



## Extended Song Notes

### Tracks 1-5



**2nd Time Around:** The album needed a title song and after several weeks of sketching out ideas, the lyrics began to take shape. I wanted to write about things that seemed difficult the first time but got easier the 2nd time. Things like trying to figure out the hand clutch on a John Deere or learning to drive a straight stick on our old truck. Other experiences, some serious and some frivolous, began to pop into my mind: how to kiss a pretty blue-eyed girl, learning gospel harmony, or how to deepen my faith. While writing the song, I developed a great respect for all those who never gave up after the first try.

**A Beautiful Thing:** There are three important things central to my life: music, my wife, and Jesus. Originally the opening lyric and melody popped into my head out of the clear blue. Music set the pace that brought me to this place and Jesus blessed it all with his amazing grace. The rest of the song fell into place and then Gordy Zens added his unique guitar patterns and it all made sense.

**If I:** A few years ago, I was driving to Fargo, ND for a Billy Joel/Elton John concert and my mind was playing rhyme games. Here's what I wrote down when I got to Fargo: If I drank I'd be drinkin' instead of sittin' here and thinkin'; If I smoked, I'd be smokin' instead of sittin' here and hopin'; If I did, I'd be doin' instead of sittin' here and stewin'. In 2022, those three lines became the basis for this song.

**Every Now and Then:** First of all, hats off to Gordy Zens for working so diligently to create the steel pedal part as this is not an instrument he usually plays. Also, a huge thanks to one of my Nashville mentors for some great advice on the song's structure. I wanted to write a song about my Dad. When I was younger my Dad struggled with alcohol now and then. I was old enough to recall many of those times. Then I heard the stories about some of the things that happened to him when he was a kid and when he became a young man. He never talked much about those things, but I never forgot. That's why I dedicated this tune to those who struggle and have struggled.

**Amazing Grace:** In 2004, Gerry Person and I were interested in doing some duet work and decided to work on a gospel album. We got together in a small studio and recorded the first three songs: Minnesota Squirrel-a song about how God can answer prayer in unexpected ways, I Catch 'em God cleans 'em-a tune based on Matthew 4:19, and an exciting arrangement of Amazing Grace. Life got in the way and we never finished our gospel album, but I kept the mastered tracks. On my first album, I released The Minnesota Squirrel and recorded my own rendition of I Catch'em. I decided it was time to release our version of Amazing Grace.



# Extended Song Notes

## Tracks 6-11



**On My Way Back:** This song is based on a poem written by my cousin Dick to his future wife Pat in 1958. Dick was in LA and Pat was home in South Dakota. The music I wrote for the lyrics is reminiscent of a style popular in the 50's and early 60's. The production on this song got a little more intricate with 11 separate tracks. There are 5 separate vocal tracks (sung by me), 4 guitar tracks (performed by Gordy Zens), and separate piano and percussion tracks produced by Eric Likness in his studio in California. I dedicate this one to Dick and Pat. He did find his way back and they recently celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary.

**I Just Want To Dance With You:** This track is a cover of a John Prine composition made famous by George Strait. I always enjoyed singing this song and decided to record it. I didn't make any major changes from the original other than to change up the ending a bit.

**Me and Jesus:** This is a cover of Tom T. Hall's country/gospel hit. I rearranged this into a blues-style gospel tune. I asked Gordy Zens if I could feature him on the instrumental break and he did not disappoint! As the song states, "Me and Jesus got it all worked out."

**All The Way With You:** This cover is of another John Prine original. I loved the overall message and melody of this song. We kept the instrumental accompaniment simple and the last thing added was some percussion and some keyboard by Eric Likness.

**Fishin':** This song is a collaboration with my sister, Susan. She is a gifted artist, poet, and musician. Earlier this year, she sent me a collection of songs she had written decades ago. I loved all of them but was drawn to this one. Sue's version was only a little over 60 seconds long and the theme was fishing for a fish. With her permission, I rewrote the original verse, added two more, and changed the story line to fishin' for a kiss. I decided to try out my whistling skills and if you listen carefully you will hear a reference to Andy and Opie heading to their favorite fishing hole. Gordy Zens is one of the speaking voices at the end of the tune. Thank you to Susan for the original melody and the basic premise.

**Lay Down Beside Me** was written and performed by Don Williams. I've always been a big fan of his music. This song has been covered by many others and I hope my version gives justice to the words and melody. The original has Don Williams humming the last refrain, but I decided to play flute instead.



## Extended Song Notes

### Tracks 12-15



**The Ballad Of The Brothers** is a rewrite of the Uffda Brudders theme song I composed in 1984. All of the guitar work is Gordy Zens. If you listen carefully you will hear the original melody subtly layered in with each verse. This addition was made by Eric Likness in his CA studio. Gordy and I spliced in a soundbite from the original Brudders near the end of the song. You can find the original Uffda Brudders Theme song on the Brudder's Unplugged album, available on your favorite streaming platform.

**When The River Meets The Sea** was composed by Paul Williams and made its debut in the Christmas classic, Emmet Otter's Jug-band Christmas. John Denver later performed it with the Muppets on a TV special titled, A Christmas Together. I fell in love with the song's allegorical message: We are the river and God is the sea. There are many questions in this life that won't be answered until the river meets the sea. This song is personally and emotionally important to my family. I sang it at my daughter's baptism and it was sung at my father-in-law's and brother-in-law's funerals. I'm looking forward, with great anticipation, to the day God reveals the answers to my questions.

**Think Of Me** was written by me this past year. As I get older, I often ponder what will be remembered. Whatever fate determines my legacy to be, I hope that this bit of advice is included: "Sing a song, tell a joke, keep the faith, and don't lose hope." Do these things and always think of me.

**The Nearness Of You** is a bonus track featuring Gordy Zens. Gordy is a legend! I am so honored that he gave me permission to include his arrangement on the album. Sit back and enjoy a true master playing this classic Hoagy Carmichael tune.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

I hope this music helps you on your journey. I hope it makes you smile. I hope you sing along, tap your foot, or even dance to a few of the tunes. Please keep in mind that you are listening to songs written by an amateur and sung by a man with a mediocre voice.

## LIFE IS ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC!

