

## **Barenaked Ladies - A biography**

Ed Robertson (guitar/vocals)  
Jim Creeggan (bass/vocals)  
Kevin Hearn (keyboard/guitar/vocals)  
Tyler Stewart (drums/vocals)

Imagine a shrine for all great sayings, a Pop Psychology Hall of Fame if you will. On these special walls you'd find such stalwarts as "What Doesn't Kill You Makes You Stronger," "Tomorrow's Another Day" and "Everything Happens For A Reason." Right over there the "Light At The End of The Tunnel" stands next to "The Great Unknown." Sure, these sayings are ubiquitous; repeated down through the ages as mantra for some, cliché for others. But now, after 20 years together, Barenaked Ladies are taking time to walk these halls and learn from another bon mot, All In Good Time.

Yes, All In Good Time is the name of the new album, the 11th from this Canadian institution, and their first as a new four-piece. Fourteen bold and adventurous new tracks, recorded in Toronto in the spring and summer of 2009, find Ed Robertson (guitar/vocals), Jim Creeggan (bass/vocals), Kevin Hearn (keyboard/guitar/vocals) and Tyler Stewart (drums/vocals) exploring a very creative and fertile phase of their careers.

"There was a little more room for people to breathe on this record" says Robertson. "It's more rocking in places and it stretches out and becomes more spacious in others. It was a really good feeling in the studio, with everyone very comfortable together and Michael at the helm."

Robertson is referring to ace producer and long-time BNL collaborator Michael Phillip Wojewoda, who produced the band's very first full length CD, 1992's Gordon. Wojewoda jumped at the chance to capture the group's rebirth as a quartet. "The newness of the situation inspired the band to stretch musically", says Wojewoda. "Even though there were challenges, they jumped in headfirst with enthusiasm and passion. The results are very exciting. It was great to be part of that."

The move from five to four could be a tough transition for a lesser group, but Barenaked Ladies are no ordinary rock band. Founded as a duo in 1988 by schoolmates Ed Robertson and Steven Page, the group soon grew to five members and took Canada by storm with their five-song indie cassette, The Yellow Tape. Over the next decade-plus, their albums Gordon, Rock Spectacle, Stunt and Maroon went multi-platinum in the U.S., and Barenaked Ladies became a top-selling, award-winning concert draw across North America and The U.K. with their frenetic blend of high-energy melodic-pop, crack musicianship and spontaneous repartee.

Ed Robertson, the primary songwriter since the birth of the band, took a moment to share how the writing process for All In Good Time was different from past

Barenaked Ladies albums. "This was a chance for me to shed some of my writing dependencies, both good and bad, and explore new ground. I allowed myself to go places that I might not have in the past. I was more literal at times, and more abstract at others, pushing the self-imposed limits I'd adhered to for too long. The writing was cathartic for me in a way that writing hadn't been since the early nineties. It had been a huge and often dark year: an arrest, a plane crash and the death of my mother. All of these things took a heavy toll on my psyche, and spurred a lot of serious exploring."

Regarding the line-up change in Barenaked Ladies, Robertson is very candid: "Our relationship was great and very fruitful. It lasted almost 20 years, but it was time to move on. Now we're doing something that feels really fresh and exciting to me. Steven's departure left four singers and three multi-instrumentalists in the band, so we're not lacking for musical ideas, and now there's more room for the other writers in the band to bring songs to the table."

The results of Robertson's personal explorations can be heard in the standout first track/lead single "You Run Away," a story of missed opportunities and remorse: "I tried to be your brother / You cried and ran for cover/ I made a mess, who doesn't? / I did my best but it wasn't enough. "

In the brisk, angular rocker "How Long," Robertson kicks off the lines "Give it up for Anger, it makes us strong!" another echo of recent years for the famous father of three.

On the power-pop "Every Subway Car," the founding singer/guitarist takes on the angst of a love-struck guerilla artiste: "Soon the world will see / Our graffiti love/ Belton on my glove/ They'll wonder who you are on every subway car."

Finally, Robertson finds three rhymes for the apparently unrhymable word Orange in a Django Reinhardt meets Jay-Z beer-hall sing-along called "Four Seconds": "Oh Flip, The light is turning Orange / Coat ripped, when I caught it in the door hinge/ I slipped when the lady in the 4 inch / Bought it in a store in Germany." Even after a couple of years of ups and downs, Barenaked Ladies have hung on to their abstract senses of humour.

For bassist Jim Creeggan, who sings the jaunty "On The Look Out" and the soulful "I Saw It," the latter a meditation on teenaged bullying, the current version of Barenaked Ladies is breaking important new ground: "I think the band is moving forward with a clearer collective understanding of who we are, and what is at stake. Leaving Steve was one of the hardest things we've had to do and we each had to weigh in on why the band was important enough for us to continue. We came to the conclusion that the band was only worth saving if we supported one another and strove for a healthy dynamic between us. So far it's been amazing and the most creative time I can remember having with the group."

Multi-instrumentalist Kevin Hearn echoes Creeggan's notions of personal and creative growth within the band. Hearn brought three new songs to the table for All In Good Time: the symphonic "Another Heartbreak," the surreal ghost town travelogue "Jerome" and the luxuriously groovy "Watching The Northern Lights," all of which showcase his unique, fragile voice. "I brought my songs in with sketches of how I heard them," says the former St. Michael's choirboy. "They were further shaped by the guys and MPW's input. I didn't try to write 'BNL' songs, per se, rather I just tried to write songs that felt honest to me, and I knew they would be in good hands within the band."

The result of new contributions from within is a recording that is stylistically adventurous, musically diverse and the most emotionally riveting and honest work by the band to date.

"We had a bizarre year in 08", says drummer and vocalist Tyler Stewart. "A lot of upheaval, a lot of changes, but 12 months later we're stronger than we've ever been. We had to dig deep and redefine ourselves. Right now it feels really, really good to be in Barenaked Ladies."

All In Good Time, the 11th Studio Album from Barenaked Ladies drops in March 2010.