

GREATEST HITS

Laura Barnett

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Lyrics by Laura Barnett and Kathryn Williams
(Except 'I Wrote You a Love Song' and 'Living Free'
by Laura Barnett, Kathryn Williams and Romeo Stodart; 'Road of Shadows'
by Laura Barnett, Kathryn Williams and Polly Paulusma; 'Home' by Laura
Barnett, Kathryn Williams and Michele Stodart)

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Each song is a lifetime. These songs are the memories.

Stevie Nicks

You don't sing to feel better. You sing 'cause that's a way of understanding life.

August Wilson, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*

So it wasn't a failure after all! It was going to be all right now – her party. It had begun. It had started. But it was still touch and go.

Virginia Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*

For Andy, of course

TRACK ONE

‘Common Ground’

By Cass Wheeler

From the album *The State She’s In*

*It was early morning when she left
And the city, under a grey sky was still sleeping
A note left on the table lying flat
Held the secrets she’d been keeping*

*We have no common ground, my love
We have no common ground
So I am leaving with the dawn, my love
And I never will be found*

Ooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo

*Crossing that dirty green London common
As the sky turned from grey to blue
A suitcase, a long-distance airfare
And a life to start living new*

*We have no common ground, my love
We have no common ground
So I am leaving with the dawn, my love
And I never will be found*

Ooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo

RELEASED 13 September 1971
RECORDED June 1971 at Union Studios, London NW10
GENRE Folk rock
LABEL Phoenix Records
WRITER(S) Cass Wheeler
PRODUCER(S) Martin Hartford
ENGINEER(S) Sean O’Malley

TRACK TWO

'Architect'

By Cass Wheeler
From the album *Snapshots*

*I was an architect
I changed my name
With just a pencil and line
I'm going to knock it down
Build it back up from the ground*

*Oh, a pencil and a line
So beautiful and fine
Just a pencil, a pencil and a line*

*My windows open like a smile
I paint my walls teeth bright white
And then I rest a while
Rest a while I rest a while*

*Like a pencil and a line
A pencil, a pencil
Oh, a pencil and a line
So beautiful and fine
Just a pencil, a pencil and a line*

Just a pencil, pencil

*A blank page
A flag on a ship
A sail full of wind and
A blueprint print print print*

*Oh, a pencil and a line
So beautiful and fine*

Just a pencil, a pencil and a line

Oh, a pencil and a line

So beautiful and fine

Just a pencil, a pencil and a line

RELEASED October 1988

RECORDED August 1988 at Hightop Studios, New York City

GENRE Folk rock / synthpop / soft rock

LABEL Lieberman Records

WRITER(S) Cass Wheeler

PRODUCER(S) David Reiss

ENGINEER(S) Todd Wallis / Leon Brown

TRACK THREE

'Living Free'

By Cass Wheeler

From the album *Songs From the Music Hall*

*I met a man who said he was living free
Nothing before him but the open road
He said, 'Why don't you just leave it all
And come with me?*

*Who only knows, who only knows
Where it will lead?*

Just leave it all behind

Give me this sad old world, I'll set it free

'You know it looks different when you're living free

*The sun rises higher in the deep wide sky
The wind it gets stronger, and the air so sweet*

*Oh, who only knows, who only knows
Where it will lead?*

Just leave it all behind

Give me the sad old world, I'll set it free'

And so I followed him and I tried living free

Who could believe that open road was mine?

The wind it grew stronger and yes, the air was sweet

*Who only knows, who only knows
Who we can be?*

Let's leave it all behind

Give me the sad old world, I'll set it free

Living free

RELEASED 10 September 1973
RECORDED July 1973 at Château d'Anjou Studios, France
GENRE Folk rock / soft rock / pop
LABEL Phoenix Records
WRITER(S) Ivor Tait / Cass Wheeler
PRODUCER(S) Martin Hartford
ENGINEER(S) Luc Giraud

TRACK FOUR

'I Wrote You a Love Song'

By Cass Wheeler

From the album *My Loving Heart*

*I wrote you a love song
But I forgot all of the words
The melody in my head
Just sounded like all the others I've heard*

