

Over the years I have written many a song, well over 100, some of which I have recorded to a reasonable standard and released. That said, most of them never made it further than a demo recording residing on my hard-disk or on an old tape recorder, cassette recorder and other equipment I no longer have access to.

I had promised myself that when I retired from my day job in 2023 I would re-visit them and re-record them to a higher standard. Well I did retire in March 2023 but I just can't get around to re-recording them and I probably never will. Besides, it's much more fun working on new stuff.

So when I stumbled on a box full of cassettes, tapes and old recordings I had to decide what to do with them. Can you just throw away or discard songs you had so much fun writing at the time?

I guess so, but these songs did have some kind of personal value to me and I thought that maybe they may bring a smile to a few faces too. So I decided to put this small collection of 8 demo's recordings onto an album and release it on our Lakeside Stories label.

In order to give the patient listener some kind of context as to what triggered these songs and what they relate to, I am providing this document as a reference.

1. Elisabeth's Fritzl's Dream

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The song is obviously about the horrible story behind the abduction and 24 year imprisonment of Elisabeth Fritzl by her monster of a father in the basement of their house. It certainly wasn't ever my intention to write a song about such a despicably cruel and horrible act. However one evening I was playing around with a new idea for a song but had no lyrics to it. So I just started to improvise by mumbling what ever came into my head and recorded that hoping that it might render some useful lines I could work on.

One of the sentences that was on that first recording was 'It's A Dream So Obscene'. Having listened back to it I thought 'what the fuck is that?'. It seemed very much like another non-starter, but having given it a bit more thought, it brought me to the Fritzl story, which like most people I had seen via the news on TV and in the newspapers. I decided to research the story in a bit more detail on Wikipedia and found some interesting and compelling facts not highlighted in the mainstream media.

Apparently during a very rare interview with Elisabeth Fritzl after her release she was asked how she managed to survive being locked up in a dark basement without daylight for 24 years. She told the interviewer that she would sometimes go for imaginary walks up a mountain. In order to visualise her walk she would turn out all the lights in her basement and walk in complete darkness for an hour or so in clockwise circles in her room imagining the walk. Then she would pause to take in the imaginary view at the top of the mountain before walking in the other direction back down. Only then would she turn the lights back on. She said it gave her the false sense of enjoyment of a 'Nice Day Out'. That story certainly inspired me to proceed with the song and that is where the title has been derived from. Another aspect of the story I found very interesting was the role of the

mother who had lived upstairs in the same house Elisabeth was held captive, but why had she not taken any action although she must have suspected something very strange was going on all those years.

2. Turn The Lights On

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This song has no connection with the first song although the title may imply that. It is in fact about the sorry state of affairs in the world we live in. Especially the way politicians and many large corporations are obsessed with greed and their desire to increase profit at the expense of the general public and their workers.

3. Building Bridges

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In the late 1990's my employer IBM enrolled me for a 2 year course on project management and leadership. I was told at the time that the course was very expensive and was only available for employees they deemed as potential candidates for leadership roles as their careers developed.

I was never really interested in a management position at IBM but I did find it very flattering that they considered me for such a course. The course was spread out over a long period about 2 years in which we learned all kinds of skills involving role play with professional actors, survival adventures, raft building, as well as the more mundane management skills like delivering reprimands and firing people. It was a small team consisting of 9 or 10 employees. Over the 2 year period we really got to know each other quite well, both our strengths and weaknesses were revealed in the many exercises they took us through. We had almost forgotten that all of our actions were being filmed and analysed by a team of psychologists throughout the 2 year period. At the end of the course we were summoned one by one to a beautiful mansion in the forrest to receive the results of their analysis.

I was quite relaxed going into the meeting as I still had no desire to become a manager, but I had immensely enjoyed the 2 year period, made new friends and a few enemies and had basically learned a hell of a lot.

Once seated in the boardroom with a team of psychologists and management consultants sitting opposite me I was first asked how I experienced the course. I laughed and said, 'it was a blast, great fun, learned a lot, thoroughly enjoyed it bla bla'.

There was a short silence before one of them said with a stern face. Well Chris, we enjoyed spending time with you too, but we have come to the unanimous decision that you are not suitable for a management position at IBM. They paused to gauge my response. I was quite surprised as I thought that everything had gone quite well. I didn't care about their decision but I was very curious about how they had arrived at their judgement and inquired about that.

It was at that point that they pressed a remote button to lower a large projector screen from the ceiling and said. So, shall we have a look at some of the footage we took of you

over the last 2 years? Well guess what,.. after just 10 minutes of watching that, I was also convinced that they were right! Needless to say, I never did go into management at IBM but I did have an interesting career lasting for 34 years in software development, services and sales.

This song is about some of the events that took place over the 2 year course and zooms in on the strain on the relationships with class mates. I guess you could compare it to the TV series The Apprentice in that respect. The punch line of the song should have been 'We're all International Business People, not International Business Machines' (IBM). However I even managed to fuck that line up during the actual recording of the song and got it back to front!

