



Manning

Songs from the Bilston House

Press Pack & Song Lyrics

Songs from the Bilston House

Mechanical Release : October 2007

Electronic Release : November 5th 2009

Available through Festival Music, via itunes, Amazon and through all good record shops.

All songs written by Guy Manning.

The Players

* Guy Manning: Acoustic 6, 12 & Classical, Electric Guitars, Keyboards, Bass, Bouzouki, Mandolin and Vocals

* David Million: Electric Guitar

* Laura Fowles: Alto Sax and Vocals

* Ian 'Walter' Fairbairn: Fiddle

* Julie King: Vocals

* Andy Tillison (Courtesy of The Tangent): Keyboards, Drums and vocals

* Steve Dundon (Courtesy of Molly Bloom): Flute

Song Title

Duration

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------|
| 1. Songs From The Bilston House | (06:03) |
| 2. The Calm Absurd | (07:24) |
| 3. Lost In Play | (07:05) |
| 4. Understudy | (08:13) |
| 5. Skimming Stones | (07:18) |
| 6. Antares | (07:10) |
| 7. Icarus & Me | (05:53) |
| 8. Pillars Of Salt | (10:35) |
| 9. Inner Moment | (07:33) |



FOREWORD

In 2006, I was invited to play at the inaugural two day “summer’s end” music festival. The event was being held at Bilston, a town in the West Midlands of the UK.

I wanted to attend both days and so i booked into a hotel at the outskirts of Bilston. The hotel was remarkable for two reasons:

1. It was inhabited by a macaw called Barney, who, I was faithfully informed, did not bite!

2. At the end of the road, there was a large derelict property, boarded up and dilapidate; on the outside, nailed to the boards, was a sign which proudly read in large warning letters

“do not enter here! the last person died!”

As I stopped to take a photo, several morbid thoughts ran through my mind...who died? how? when? where exactly? I wonder what else went on in there over the years?

The ideas percolated and as i started to assemble pieces for the new album, later in the year, this theme popped back to the surface again.

So, here we are then, with stories, observations and atmospheres which have been set within the walls of one building over time.

It should be stated that through no pre-determined method, many of the tales have turned out to be quite autobiographical in nature, although, most likely, these have been delivered to you in the third person (see “The Calm Absurd”)

At this time, I must also tender my apologies to the inhabitants of Bilston itself. in order to accommodate “Antares”, i have had to uplift the house and the town to the UK coast for a while. I promise I will return it one day!

Guy Manning
2007



Songs from the Bilston House

V1

Down at the Bilston House,
there's a welcome second to none
Knock on the battered door and go in
dust on the empty floorboards
show the places they stood
caught in the mirrors and in the air

V2

Each room has an imprint
and an echo of days of yore
take a photograph framed from inside
outside on the boarded window the notice catches your eye
"Don't enter here, the last person died!"

Ch1

Blue prints of a mystery
Floor plans etched in rhyme
I wonder who will be the next in line
a black edge to the corners
paper on the wall
the voices in the shadows, locked in time

V3

How many people have crossed the path
or have they stayed behind
marks on the wall record their height
who were the children on the second floor
on the landing on the stairs
something in this place is not quite right

V4

Just another story from the Bilston House
where the rooms are tumbling in
a thought in the mind that struck a chord
Personalities come and go
and seldom leave their mark
so many faces within these walls

Ch2

Blue prints of a mystery
Floor plans etched in rhyme
I wonder who will be the next in line
a black edge to the corners
paper on the walls
the voices in the shadows, locked in time



The Calm Absurd

Verse 1

Writing simple love songs,
with a smile upon my face,
I'm waiting in anticipation,
that everything will find its place,
And as I sit here now,
With a pen in my hand,
trying to find a clever rhyme
and hoping the metre will turn out fine

Verse 2

This is not the kind of song that I find easy or clear,
The lyrics seem so clumsy and they never sound sincere,
I try to go third person so the meanings are obscured,
but there's a certain charm to tripping up
and speaking plain as you hit the floor

Chorus

In the hands of the Master poet,
the meaning so easily comes,
On the banks of exotic rivers,
in the land of the Midnight sun,
Up the face of the highest mountains,
at the bottom of the deepest sea,
Searching for words in the calm absurd
when the outcome is plain to see



Lost In Play

V1

Curtains part on a brand new morning
Push away all the midnight blues
Out Of Sight, the child is calling to the day
Lost in play

V2

The birds are singing in my swinging tree
Toys still out there where I dropped them yesterday
No black & white, worries are far away
Lost in play

V3

Run fast, catcher man, find me where the rivers ran
I will canter through the wind & the rain
Up the mountainside, riding on the Copper Mine train
Lost in play

V4

Sometime later as the sun goes down on me
I can still call on the dreams and fantasy
A long time over, but still not faded away
Lost in play

Please don't fade away



Under Study

V1

I don't think about the good old days
Locked in the corner of my eye
A quick rescue from old fashioned values
Pulling me apart
Tradition is just a concrete heart in the pocket of the one eyed
king
A tug of war over family values
Till I just couldn't feel a thing
But I had to find a way
And my role in the play

V2

Caught in years of non-believing in a thought for when you die
Cross breeding through generation, my brothers & I,
Face to face and toe to toe, I stood up to play my part
Of a well beloved under-achiever with religion in a shopping
cart
But I had to find a way
And my role in the play
We started the dance

Chorus

Forty years on the dusty track, round & round but you never
came back
Climb up the mountain, parting the sea,
All to make a better man of me,
Written on the stone,
Delivered by hand,
A one way ticket to the Promised land,
Keep to the paths and don't talk back,
A snapshot in the family almanac.