*So I started again
And wondered how I could tell you
That life looks so different
Now I'm under your spell
I need to tell you
How deep and far I fell*

*There's just something about you
And I don't know what it is
Your face in the morning
And the taste of your kiss*

*And the shape that your body
Leaves in our unmade bed
Your hand in my hand
And your voice in my head
The look in your eyes
Says it's better left unsaid
Ahhh ahh ahh ahh
Ahhh ahh ahhh ahhh*

*So this is your love song
It's simple, I know*

Cast your spell on me, darling
And don't let me go
Don't let me go
Don't let me go
Don't let me go

RELEASED 15 March 1976

RECORDED November 1975 at Harmony Studios, Los Angeles

GENRE Folk rock / soft rock / pop

LABEL Phoenix Records

WRITER(S) Ivor Tait and Cass Wheeler

PRODUCER(S) Bob Wright

ENGINEER(S) Bill Freeman / Isaiah Jones

TRACK FIVE

'Just Us Two'

By Cass Wheeler

From the album *The State She's In*

*There's you in the morning
When I open my eyes
And you in the evening
When we say our goodbyes
It's just us two and that's enough for me
Just us two and that's enough for me
It's just us two and that's enough for me
It's just us two
Just us two*

*Some are only happy
When they're in a crowd
Others walk alone
In the dead of sound
It's just us two and that's enough for me
Just us two and that's enough for me
It's just us two and that's enough for me
It's just us two
Just us two*

*One and one is all we need
One and one is all we need*

*It's just us two and that's enough for me
Just us two and that's enough for me
It's just us two and that's enough for me
It's just us two
Just us two*

RELEASED 13 September 1971
RECORDED June 1971 at Union Studios, London NW10
GENRE Folk rock
LABEL Phoenix Records
WRITER(S) Cass Wheeler
PRODUCER(S) Martin Hartford
ENGINEER(S) Sean O'Malley

TRACK SIX

‘Road of Shadows’

By Cass Wheeler, Ivor Tait, Hugh McMaster
and Danny Ingleby
Previously unreleased

In the dark

Sodium glows

The white lines come and the white lines go

Under quiet chimney ghosts

We’re knocking down miles like dominoes

The old world music is the scenery

The back drop, back line, you don’t see me

Engine hums as the feeling grows

We’re knocking down miles like dominoes

Knocking down miles like dominoes

Rolling past this town on this road of shadows

Knocking down miles like dominoes

Rolling past this town on this road of shadows

We’ll listen here, listen there’s nothing I need

When I’m on the road just you and me

To feed the song inside that grows

Knocking down miles like dominoes

Above us the moon’s so round tonight

Wheels like wings as we take flight

And as the grass beneath, beneath us grows

Knocking down miles like dominoes

Knocking down miles like dominoes

Rolling past this town on this road of shadows

Knocking down miles like dominoes

Rolling past this town on this road of shadows
Knocking down miles
Dominoes
Knocking down miles
Stop. Go. Dominoes
Knocking down miles
Stop. Go. Dominoes
Knocking down miles
Stop. Go. Dominoes
Knocking down miles
Stop

WRITTEN June 1969

RECORDED September 1970, at 45 Savernake Road, London NW3
(previously available only on the bootleg *Cass Wheeler and*
Vertical Heights: The Demo Sessions)

TRACK SEVEN

'Don't Step On the Cracks'

By Cass Wheeler

From the album *Songs From the Music Hall*

*Don't step on the cracks, he said
That sad-eyed old man
With the dirty and tattered blue coat
And the bag in his hand holding everything he owned*

*I told him I wouldn't
But that was a lie
For I look for danger
His rules are not mine*

*Don't step on the cracks, you said
You've broken my heart again
It's shattered and splintered apart
And fallen too far to make up from the start*

*I told you I wouldn't
But that was a lie
For I want my freedom
And rules are not mine*

*I'll step on the cracks to get there
Although it may seem I don't care
If I have to leave you, it's not fair
But I'll step on the cracks to get there*

*I told you I wouldn't
But that was a lie
For I want my freedom
And rules are not mine*