4 Jajum On Friday Night

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This song is about my former local Pub called Satchmo, which was commonly known to all that frequented it as Cafe Jajum. The pub was owned by Peter Jajum (not his real name). I think Jajum means Rum. The tiny pub was conveniently located within crawling distance at the end of my street in Hoorn and was a haunt for the down and out types, drug addicts, alcoholics and all types of weirdo's. Not the sort of place you would want you kids to go to. However despite that, it was my local pub and I felt quite at home there with that weird crowd. What made it even better were the uncoordinated jam-sessions, which at times could really strike up a groove. The song describes a number of the local regulars and the atmosphere during the jam-sessions evenings.

The song is preceded by a voicemail message from my dear friend Ian Moffatt who sadly died around 2008. Ian or Moff as he was known to his friends had left Cardiff to live in Hoorn in Holland together with Steve Phillips and myself. The three of us all from Cardiff were regulars at the Friday night jam sessions in Jajum. Moff, Steve Phillips and I were very close friends and had been through a lot of things together playing in bands in the UK, Germany and Holland. One evening shortly before Moff passed away we were standing outside the Pub smoking and I asked Moff how it felt to be dying? He smiled and answered 'well I guess you could say that we are all standing in line waiting to die, but I just got moved up to the front of the queue.' About a year after he died, a group of musicians and the owner, Peter Jajum decided to organise a special tribute jam-session for Moff to be held on a Friday.

We had set the date about a few weeks in advance and I can remember driving home from work in Amsterdam on that night of the tribute. I got stuck in traffic on my way home and checked my Nokia phone for Voicemail. There were no new messages, just 1 old message which it asked me whether I wanted to delete. I decided to listen to it first. You can imagine how freaky it was to hear Moff (dead for a year) asking me whether I was going to the session tonight in Jajum. Sorry for the poor VM quality but sometimes it is easy to make compromises like that.

The scream on the track was actually provided by Ina who I invited back to my studio after closing time at Jajum just to record her excruciatingly pierce scream. You may need to put ear plugs in!

Another memorable occasion at Jajum was when an Englishman with one arm showed up at the session and asked me whether he could join us on drums. I looked at him and his disability for a while, then thought,.. well weirder things have happened at Jajum before,..

so yeah, why not! What surprised everyone including me was that he was a fantastic drummer despite the inconvenience of having just one arm and hand.

After we had played for about an hour I joined him at the bar and complimented him on his playing. I asked him if he was in a band. He whispered, 'yes, actually we're rather famous'. 'Oh really, what are you called then?' I replied. 'Def Leppard'. 'Hmmm, sorry never heard of them.' Needless to say when later that evening I finally got the spelling right, I was embarrassed to read that they had sold 12 million or more copies of their latest LP and that we had had the pleasure of playing with Rick Allen or The Thundergod of Def Leppard as he was also known. I think he came back to Jajum about 4 or 5 times in total and loved the place. Richard didn't make it onto the song but the story does highlight the magic of Jajum, which has since been closed down as pub and converted into a regular house.

For more about Jajum, I have written a short fictional story entitled [The Second Wave](#).

5. Caribbean Greetings

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This is a very old song written in the mid 1980's. Having just found some well paid work as a systems programmer, I treated myself to a number of long vacations in Jamaica as I became obsessed with reggae music and felt that in order to really understand it I needed to just go there and feel the vibe first hand. On one of my trips I met a young local lady who accompanied me for a few days while we were exploring the north coast of the Island. Nothing spectacular happened with that relationship but she did send me a Christmas Card a few months later which I used to help me write some lyrics to the song. A bit like the Beatles did with the song For The Benefit Of Mister Kyte of which most of the lyrics were extracted from a poster advertising a local travelling fair.

Although the Christmas card provided me with a few usable lines, I was looking to write a song about what it would possibly take in order to resolve all our worldly troubles like war, racism, and famine. I think I may have been under the influence of some dubious substances at the time, but all of a sudden, it came to me. What if the earth was invaded by a hostile group of aliens, maybe then,... people from all different political flavours, races and creeds would finally unite together to face up to our cosmic attackers! Within minutes this song was written and recorded, never to be revisited!

6. She Was A Phantom Of Delight

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Anyone with the slightest knowledge of English literature would recognise the title as a poem from William Wordsworth. I think I must have been looking out of the classroom window when we covered him at school. My first encounter with the man was when I was planning to visit the Lake District in the UK and stumbled on one of his books in which he documented his favourite walks through the Lake District where he had lived most of his life. When I arrived in the area, I decided to pay a visit to the Wordsworth museum in Grasmere, which is a very picturesque village in Cumbria. It was very frustrating to find out that both the museum and his house were both closed for renovation to commemorate 200 year Wordsworth. Only the gift shop was open so I bought a tea mug and a book of his poems.

