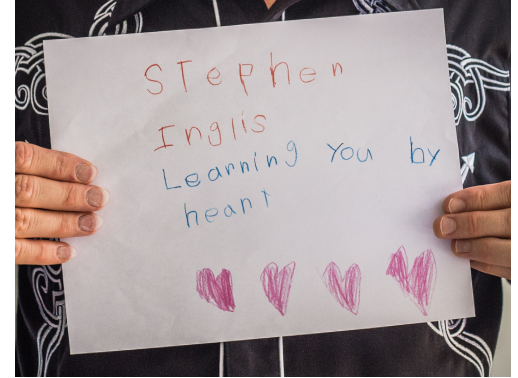


Stephen Inglis...Guitar Slinger/Word Singer Learning You By Heart



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. And he does not 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 where he was born—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. Then his older brother turned him on to classic rock—Hendrix, The Doors, The Dead, on and on . . . And from that moment, the guitar was it. Electric, but acoustic too. And Hawaiian slack key, which he devoted years to learning—from the best, from the heart. In his twenties he took off for the West Coast, and out of his time in the Bay Area came his first two albums of 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—and to record with one of the alltime 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.

That is 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 busy 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 Lowdens. They got on well, and decided to book a tour. That worked out fine, so they decided to record. From all their different musical roads came an EP in 2014, *Common Ground*.

At home and out in the big world—club gigs and festivals, recording, touring, city nights and country days—Stephen lives the music life to the full. He wouldn’t have it any other way. *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, finding joy in making music of everything he learns.

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