

Forward

The introduction of affordable home studio equipment has made it possible for musicians to independently produce music without the aid of a traditional recording studio. In addition, low-cost CD duplication and digital distribution services have made it possible for musicians to sidestep the record company and self-release albums. This is the story of how I wrote, performed and produced my third album *When April Comes*.

To begin with I used my trusty portable recorder *Edi-09* to record myself playing guitar whilst singing. The goal was to strip down the songs to their essential ingredients ready to perform live without a band. I then performed them as a final 'strength test' - songs that maintained the audience's attention were kept. At around this stage I started designing the artwork using Paintshop Pro. The picture on the front cover was taken in Regents Park. The effect I use on all of my album covers is called 'Brush Strokes' and can turn digital photography into impressionistic paintings.

The album title *When April Comes* had been in my head for a long time. April is a conceptual reference, a marker for spring, yesterday's stone's-throw. Sometimes April never comes, sometimes she comes in a different way than you expected, sometimes you can only watch her go by. *When April Comes* - the fundamental feeling behind the artistic endeavour, the cyclic nature of things, the small plans of humans floating curiously in space-time – discovered, lost, creating – a thematic and musical circle or mirror; a comment on the human experience as seen from my own unique perspective.

I aimed to visualise eight individually strong songs that when listened to consecutively became greater than the sum of their parts. Like an old record or tape with four tracks on each side or a two act play where the first act ends with a cliffhanger. This goal was achieved by thinking intelligently about the album's track listing and by carefully making each track flow into the next. If *Times Are Hard* is a song about the beginning of a man's journey then *Forever* is a song about that journey's cyclic end. Everything that happens in-between the beginning and the end happens for a reason until it all starts over again. The lyrical and musical subtext to accompany this album is one of financial and relationship stress.

Using affordable home studio equipment I have produced an album of good sound quality ready for small scale distribution. Right now I am going to play some gigs, get some reviews and see if somebody notices me. Fortunately, because of my teaching I am in a position where I support my art financially. So far in my career I have found that there is no pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. Still, as long as I am still physically able I will carry on playing my guitar, singing these songs and painting pictures in old notebooks.