Ahhhhh

They're not mine they're not mine they're not mine

RELEASED 10 September 1973

RECORDED July 1973 at Château d'Anjou Studios, France

GENRE Folk rock / soft rock / pop

LABEL Phoenix Records

WRITER(S) Cass Wheeler

PRODUCER(S) Martin Hartford

ENGINEER(S) Luc Giraud

TRACK EIGHT

'She Wears a Dress'

By Cass Wheeler
From the album *Huntress*

*She wears a dress
Of silk and feathers
That was her mother's
They sewed it together*

*Needle in the lamplight
Dancing in the gaslight
That hand she held so tight
She'll wear her mother's dress tonight
She'll wear her mother's dress tonight
She'll wear her mother's dress tonight*

*She wears a dress
Of lace and linen
The girl who was chosen
What was she given?*

*Needle in the lamplight
Dancing in the gaslight
That hand she held so tight
She'll wear her mother's dress tonight
She'll wear her mother's dress tonight
She'll wear her mother's dress tonight*

Oooooooooo

*Needle in the lamplight
Dancing in the gaslight
That hand she held so tight*

She'll wear her mother's dress tonight
She'll wear her mother's dress tonight
She'll wear her mother's dress tonight

RELEASED 10 January 1977
RECORDED October 1976 at Rothermere, Surrey
GENRE Folk rock / soft rock / pop
LABEL Phoenix Records
WRITER(S) Cass Wheeler
PRODUCER(S) Eli Glass
ENGINEER(S) Mike Edwards / Sean O'Malley

TRACK NINE

'Lilies'

By Cass Wheeler
From the album *Huntress*

*Lilies in the bathroom
Old men in the back room
Talking in low voices the way old men do*

*The young girl and her mother
Gentle with each other
Eat their dinner
In their finest Sunday clothes*

*Did you see the flowers, Mama?
I think they're called lilies, Mama
Oh if we could buy some for her
And put them in my room*

*Lilies in the bathroom
I am in the back room
With the old broom
And all things left behind*

*The young girl has a mother
They're gentle with each other
While I eat my dinner in this room that was yours*

*Yes, I saw the flowers, daughter
And yes, I also thought of her
And yes, why don't we buy some for her
And put them in your room*

Flowers in the bedroom
Mother's in the back room
You are in the garden and
Autumn is coming soon

RELEASED 10 January 1977
RECORDED October 1976 at Rothermere, Surrey
GENRE Folk rock / soft rock / pop
LABEL Phoenix Records
WRITER(s) Cass Wheeler
PRODUCER(s) Eli Glass
ENGINEER(s) Mike Edwards / Sean O'Malley

TRACK TEN

'Brightest Star'

By Cass Wheeler
From the album *Huntress*

*Flying through this empty night-time sky
Bridging the distance between your heart and mine
Nothing at the windows but the night
And a tiny yellow quiver looking like some fire*

*Sirius you are the brightest star
The wishing and the wanting, that will get you so far
So come and share the limelight, honey,
Come and shine your starlight over me*

*Oh, is it the darkness in your eyes?
The black hole where I fell for all your lies
But space between us only seems to grow
All you want is for the whole world to know*

*That yes, you are the brightest star
The highest and the brightest I have seen by far
So come share the limelight, honey,
Come and shine your starlight next to me*

*The brightest star
The brightest star
However far
Oh, you're so far
The brightest star
The brightest star
Oh, you're so far
My brightest star*

RELEASED 10 January 1977
RECORDED October 1976 at Rothermere, Surrey
GENRE Folk rock / soft rock / pop
LABEL Phoenix Records
WRITER(S) Cass Wheeler
PRODUCER(S) Eli Glass
ENGINEER(S) Mike Edwards / Sean O'Malley

TRACK ELEVEN

'In This Garden'

By Cass Wheeler
From the album *Huntress*

They were young when they were married

*Two kids of slender means
He was working for the council
She was painting all the scenes*

*And the house that they moved into
Was dark and old and cramped
Too hot to breathe in summer
And in winter, cold and damp*

*But outside, there was a garden
They planted beds of flowers
And she took his hand and told him
'This garden here
This garden here
This garden here is ours.'*