Skimming Stones

V1

And in the end it all comes to nothing my friend
the church bells still will chime,
admitting the constant fellowship of time
and the moment comes and the moment comes
unannounced to us all

V2

I watched my father slip away
from the bedside armchair comfort on a Summers day
we were looking for signs, looking for signs
of something more than wastefulness...
unconsciousness - playing skimming stones
by the banks of the river - skimming stones
the banks of the river - skimming our life's stones

V3

With a coin to pay his ferryman
we set him free upon the Sea,
floating home, floating home,
a garland on the ocean,
and tears in our eyes,
contemplating everything,
in the sight of paradise - skimming stones

V4

And in the end it makes for everything my friend
the morning sun will still arise,
welcoming the constant fellowship of time
when the moment comes when the moment comes
unannounced to us all
Skimming stones



Antares

V1

Far out of sight on the crests of the ocean
The trawlers are pitched like floats in slow motion,
My father & brother, with the name of the sea,
pulling their haul & the weights, underneath.

Rolling the salt barrels, caskets of ice
The nets will burst open like birds in free flight,
The wind & the water cut through to the bone,
Turning the boat around, heading for home

Chorus

But the light from Antares has travelled to greet me tonight,
Matching the candle, that waits by the window & calls to the
night.

The light from Antares has travelled to greet me tonight,
Our own journey is short & over too soon
As the red star casts bronze on my face & the walls of my room

V2

Play host to the galaxy, bathed in delight
We sparkle the globe like firefly lights
Mayfly moments & lightning crash,
Lost in a second of brilliant flash

Whilst stretching its heart on a travelling sleeve,
The soul of this giant is barely perceived.
Ignoring our transitory nature & haste,
It stretches its fingers and flexes through space

Chorus

And the light from Antares has travelled to greet me tonight,
Matching the candle, that waits by the window & calls to the
night.

The light from Antares has travelled to greet me tonight,
Our own journey is short & over too soon
As the red star casts bronze on my face & the walls of my room



Icarus & Me

V1

Tonight's the night when all the tumblers clicked!
Remembering the practices, it all went by too quick
There's a guy on the second row and he's playing air guitar
It seems for once the people really know who we are

Chorus

Oh let the eagle fly!
Cut the leash and watch him soar on high
Catch a sailing wind and set him free
Starting on the journey, just Icarus & me

V2

Somebody's singing now - I hear all the words
Flooding back through all the years when it was hard learned
Standing in line, just to get to see the band
Promises of one day lending a hand

Repeat Chorus

Middle 8

...and it seems like yesterday
Where has all the time gone?
Losing precious moments...
So long....so long...

V3

It's no use just sitting round waiting for the phone to ring
I spent so many days alone with the room crushing in
Studying my heroes, on a single line Dansette
Bashing out the 12 bar blues with any players I could get



Pillars Of Salt

V1

Sitting in the parlour with Beatles on the radio, oh boy
Outside in the air, there was music everywhere, all in one voice,
Caught up in a moment of love
We wished that it would all be enough
But things pass away,
And we wanted them to stay

V2

Flowers in our hair,
The smell of incense blowing in the breeze
The US tigers went to war to bring the faceless peril to their
knees
Clinging to a pillar of salt
Woodstock to Altamont
The darkness pushed on,
While we sang our songs

Chorus

Standing in the shadow in the middle of the day,
Waking from a dream that ripped away,
The joyful echo of a distant star
Forgetting for a moment who we are,
Bathed in the memory of a Summers' night
With love turned to anger overnight,
Washed away in the overflow
But which way did the Sixties go?

V3

Make headline news with no delay
Martin, Marilyn, JFK are on display!
Hidden value, blood & glory
Captivating true life stories - truth mislaid!
Were we all so easily confused?
Mapping out a life of good news from Peace & love
In a world of push 'n shove

Middle 8

Clouds are racing through imagination
that challenges my mind
retrospect and contemplation
in places now hard to find
looking back now on all it seemed to be, in my heart
the foundation of the consternation in the formation of my
doubt!



Inner moment

V1

The call of my soul
When something's in the air
and the Sun is setting slowly
lonely over the sea
standing ajar
across the great divide
between the future and this moment

CH1

Leaving all the comfort
of my homeland, of my heart
the first shaky footfall on a path
and each of the footsteps,
falls in behind the rest
mile upon mile upon mile
you are calling, you are calling

V2

The door is standing open
it only takes one step
to start upon this journey
no forgiving, no regret
my heart skips a beat
as it races up the lane
to wait on the other side of this moment

CH2

Leaving all the comfort
of my homeland, of my heart
the first shaky footfalls on a path
and each and every footstep,
falls in behind the rest
to go mile upon mile upon mile
when you're calling, when you're calling me away

V3

When I return
Worldly wise, a better man
will I stop all this wandering, questioning, harnessing all I am
content in my journey's end
the tide will come to rest
on the farthest shore of this moment

CH3

Leaving all the comfort
of my homeland, of my heart
the last shaky footfall on the path
and each and every footstep,
fell in behind the rest
i went mile upon mile upon mile
while you were calling, while you were calling me away

V4

The call of my soul
Something's in the air
and the Sun is setting slowly
lonely on the sea
standing ajar, across the great divide
between the future and this one moment
this one moment