

GUITAR MIKEY and THE REAL THING

OUT OF THE BOX

CUT-by-CUT

Back To You *(Michael McMillan)*

This may be my favorite on the album. It was originally written in the early 90's shortly after the A&M release Caught Between The Squeeze. The first demo of this song was a simple straight rock arrangement but I always had something more in mind for it. When rerecording it for this project, it evolved in a big way as part of the process and the vision became a reality.

That's No Way *(Michael McMillan)*

This song evolved out of a riff I used to play at shows as a prelude to an encore while the band followed me back to the stage with a wireless guitar in hand. It was kind of fun especially when we had to return to the stage through the crowd from the rear of a venue.

Blues Attack *(Doug Carter & Michael McMillan)*

This is very much a Doug Carter song in its delivery of a story. I think of Doug's lyrical prowess is not unlike that of Chuck Berry (an underrated songwriter in my opinion). This one delivers three vignettes in the same spirit of Leiber and Stoller songwriting. Billy Gibson shines on this track and in my mind; it has gotten a surprising amount of airplay compared to some of the others.

It's a Sin *(Michael McMillan & Doug Carter)*

This song was initially a possible throw-away. While I liked the song, in my mind it didn't stand up to the other songs until Billy Gibson laid his harp part down. Then...WOW!

It's Goin' Down *(Michael McMillan)*

This tribute is the first of a couple of tributes. I really wanted to write a song in homage to Robert Johnson. I came up with an approach to "yang" the "yin" of his legendary pact with the devil by entertaining the idea of what he could have written had he lived longer and realized that he had come to a spiritual misalignment. This song brought up some controversy and even anger. I even had to fight a little to keep it on the album because of the Christian subject matter somehow makes folks uncomfortable; an irony considering these same folks are OK with Robert's deal with the devil. This is also interesting considering many feel there is presently a war on Christianity in western society.

Livin' In The Big Time *(Doug Carter & Michael McMillan)*

This song would be much better in the hands of a country artist. Being another Carter gem, I thought we should keep it on the album for its storytelling.

Blues Head *(Doug Carter & Michael McMillan)*

This is a follow-up to "Blues Attack." I had a lot of fun putting this together with the commentary by Nellie "Tiger" Travis and Super Chikan. A lot of times this kind of dialog can seem a little forced on record but I think the material lent itself to this approach. Sometimes I take things too seriously and this was an opportunity to have some fun and so we did.

The Bigger Fool (*Michael McMillan & Doug Carter*)

This is clearly a tribute to one of my biggest mentors, Muddy Waters. This may have been the most difficult song to write as all the great traditional blues songs seem to have been written. How could I write something that would even stand up? I was so honored when Muddy's former guitarist Bob Margolin consented to be on this cut. Then he suggested piano veteran David Maxwell join the lineup and that was just a second layer of icing.

Need \$100 (*Doug Carter & Michael McMillan*)

This is my favorite traditional blues song, even though it is a little "out of the box" and blends jazz blues and a subtle tribute to Jimi Hendrix. I thought blues radio would latch on to this one over some of the more "radio friendly" tracks but so far, I was wrong. ☺

Freedom Road (*Doug Carter & Michael McMillan*)

I like this one a lot. It rocks and pays tribute to Richard Newell (aka: King Biscuit Boy) to whom this album is dedicated. I borrowed a bass line from a chord change in his interpretation of Jimmy Hughs' "Neighbor Neighbor." This song was originally titled "Danger Road" but it seemed to be more about an escape to freedom.

Who Is She (*Michael McMillan, Peter Nunn & Doug Carter*)

This is a song in the tradition of "ooky-spooky, voo-doo hoo-doo" storytelling; a theme that I always liked and would like to revisit more in the future.

Heart Shakin' Mama (*Michael McMillan, Doug Carter & Robert Latzer*)

This is a song that was recorded on the A&M session, but was kept in the can for a subsequent release that never materialized. It was and is a good song and thought it was worthy of rerecording for this project. I really like the space guitar in the background.

She Needs Time (*Michael McMillan*)

With a funky, swampy kind of groove, this song delivers a mature subject matter. It sympathizes with the plight of women who have been in bad or even abusive relationships. It also suggests the possibility of a positive outcome driven by a woman's inner strength to overcome.

When Leo Starts to Growlin' (*Michael McMillan*)

The origin of this song is from a single insignificant event. While sitting around a kitchen table at a friend's place, I began to ask the friend's sister for information about a woman who she had brought to one of my recent gigs. She began to laugh and said, pointing to her brother with her thumb, "You're just like Opie here." I asked her what she meant and she responded, "well when Leo starts growing". Both he and I shared that zodiac sign. I subsequently promised her that I would write a song based on the premise. It is also noteworthy that "Opie" was a nickname bestowed upon her brother by none other than Quincy Jones. Opie's real name is Oscar Peterson.

Out Of The Box (*Michael McMillan*)

This is the most personal song on the album, was written in the 11th hour of this project. It's about the making of the album as well as my entire musical journey. It also addresses the broader idea of becoming true to yourself and the fruits associated. Not to compare my insignificance to that of a Mammoth force like Duke Ellington, but it is somewhat of a tribute to him and the phrase he coined about his own music, "Beyond Category."