

LC 04910



©+© 2024

Stockfisch Records

closer to the music®

stockfisch-records.de

SFR 357.2110.0