*It's years since they were married
Those kids of slender means
He still works for the council
She painted on their dreams*

*And the house that they still lived in
No longer dark and cramped
In summer open windows
And the warm light of a lamp*

*Outside, there was a garden
They lay in beds of flowers*

*And she took his hand and told him
'This garden here
This garden here
This garden here is ours.'*

RELEASED 10 January 1977
RECORDED October 1976 at Rothermere, Surrey
GENRE Folk rock / soft rock / pop
LABEL Phoenix Records
WRITER(s) Cass Wheeler
PRODUCER(s) Eli Glass
ENGINEER(s) Mike Edwards / Sean O'Malley

TRACK TWELVE

'Queen of the Snow'

By Cass Wheeler
From the album *Fairy Tale*
(Demo version)

*New York was silent
With fresh fallen snow
The glass and the concrete
The hard neon glow*

*On the fifty-fifth floor
On the Lower East Side
A woman stood and watched
Her newborn child*

*Oh daughter, my daughter
Your mother is here
The queen of the snow
The empress of tears*

*The mirror, it shattered
The shard's in my eyes
Ice and shadows
In this great kingdom of mine*

*One day, it will be yours
This freezing cold land
My face in your mirror
My hand in your hand*

*Oh daughter, my daughter
Your mother is here
The queen of the snow
The empress of tears*

*May you grow taller
Than I ever was
May you bring sunlight
To this nation of ice*

*Oh daughter, my daughter
Your mother is here
The queen of the snow
The empress of tears
O daughter, my daughter
Your mother is here
The queen of the snow
The empress of tears*

RELEASED Album released 7 January 1983;
this demo version previously unreleased
RECORDED November 1982 at Rothermere, Surrey
GENRE Folk rock / pop
LABEL Lieberman Records
WRITER(S) Cass Wheeler

TRACK THIRTEEN

'Home'

By Cass Wheeler

Released in aid of homelessness charities

*Home is a house
Where the windows are open
Music is playing
And soft words are spoken
All these presents
We just keep on opening
Look at what we call a home*

*Home is a place
Where the kids play outdoors
Trees in the garden
And rugs on the floors
We've done all our shopping
We're out to get more
Look at what we call a home*

*Home is a flat
On the rough side of town
With a sheet for a curtain
A patch of hard ground
Look at the Christmas tree
That we found
Sometimes you just need a home*

*Home is a roof
That lets in the rain
Mould on the walls
An ugly black stain*

*Carols they're singing
Are always the same
Sometimes you just need a home*

*Home is a bridge
A tunnel, a yard
A cold rush of air
A mattress of card
Sit round the TV as if it's a fire
And feed all the need and the greed and desire
(Shoo wap a doo we doo wop wop wop sha doobie do wap)
At Christmas
For home
At Christmas
Home
At Christmas
Home
At Christmas
Home*

RELEASED 6 December 1993
RECORDED August 1993 at Home Farm, Kent
GENRE Rock/pop
LABEL Lieberman Records
WRITER(S) Cass Wheeler
PRODUCER(S) Steve Linetti
ENGINEER(S) Jim Wright

TRACK FOURTEEN

'Edge of the World'

By Cass Wheeler
Previously unreleased

*On the beach
Threw your arms out wide
Closed your eyes against the sun
Turned your face up to the sky
If I could find a way to stay there
One moment in time
Stay behind each other's closed eyes
'This feels like the edge of the world,'
You said,
'The land bleeds into the sea
And the wind blows free.
This feels like the edge of the world,'
You said,
'I am the body of the sea
And my mind is free.'*

*On the beach
No one but us
Nothing but the wind in its rush
If I could find a way for us back there
One moment in time
Behind each other's closed eyes
'This feels like the edge of the world,'
You said,
'The land bleeds into the sea
And the wind blows free.*

This feels like the edge of the world,'

You said.

'My body is the sea

And my mind is free

And my mind is free.'

