

Stephen Inglis puts a lot of human heart into his music. He plays virtuoso guitar, both acoustic and electric, but he never plays at a hundred miles an hour just to show off. He doesn't jack up his sound to a hundred decibels just because he can. Stephen is a singer-songwriter, and he believes in the wonderful definition of "song" by Yip Harburg, who wrote the lyrics to "Somewhere Over The Rainbow." Words make you think a thought. Music makes you feel a feeling. A song lets you feel a thought. Track by track on "Learning You By Heart", Stephen lets you feel his thoughts about life and love. In the title song, love starts early and lasts a lifetime.

*Back when we were kids,
Hanging out in school,
No one ever called me clever,
I just played the fool,
But when you smiled I paid attention,
I remember from the start,
Didn't know what I was doing,
But I was learning you by heart*

In other tracks, the music of life plays differently. At the weekend party in "Maria Luisa," it's the soundtrack to a one night stand;

*Swingin hips,
laughin lips,
Check out every man,
He's got thirty seconds,
Catch me if you can,
Forget your thirty seconds,
Can I slow her down?
Next thing, we're dancin,
Like there's no one else around Her and me,
Slow dancin Horizontally*

In the music life, the road has all kinds of twists and turns. For Stephen, it began with his upbringing in Hawai'i, where just by being alive you can breathe in music. At five, he played in a piano recital in a Honolulu concert hall. He sang in a boys' choir, harmonizing his heart out among all the other little trebles.

His older brother turned him on to classic rock—Hendrix, The Doors, The Dead, on and on. At age twenty-two, Stephen played with legendary Grateful Dead drummer, Bill Kreutzmann, in the group "House Of Spirits", from that moment on, the guitar was it, both acoustic and electric. He devoted years learning Hawaiian Slack Key guitar from the best.

In his twenties he took off for the Bay Area where he released his first two albums, both singer-songwriter originals, "Fringes of the Highway" and "Driftwood". His instrumental "Redwood Slack Key," was featured on the Grammy nominated album Hawaiian Slack Key Kings Volume 2.

His slack key playing had grown to be good enough in technique and understanding of tradition for him to tour with the masters. He went on to record with one of the all time great Hawaiian guitarists and composers, Dennis Kamakahi. In 2012, their duet album "Waimaka Helelei "won a Na Hoku Hanohano

Award, the Hawaiian version of the Grammy. The album is on permanent display in the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC. Serving as a testament to Stephen's respectful understanding of tradition.

At the same time he is an innovator, willing to take creative risks. On "Slacking With Dylan", he put slack key together with classic rock. It worked. The album won a Hawai'i Music Award.

He is a great collaborator, in Hawai'i and beyond. In 2014, on the West Coast, he hooked up with two virtuoso guitarists, Thomas Leeb and Shawn Jones. All three of them had solo careers, in very different kinds of music, from Hawai'i to Nashville, Ireland to West Africa and back. The only thing they had in common was that they all played Lowden guitars. They decided to book a tour. It was so successful they recorded together. From all their different musical roads came a 2014 EP, "Common Ground".

"Learning You By Heart" is his ninth album. Here is the opening verse of the final track, "The Long Run."

*Down the country road,
Called the long run,
Travel on,
In the morning sun Looking to find,
The meaning of the sign Down the country road,
Called the long run,
That's Stephen in it for the long run,
learning life by heart,*

Stephen's latest album, "Cut The Dead Some Slack", Grateful Dead done Hawaiian slack style has been garnering rave reviews worldwide.

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