

# Music Review: Stephen Inglis – ‘Learning You By Heart’

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Stephen Inglis is a Grammy-nominated Hawaiian slack key guitarist who recently released a new album titled *Learning You By Heart*, a fun, soothing, and very pleasant collection of 13 songs. While Inglis took care of a lot (vocals, acoustic and electric guitar, guitarlele, harmonica), he also got help from Jon Hawes (upright and electric bass), Tom Piranha Gierman (drums), Michael Piranha McGraw (electric bass, harmonica), Eric Petersen (keyboards), Kilin Reese (mandolin), Chris Lau (upright bass), Paul Sato (banjo), and Erika Elona (backing vocals).

All offerings are set within a relatively simple general formula: warm vocals, detailed acoustic guitars, some strings, and one or two variations per track. From the slow and poignant “Learning You By Heart” to uptempo and fun “Lay Your Dagger Down” and running by the anthemic “My Latest Offering”, the album runs through a gamut of emotions. The melancholic “Our Younger Days” comes in sharp contrast to the sensual “Maria Luisa”. The inspirational “Don’t Postpone Joy” relies on the beautiful vocals of guest Patti Cathcart-Andress, while “Cold Sunday” uses a harmonica to reflect the warmth of a home and an acoustic guitar solo to the joy of having one.

There are no gimmicks here; listeners get exactly what they expect based on the titles and only on the first track. But far from making the set a homogeneous or boring one, the songs are each crafted with enough variation that it keeps listeners well engaged, with the lyrics doing most of the job. For Inglis is a storyteller and a bit of a poet, weaving stories of love, joy, loss, and rebirth set within the embrace of carefully crafted instrumentation than enhances rather than makes up for the lyrics.

Tracks are available for streaming on [SoundCloud](#). More information is available on his [official website](#) and [Facebook page](#).