

Halfway to Summer

Colin Macduff

Lyrics booklet



Painting: Halfway to Summer

By Rita Kermack (www.ritakermack-art.com)

This new collection of songs is mainly about the joy (and challenge) of seeking to “be here now” in the present, rather than focusing over much on the past and future.

It’s been my privilege to work with these fine musicians:

Angus Lyon: all accordion, bass, midi mellotron and cello

Maria Quinn: piano track 10; Hammond track 2; backing vocals tracks 2 and 5

Gustaf Ljunggren: flutes track 4; clarinets tracks 4 and 6; pedal steel guitars track 8

Colin Steele: trumpet tracks 1, 2 and 10

Shirley Barr: vocals track 4; backing vocals track 5

Anna Massie: mandolin track 5; guitar track 9

Jenna Reid: fiddle tracks 5 and 9

Susy Wall: backing vocals tracks 2 and 5

Uwe Münnich: guitar track 7

Findlay Napier: guitar track 2

Colin Macduff: all other vocals and guitar.

All songs written and composed by myself, apart from:

Today (Colin Macduff and Maria Quinn) and Captain Macduff’s Reel (Daniel Dow)

Album produced by Angus Lyon, Gran’s House Studio

Mixed and mastered by Chris Waite

1. Halfway to summer

Halfway to summer, first sunrise in May
Up before five, it's a beautiful day
Feeling alive, is it ok to say I've survived?

Bees, blossom, birdsong, hills all around
Meeting the morning in sight, smell and sound
In love with life, feeling so well and revived

Halfway to summer, rapt in the moment
Watching the water flowing on its way
Feeling so high and closer to knowing
This day is my kind of ecstasy

Instrumental break

Worries behind me, blue sky above
Fear can't define me, it has to be love
Moving me onwards and upwards when push comes to shove

I'm halfway to summer, grinning and glowing
Half way to summer, knowing it's alright
Dark days have ebbed, the light's here and flowing
Halfway to summer, the outlook's clear and bright
Halfway to summer, let's grab that beer tonight



That feeling of being back in the hills after a good set of post-radiotherapy blood results

2. When you sing

On the edge of your voice
In the turn of your phrase
I feel warmth, I hear wisdom
Feel I'm surfing a wave

A wave that has carried
Over time and through space
All the way here unbroken
To arrive in this place

In the half light I see you
Moving round on my screen
Often wanted to be you,
Every now and then
I return again
To feel what it means

Watching you sing (*I see you*)
Hearing you near (*I hear you*)
Knowing that glow
Making everything clear

Hearing you sing (*I hear you*)
Seeing you near (*I see you*)
Knowing that glow
Making everything clear

Instrumental

Under my skin
Every time
Welcome within
Your direct line

On the edge of your voice
In the turn of your phrase
I feel warmth, I hear wisdom
Feel I'm surfing a wave

Through your eyes, through your being
Every word, every note
All I'm hearing and seeing

I believe as real
Just like I can feel
This lump in my throat

Watching you sing (*I see you*)
Hearing you near (*I hear you*)
Knowing that glow
Making everything clear

Hearing you sing (*I hear you*)
Seeing you near (*I see you*)
Knowing that glow
Making everything clear

Having you near
Means everything
And everything's clear
Everything's clear
Everything's clear
When you sing

3. Freckles

You are in History

New and sitting next to me

They say you're from Dundee

Now I'm learning Geography

Freckles sit below your eyes

Summer's resting butterflies

If only I could find a chance

I'd like to make those freckles dance

I'd love to make those freckles dance

those freckles dance

Patchouli is your perfume's name

Julie said, she wears the same

In the playground blossoms float

Still you wear your dufflecoat

Julie says you're acting strange

The freckles on your face have changed

Butterflies swarm in a mass

Boys say that you wear a mask*

Try not to stare, it's rude to ask

... it's rude to ask

You were in History

You left and had that mystery baby

Your freckles had a symmetry

You hardly seemed to notice me

Anytime I catch that scent

Can't help but wonder where you went

Did you go back to Dundee?

To give your story symmetry

You always looked so good to me

..... so good to me

You are in history.....

You are in history.....

Ah, many times I wished you'd stayed

But freckles flitand freckles fade

You are in history.....

**The "Butterfly Mask of Pregnancy": a skin condition called "Melasma" affecting some pregnant women. Brown patches appear on the skin, often on the face*

4. The hands of the hill
(featuring Shirley Barr)

I'm high on this ridge
'Cross the sky on this bridge
Taste the breeze, feel the thrill
As I heal in the hands of the hill

In a tent by a stream
Water music, sun dreams
Song bird sweet, air so still
Feel complete in the hands of the hill

Far away in the town
Working life gets me down
Always rushing around
Wage slave clown

But that view to the west
Rivers, lochs, sunlit crests
Rock as bone, earth as flesh
As I rest in the hands of the hill

Instrumental

And though wind, rain and snow
Come again I still know
Through the ebb and the flow
I will go

For as long as I live
Here I'll find perspective
From this five-fingered ridge
Glen and ben, mice and men
And the touch of the hands of the hill

I'll rest cupped in the hands of this hill

*Particular thanks to Shirley Barr (<https://shirleybarrmusic.com/>)
for singing this one*

5. My father's a songwriter now

My father's a songwriter now
It seemed to just happen somehow
He confessed first to Mum
Then he started to hum
And then write, and then rhyme, and then strum

Then he vanished to "workshop weekends"
Writing songs with his songwriting friends
To make matters worse
He writes songs about us
We're wondering where it all ends

Chorus

It's lyrics by day, and music by night
Drawn like mad moths to the troubadour light
They all think they're Joni or Loudon Wainwright
How do we tell them they're all reallynot quite?