On return to Holland I was fooling around in my studio and needed some lyrics to try out a new song. Lazy as I am, I grabbed the Wordsworth book of poems and was surprised to find out that

the the first poem I tried fitted the song perfectly. So I thought maybe I could set a few more of his poems to music and basically before the week was out I had written 3 songs all using Wordsworth poems as a lyric. I recorded this song together with my songwriting partner Laurens Reij and rebranded it Perfect Woman which we dedicated to our dear friend and Lakeside Stories graphic designer Marion Buis. Marion was in her final months fighting a losing battle with cancer. It was the least we could do for her after all the great work she had put in over the years for our Lakeside Stories organisation.

We later contacted the Wordsworth organisation to inquire whether they would be interested to have more of his works put to music in a joint venture. We were very frustrated that we didn't get a response from them. After waiting for a month or so I looked them up online and saw that they had a small team of about 7 people plus a dog called Ralph The Shredder. In a pathetic last effort to get their attention I sent a new letter addressed to Ralph with short message offering a doggy treat as a bribe for passing on our information to their director of marketing. Within days they did reply and although they were unwilling to participate in the venture, they did wish us luck and gave us permission to use his poems in our songs and publish them as there were no issues with the copyright.

7. Be Gone, Be Gone

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Well what shall I say? Separation and divorce from someone you love dearly is a sad and painful experience that many of us have had to experience sometime during our lifetime. My case was no different, and shortly after my divorce, I used this song as a vent for my bitterness and feeling of betrayal at the time. It's not a song that I am very proud of, but it did more or less sum up my feeling of emptiness and frustration at the time.

Luckily time and reflection is a great healer for most people and over time I was able to overcome my sadness and bitterness. Now 5 years on I believe that we both have been able to put things into perspective and move on with our lives, possibly looking back on some of the better times we shared during our long relationship.

8. Final Farewell

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As the title would suggest this is a song about the last phase of life. The song was triggered after an hour session I did with a young and talented songwriter. She had written a number of very sad but beautiful songs while going through some personal issues. Her problem was that since her problems were somewhat more under control her creative side had dried up. She approached me and wanted to chat about songwriting in general and in particular how to become creative and write new songs without the depressing personal circumstances which brought about her first batch of songs.

I thought that I might be able to help her or at least offer some guidance to help her get back to writing without having to wait for the next sad experience. In the back of my mind I was thinking of songwriters like Bob Dylan who was an absolute master of describing a situation full of injustice or making a compelling case for some kind of protest without necessarily being personally connected or involved in the situation.

We made an appointment to meet but her father wanted to come along. She was quite young at the time and I didn't want to say no, but I did feel very uncomfortable and awkward with her father sitting there as a spectator. The session didn't go too well and I wasn't really able to explain my point that you don't necessarily need to be sad yourself in order to write a sad song. In fact often all you need to do is to place yourself temporarily in someone else's shoes, and the emotions and inspiration should appear similar to when you experience something yourself.

Any after an hour or so they left and I was left sitting in my little studio thinking about how I had dealt with the situation and how I could have done things differently. Maybe I should have foreseen that bringing along a parent was not a good idea.

Feeling a little frustrated and disappointed, I decided to challenge myself to do exactly that what I had planned to ask her to do. I.e. Write an emotional and sad song without being personally affected. After giving it some thought I came up with a lyric written in the first person from someone who is terminally ill and in their final days of life. That was quite easy to reflect on at the time as one of my extended family was in the process of losing her sister at a much too young age and with young children and a loving husband to leave behind. The song was finished within 20 minutes and during those 20 minutes I tried to put myself in the position of someone who had just a short time left. I even managed to re-use the same chord progression that the girl from the meeting had showed me which she was working on.

I later offered the song to the bereaved family member when the sister died shortly afterwards.

I would like to think I have a bit more time left to enjoy life at the tender age of 67,... but should I get the bad news tomorrow, then I'm pretty sure that this would more or less sum up my feelings.

9. I Think I'm Going Down

I would have liked to include a 9th track on this Demo Collection Album entitled 'I Think I'm Going Down', written back in March 2020 at the start of the COVID pandemic. However it was rejected by our distribution partner Dittomusic in the UK who requested we remove the samples we had used from a Boris Johnson broadcast on the BBC. The song also contained samples of Mark (Teflon) Rutte, Geert Wilders and Aura Timen who didn't have any objection to the use of their sampled contributions. In the end we decided to remove the track from the album but you can still listen to it [here](#) If you want. Whatever, Laurens and I had lots of fun recording it especially the cheesy Bee-Gee like background vocals for which we had to tighten up his trousers a few notches.

Thanks for reading this far and listening, have fun!

Cheers, Chris & Laurens

The logo for Lakeside Stories is located in the bottom left corner. It consists of the word "LAKESIDE" in a bold, white, sans-serif font, with a white wavy line underneath it. Below the wavy line, the word "STORIES" is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. The entire logo is set against a dark grey or black square background.

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