Oh the sea, the sea, the sea, the sea, the sea, the sea

WRITTEN January 2005

RECORDED January 2005 at Home Farm, Kent

TRACK FIFTEEN

'Gethsemane'

By Cass Wheeler
New and exclusive

*I pawned a golden evening
The sign said
'Please wait for me'
I called it a resting place
You are the shadow of the trees*

*Because we always follow
Up the hill, Gethsemane
Up the hill in fear
And dropping to my knees*

*Oh save me father
Save me
Call me Gethsemane
I am lonely
Call me Gethsemane*

*I stood with them and watched him
Garden of Gethsemane
He held me so tightly
Evening of Gethsemane*

*You are the shadow of the trees
Eyes burn so brightly
Told me you'd set me free
Oh please believe me
Oh save me father
Save me*

*Save me Gethsemane
I am lonely
Call me Gethsemane*

*He told me he would set me free
Set me free Gethsemane
Love would set me free
Love would set me free
Love would set me free
Love would set me free
Love would set me free
Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhh*

RELEASED 18 May 2015
RECORDED February 2015 at Home Farm, Kent
GENRE Folk rock / blues / pop
LABEL Lieberman Records
WRITER(S) Cass Wheeler
PRODUCER(S) Callum Sutherland
ENGINEER(S) Gavin Bryant

TRACK SIXTEEN

'When Morning Comes'

By Cass Wheeler
New and exclusive

*I have spent so many nights, love
Restless and alone
Sleepless in my own bed
Weary for the dawn
Well tonight I am awake, love
Like all those nights before
But nothing is the same
I've found a cure*

*When morning comes I will reach for you
When morning comes I call you
When morning comes
I can throw off the darkness
I have lived in for too long
And I will listen listen listen
To the song
To your song

I knew that nothing
Could turn me around
Nothing of my own doing
Could help me be found
When you came around to me
You opened something closed
And when you let the light in
Love grows*

*When morning comes I will reach for you
When morning comes I call you
When morning comes
I can throw off the darkness
I have lived with for too long
And I will listen listen listen
To your song
To your song*

RELEASED 18 May 2015
RECORDED January 2015 at Home Farm, Kent
GENRE Folk rock / blues / pop
LABEL Lieberman Records
WRITER(S) Cass Wheeler
PRODUCER(S) Callum Sutherland
ENGINEER(S) Gavin Bryant

Cass Wheeler: Discography

With Vertical Heights

Demo, recorded 1970; released 1978 by Angus Mackinnon and Hugh McMaster as the bootleg album *Cass Wheeler and Vertical Heights: The Demo Sessions*

As a solo artist

The State She's In, 1971

Songs From the Music Hall, 1973

My Loving Heart, 1976

Huntress, 1977

Fairy Tale, 1983

Snapshots, 1988

The Best of Cass Wheeler, 1990

Silver and Gold, 1997

The Eagle and the Hawk, 2003

Greatest Hits, 2015

Miscellanea

Backing vocalist on Dinah McCombs's single 'Don't Make Me Scream Out Loud', August 1988

Writer and lead vocalist on the charity single 'Home', December 1993

Demos for several abandoned album projects – including 2005's *On This Island*, under US producer Hunter Forbes – scheduled for reissue during 2017

Rumoured to be working on a new album, featuring at least fourteen original tracks, under Scottish producer Callum Sutherland, with a slated release date of 2018. Working title believed to be *Feel No Fear*

Original paintings to be exhibited alongside sculptures by the American artist Larry Alderson at the Cargo Gallery, London E1, in spring 2017

Acknowledgements

Nobody – at least in my experience – writes a novel in complete isolation. Yes, we shut ourselves away for long hours to get the words on the page. But the ideas, characters and themes that can – with time, hard work and a good deal of revising and rethinking – become a novel are inspired by the world around us. Our friends, partner, family. The art we look at, the plays we see, the books we read and – particularly in the case of this novel, of course – the music we hear.

I'll start, then, by thanking the women – and men – whose music has so inspired and moved me for as long as I can remember. There are too many to list in full here, but among them are Joni Mitchell, Sandy Denny, Carole King, Paul Simon, Nick Drake, Peter Gabriel, Kate Bush and all the members of Fleetwood Mac. In preparing to write *Greatest Hits*, I read many books by, or about, these artists, and I am grateful to all those authors for giving me an invaluable sense of the architecture of a musician's career.