That lyrical look's in his eyes
He's about to self-actualise
He walks round in a trance
Spends our inheritance
On promo and recording supplies

And he's got what he calls his "own rig"
Even worse now he's starting to gig
And his own new website
Where he's sweetness and light
And he's talking of making it big

Now it's lyrics by day, and music by night
Drawn like mad moths to the troubadour light
They all think they're Joni or Loudon Wainwright
How do we tell them they're all reallynot quite?

The thing is I have to admit
It looks like he's written a hit (*voices off 1*)
It's on radio shows
From Dundee to Arbroath
And I'm starting to like it a bit

I normally don't as a rule
But my friends all say that my Dad's cool (*voices off 2*)
So I'm thinking again
And I've lifted this pen
And we've signed up for songwriting school (*voices off 3*)

Now it's lyrics by day, and music by night
Drawn like mad moths to the troubadour light
We all think we're Taylor or Rufus Wainwright
And the hits haven't come but they might
The hits haven't come
The hits haven't come
The hits haven't come
but they might.....

It seemed to just happen somehow! Thanks for "voices off" to:

1 Catya "No way" Macduff

2 Shirley "Cooooool" Barr

3 Uwe "Yeah, let's go" Münnich

6. Tattoos can dream

When we were new, we got tattoos
Hid them for a day
Their red eyes blinked, wept then winked
When we peeled the wraps away

They settled in to live in skin
At home as part of us
Changing colours during dreams
Just like the octopus.....does

It worried me each time I'd see
Their strange emoticons
Signalling unknown things
Those night chameleons

Would your tattoo stay true to you?
Would mine stay true to me?
Tattoos can snooze in different hues
And bring uncertainty.... look-see

Instrumental

Bridge

We wakened late one spring Sunday
Looked down to find they had gone
Left in the night, two vacant sites
One very strange phenomenon

My ex in ink's not quite extinct
Look hard, there's still a trace
The same is true when I look at you
Cause I know the place and space

The ghost lines of the ink still
Linger in each wrinkle
But as we age and crinkle
We think they'll pass from sight...alright!?

Instrumental

So watch out for the signs
Tattoos can dream
Though you can try, you
Can't know what they mean

You can't shackle pigment
You can't tape up your seams
Forever is a figment
Tattoos can dream
Tattoos can dream
Tattoos can
Tattoos can dream

7. After dreams come true

You've made it up the ladder
The journey seems complete
What was once above your head
Is now below your feet
Officially a winner
Relax, enjoy the view
Breathe deep, air can be thinner
After dreams come true

Chorus

After dreams come true
After dreams come true
Breathe deep, air can be thinner
After dreams come true

All the things you longed for
Are all the things you've got
But still a voice is whispering
It nags and says "So what?"
It grows and starts to echo
And now it's haunting you
Some things can ring hollow
After dreams come true

After dreams come true
After dreams come true
Sometimes you hit a hollow
After dreams come true

Instrumental

Bridge

Looking round, it's hard to see
The view from yesterday
Sands are always shifting
We change along the way

So surf that golden breaking wave
While the sun shines through
But watch out for the undertow
In case it catches you
Go on out and nail it
But don't forget your glue
Love can bind the cracks you'll find
After dreams come true

After dreams come true
After dreams come true
Love can bind the cracks you'll find
After dreams come true

8. Sparkles

Winter sun comes up electric
See it sparkle in the frost
Watch it warm away the patterns
That the long night
Embossed

Beachfront morning is beginning
Brand new dawn for you and me
The sea's all sparkles, let's go swimming
Darling we've
Buoyancy
Darling we've
Buoyancy

Instrumental

Feeling high again and hopeful
Heads above the waterline
Doctor phoned you yesterday
She said it was
Benign
It is benign

Instrumental

Winter sun comes up electric
See it sparkle, feel it shine
Watch it warm away the patterns
That the long night
Embossed

9. That fiddle knows/Leaving Larchfield/Captain Macduff's Reel

That fiddle knows
Of joy, of pain.
Over time the
Tunes ingrain.
Deft fingers,
Well angled bows,
The wood gets wise:
That fiddle knows

That fiddle knows.
It goes beyond
The flashing tongues of the reel,
To where sound, first born,
Breathes and grows
To dance.
What we feel:
That fiddle knows

That fiddle knows.
There, in the slow arc
Of the borne air
Where time holds its breath
In shadows,
Through death,
To glimpse rainbows:
That fiddle knows

That fiddle knows
Of jigs and slides
The ins and outs
Our time, our tides
How life comes
Where life goes
The totalled sum:
That fiddle knows

I found myself saying "that fiddle knows!" while listening to Jenna's playing on my last album. More words then came quickly. Leaving Larchfield (the old family home) was written in tribute to my late parents. Captain Macduff's is from The Skye Collection of fiddle tunes.

10. Today

Listen dear, the dawn is near
I hear the blackbird's song
The wind has dropped
The rain has stopped
The sun may not be long
We can rise to clearing skies
Chase away the grey
We're on the weathered side of wise
But we are here today

I know that it's been hard for you
The game, the cards, the deal
You play your hand the best you can
I can't know all you feel
In your eyes that pilot light
Has sometimes ebbed away
We're on the weary side of wise
But we are here today

With you through the dark and light
With you come what may
We know it could be otherwise
But we are here today

Instrumental

Mouths to sing, feet to dance
Fingers that can play
Turn that clock to face the wall
We don't need to obey
Be here now, let's take that vow
Beyond an old cliché
We're on the winning side of wise
And we're here now today

Here with you 'til now is through,
With you all the way
We know it could be otherwise
But we're here now today

Here with you 'til now is through,
With you all the way
We know it could be otherwise
But here we are today

