

“I Chose To Sing The Blues” by Blue Jean

The Album-

This album was about three years in production. On a very limited budget, I set out to finish several of my songs that were in various states of completion. I knew that I could not afford to hire people to do what was needed to complete the album. I also discovered that musician friends could not be available when I needed them. It is unfair to expect that much help from friends when you can't afford to pay them. Plan “B” would be required for this project. With the help of modern technology, skills acquired through many years of performance, and my musical education, I decided that I would play and record each part. This would prove to be a monumental task. Each part of each song would have to be recorded separately. After carefully planning each part of each song, I found that not all worked as well as planned. Some required re-writing and some were scrapped. After much trial and error, the album was complete and sounded musical. I thank you for taking time to listen to this work and hope you enjoy what you hear. I hope that the following dialog will help you to appreciate and better understand what goes into producing each song of an album.

The Songs-

Recording an album is not as easy as listening to one. First you must acquire enough songs that are ready to record. These songs must be written and re-written until such time that you determine that they have all the requirements needed for production. Re-writing includes lyrics as well as musical parts and arrangements. All of the pieces must work together like a fine tuned machine. Re-writing is sometimes extended well into the recording process. If you discover that words or parts don't work as planned, the problem must be solved before continuing with the project. In some cases the song will be put aside and perhaps re-worked for use at a later date.

Song Writing-

While assembling the necessary parts to the puzzle to construct an album, the writing process must continue. As a writer, I am obligated to myself to continue expressing my thoughts, fantasies, and desires, through my songs. When an idea emerges it must be recorded using whatever is available at the time. A paper napkin, shoebox lid, voice recorder, or a digital device might be used depending on availability when the idea strikes. Song ideas seem to happen at the most inappropriate times, such as, while driving a vehicle,

watching TV, weddings, funerals, or sitting on a commode. Occasionally the idea is strong enough to be remembered for a later date but many good ideas are lost and never developed as a result of not being recorded immediately. The song may start from one or two lines and be developed later. The idea may be lyrical or musical or both. In rare cases I have written complete songs in a few minutes. Most songs require development that may take place over days, weeks, months, or years. Though the process is often long and tiring, the reward at completion is worth it. Another child is born. About half of the songs used on this album were written while it was in progress. Most of my songs have male vocals, background vocals, horns, strings, and rhythm section. Those are the tools I chose to use to produce this album.

Arrangements-

All arrangements are by Bryan Leger.

Performance-

All instrumental parts with exception of electric guitar on “Line Dancin” were performed by Bryan Leger. Thanks to Rick Reppond for the nice electric guitar work on “Line Dancin”.

Production-

Vocalists have very limited free time to invest in recordings. Many have previous commitments that don't allow them to help and others are too busy with their own projects. Fortunately **Blue Jean** “Jean Guillet” has always been available with short notice to do vocals. We have worked on many projects together and Jean has always done a great job. Jean did all of the lead and background vocals on this album.

Horn players are seldom available when needed. Most are playing gigs or busy with day gigs. Having been a horn player and arranger in a large R & B group (**The Boogie Kings**) helped me to better understand the articulation needed while playing each horn part.

Recording drums requires special conditions and a drummer that is available. Drummers share the same issues as most other musicians, gigging or working most of the time. With the help of technology, I was able to use pre-recorded percussion loops and parts to create the drum and percussion tracks for this album.

Each rhythm section and string part was designed and played to best accompany the song with special attention to the vocal rendition.

Perfection is my desire but reality must be considered to complete a production. If I wait for each song to be perfectly written, performed, and recorded, I will never have a release. I have learned that words like “perfect”, “absolute”, “never”, and “always”, describe conditions that cannot be met in real life. Compromise is a more realistic approach to most things. Without tolerance we cannot function.

Digital Recording, Mixing and Engineering- by Bryan Leger

All instruments were recorded from sampled or digitally created sources, with the exception of electric guitar on “Line Dancin’”, and acoustic-electric guitar on “Shame On Me”.

Art Work-

Blue Jean photo by **Bryan Leger**.

Album Cover and all other artwork by **Kathy Harbison**

Song List-

April (5:05)
Caretaker (4:27)
Hold Back (4:27)
I Chose To Sing The Blues (6:13)
I'll Make You Love Me (4:04)
It Just Ain't Hit Me Yet (3:59)
It's The Right Time (3:18)
Let It Be For Me And You (3:16)
Line Dancin' (2:50)
Lovin' Me (3:33)
One More Chance (3:50)
Plain Jane (3:00)
Shame on Me (3:38)
Tell Me What You Want From Me (2:24)

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