To Kathryn Williams – a songwriter who can spin magic out of thin air – thank you for stepping off the cliff with me. To Romeo Stodart, thank you for joining us. And to Derek, Sue, PJ, Tones and everyone at One Little Indian, thank you for providing us with a safety net.

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And finally, to Andy: ‘thank you’ doesn’t feel like enough, really, but it’s all I’ve got. So I’ll say it again. Thank you. I couldn’t have written this novel without you.

LB

A note on Kathryn Williams,
and the songs from *Greatest Hits*

This novel is founded on my belief that there is no art form more evocative than music. A song has the power to transport you, in an instant, back to the moment you first heard it: to the person you were then, to the sounds and colours and feelings that shaped the contours of your world at that time.

When I hear Kathryn Williams's Mercury-nominated 2000 album *Little Black Numbers*, I am eighteen again, on my first day at university. Autumn light shining through wood-framed windows. My room spartan and empty, but for the hifi I've just unpacked. And me standing among boxes, hugging my mum goodbye, wondering whether I'll be able to avoid crying (I won't), and whether the girl in the room next door might become a friend (she will).

I've loved Kathryn's music ever since. So when, in 2015, I heard her on BBC Radio 6 Music talking about her latest album *Hypoxia*, inspired by Sylvia Plath's novel *The Bell Jar*, I stopped what I was doing and took note.

I was halfway through an early draft of *Greatest Hits* – and I knew, as I had from the moment I'd first had the idea for the novel – that I wanted the songs of my character, Cass Wheeler, to have a life beyond the page. To exist as an album, interpreted by a real-life singer-songwriter who could bring her own creativity to a unique collaboration, blurring the lines between music and literature, between the experiences of reading and listening.

Here, then, was a musician who seemed to be thinking along the same lines. The next day, I sent off a tentative email to

Kathryn's label, One Little Indian. The day after that, Kathryn herself called, and – to my amazement and delight – agreed to take on the project. As far as either of us knew, nothing like this had ever been attempted before. 'Let's jump off the cliff,' Kathryn said, and I had a vision of us doing just that, hand in hand, hoping we might just land safely.

Together, then, we have created an album of songs that exists both in its own right, as part of Kathryn's incredible, diverse output – this is her fourteenth album, and she's worked with everyone from John Martyn and Ed Harcourt to Chris Difford of Squeeze – and as a companion piece to my novel.

Kathryn has taken my own embryonic lyrics, composed in response to Cass's feelings and experiences – her attempts to make some sort of sense of her life, as all artists, in their various ways, try to do – and turned them into songs. We've cried together, drunk wine together, and laughed a *lot*. And, bit by bit, we've come up with a body of music that sits somewhere between the songs that Cass Wheeler, in my imagination, actually produced, and Kathryn's own interpretation of them: for Kathryn's own experiences as a musician, as an artist, and as a mother, wife and daughter, have of course also been brought to bear.

In October 2016, Kathryn and I spent several days holed up together in a house in Durham with a group of other novelists, poets and musicians: a retreat, organised by the Durham Book Festival, aimed at sparking more of the crossover collaborations Kathryn and I had already embarked on. As a writer accustomed to sitting alone in my study rather than to working creatively with others, it was, without exaggeration, a life-changing experience for me. I felt vulnerable, I felt raw, I felt exposed – and I have rarely felt more alive. That description could stand, too, for the whole experience of working with Kathryn.

Kathryn's album, *Songs from the Novel Greatest Hits*, is, then, both for those who have read, or would like to read, this novel;

and for those who know Kathryn's music, or would like to know it; and for anyone who is interested in music, or in literature, or in the rarely-explored borderlands between the two.

It is produced by Romeo Stodart, of the band The Magic Numbers – a man of great charm and astonishing musicianship. Romeo has also, along with singer-songwriters Michele Stodart and Polly Paulusma, contributed lyrics to several songs. I am grateful to everyone for their belief in this project, and above all to Kathryn, who provided a soundtrack to my life all those years ago – and has now done so again, both for me and for my character, Cass Wheeler.

LB



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