

Jason Mraz - A biography

We Sing. We Dance. We Steal Things. comes six years after Jason Mraz saw his major label debut, *Waiting for My Rocket to Come* explode off the success of such hits as "Remedy (I Won't Worry)," "You & I Both" and "Curbside Prophet." Shortly thereafter, he returned with his Grammy-nominated, critically acclaimed *Mr. A-Z*, which continued his chart success with "Wordplay." Throughout, his reputation as a tremendous live act soared.

We Sing. We Dance. We Steal Things. has earned two Grammy awards in 2010; Best Male Pop Vocal Performance for "Make It Mine" and Best Pop Collaboration for "Lucky". It also garnered three Grammy nominations in 2009, including Song of the Year, Best Male Pop Vocal Performance for "I'm Yours". The album, Mraz's most self-assured effort to date, is characterized by songs wrapped in clever, observant lyrics and strong, engaging pop melodies, all inspired by "gratitude."

"I'm Yours" is a warm breeze of a song about generosity, surrender, and openness to life's infinite possibilities set to a lilting island tempo. A demo of the song sneaked into the world a few years prior to the current release and developed a cult following. "I considered it my happy little hippie song and wanted to share it even when it was fresh and new. Over the years as we performed it live, it became the song people sang along to at the loudest volume. And they sang it to each other. That's when I realized I needed to give it a home on this new record."

"I'm Yours" has since been certified 5x platinum and made history as the first song ever to top the charts at four pop radio formats: Hot AC, CHR/Top 40, Triple A, and AC. The song holds the record as the longest-running song on the Billboard "Hot 100" chart in the charts 51-year history. Propelled by the success of the song, *We Sing. We Dance. We Steal Things.* has been a breakthrough album internationally for Mraz. More than 3.5 million albums have been sold worldwide. In addition the album's platinum certification in the U.S., the album has received multiple platinum certifications in Korea (5x), France (4x), and Indonesia (3x); double platinum certifications in Australia and Canada; and platinum certification in Hong Kong, New Zealand, Malaysia, The Netherlands, Portugal, Singapore, Switzerland, Thailand, and the United Kingdom.

Another highlight on the album is "Lucky," a simple, endearing duet with platinum singer-songwriter Colbie Caillat. "I got word that she was a fan and might consider working together, so I immediately demanded her phone number," Mraz says with a laugh. He sent her segments of a love song that she and her guitarist Timothy Fagan completed.

Caillat then joined Mraz in a London studio where he recorded the album with producer Martin Terefe, best known for his work with Coldplay and James Morrison (who guests on the intricate "Details in the Fabric").

Terefe, along with songwriter/pianist Sasha Skarbek (who co-wrote James Blunt's "You're Beautiful"), also played a hand in co-writing some of the tunes with Mraz, including "Love for a Child," a searing autobiographical tale of Mraz's parents' split when he was five. "I don't usually care to share the crafting of the lyrics," Mraz confesses. "Sasha and Martin did a wonderful job introducing me to melodies and textures, while pushing me to sing my instincts. In the case of 'Love for a Child,' my instincts kept leading me back to getting complete with my parents. I was nervous about it as it isn't your typical love song, but I think that's why it resonates with so many. Whether or not you're in a relationship, we all have one with our parents. And until you acknowledge them, it's hard to practice unconditional love or act with integrity in the rest of your life."

While Mraz and Terefe deliberately kept the music stripped down, they added flourishes that distinguish "We Sing" from standard pop fare, including a gospel choir on "Live High," and operatic embellishments and a children's chorale on "Coyotes."

"Martin is an extraordinary artist," Mraz says. "He holds space for whatever I choose or choose not to express. Putting his producer image aside, he supports the artist. So in my case, both fervency and humor get to be represented. A fine example is his willingness to bookend "Details in the Fabric" with the ridiculous voice mail messages left on my phone one afternoon by my good friend/writing partner Bushwalla."

The album takes its title from a piece of art by Glasgow-based visual humorist David Shrigley that Mraz saw in Scotland while traveling.

"We are a language based species," hums Mraz, "So anything that comes out of our mouths is our song. Our movement is our dance. And anything we might take for granted, well, consider it stolen moment."

For an artist who is so well known for his clever, inspired way with words, it should come as no surprise that many of the songs for "We Sing" were born from a songwriting game he plays with a number of other artists, including noted Texas-based songwriters Billy Harvey & Bob Schneider. "Bob and company will give me a word or a phrase, and I'll have to turn that info into a song and email it to everyone else who's playing." The impressive verbal torrent that spills forth on "Dynamo of Volition" that once again shows Mraz's unmatched ability to sing at the speed of sound, came from being tasked to use the phrase "blind man's bike." Similarly, "Coyotes," "Butterfly," and "Lucky" all sprung to life after starting from songwriting challenges. "The game is like a support group. It's a way for writers to encourage each other, to stay active in their craft and not get too heady and where their song might end up."

Mraz's songwriting talents were recently recognized when he received the Songwriters Hall of Fame's esteemed "Hal David Starlight Award" at the

organization's 40th anniversary gala. The award - given to gifted songwriters who are making an impact in the music industry via their original songs - has previously gone to such artists as Rob Thomas, Alicia Keys, John Mayer, and John Legend.

"For me, music is the closest I may ever get to realizing what God is. (Music) is an awesome invisible force that gets under your skin, makes you dance and has the power to transform you. I'm the most at ease when I'm wrapped up in a song or deep inside the mania of the creative process. Success to me is the exploration of sound and vibrations and the freedom that exists when you dwell in those spaces. Awards and recognition are always encouraging and nice to receive, but they're just a pageant show compared to the real reward that music gives. Therefore, I'll be writing songs and setting stages for a long time to come. I'm hooked on it. And I'm grateful."