

# Barenaked Ladies

## **BARENAKED LADIES ARE ME**

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#### **Barenaked Ladies Are...**

**Ed Robertson:** vocals, guitar.

**Steven Page:** vocals, guitar.

**Tyler Stewart:** drums, backing vocals.

**Jim Creeggan:** bass, stringed instruments, and vocals.

**Kevin Hearn:** keyboards, guitar, and vocals.

#### **Barenaked Ladies Are:** Experienced.

Having toughed it out for over 15 years, this five-piece Toronto based band has witnessed births, marriages, deaths and near-death experiences in addition to their prodigious professional accomplishments. They are also a top concert attraction and musicianship has been one of the band's founding principles ever since they started out, in their teens, at a Summer Music Camp in Ontario, Canada.

#### **Barenaked Ladies Are:** Prolific.

Their very first recorded output, "*The Yellow Tape*" was a self-produced, home-marketed five-song cassette, which went Gold in Canada setting their native recording industry on its ear and triggering a do-it-yourself "indie" revolution in the 90's. Over the next decade and a half, BNL have amassed an impressive catalogue, from their precocious debut *Gordon* and career making live album *Rock Spectacle* to their multi-platinum breakthrough *Stunt* and its follow-up *Maroon*. Mixing socially conscious observations with crafty lyrics, BNL have racked up memorable hits like "Pinch Me," "If I Had A Million Dollars," "Brian Wilson," "The Old Apartment," "Too Little Too Late," "Falling For The First Time" and the Billboard Number One Hit, "One Week."

**Barenaked Ladies Are:** Pleased to announce the simultaneous release of multi-platform versions of *Barenaked Ladies Are Me* on September 12, 2006 through their own label, **Desperation Records**.

#### **Barenaked Ladies Are:** Bridging the digital divide.

While a conventional 13-song CD will be available in stores, BNL are also pleased to be able to offer their music directly to their fans online. One package features the 13 songs from the physical CD plus 2 bonus songs. In addition, they will offer fans a 27-song digital package, *Barenaked Ladies Are Me: Deluxe Edition*. Also planned is a physical USB flash memory stick complete with all 29 new songs and special bonus content.

Additionally, *Barenaked Ladies Are Men*, a CD comprised of songs not on the physical *Barenaked Ladies Are Me* CD, will be released in early 2007.

#### **Barenaked Ladies Are:** All grown up.

While they've retained their boyish sense of fun over the years, the musical and lyrical themes on *Barenaked Ladies Are Me* demonstrate a maturity you'd expect from five guys with young families who have played together, like, forever. Like all of us, sometimes they don't know whether to laugh or cry.

"For us," says Page, "with the events going on in the world and our country's unfortunate slide to the right of the spectrum, it was inevitable that we carried on with some of the political themes we explored on *Everything To Everyone* (2003). But for me now, it was truly about making those situations personal."

*Barenaked Ladies Are Me*, their most melodic and accessible album since *Stunt*, is also the band's most cohesive and holistic set of songs. More than ever, they wrote together, jammed together and lived together, raising each other's standards and blurring the lines of who wrote what.

Although some of the material had been kicking around, in various forms, for a while, Page and Robertson met up at Page's house in the spring of 2005 to begin writing songs specifically for the new album. While admittedly, they

didn't write many songs in this initial session, the two did manage to come away with three of their personal favorites from *Barenaked Ladies Are Me*: "Home," "Rule the World With Love" and "Wind It Up".

After a summer life break, the two reunited in the fall, this time at Robertson's cottage, for another concentrated writing session.

"We spent 4 or 5 days there," says Robertson, "and finished 13 or 15 songs. It was a really productive and creative time. We wrote "The New Sad" together in what seemed like about 45 minutes, but was probably a few hours. Steve had brought a bunch of partial songs, and I had too. We finished them all together. Jim's track, and Kev's 4 were written by them alone."

"Meanwhile across town," says Page, "Kevin was writing about a dozen songs per day."

Secluded in what he calls a "little cabin" deep in the forests of Northern Ontario, Hearn was indeed enjoying a rather prolific period. Beside the songs he brings to *Barenaked Ladies Are Me*, Hearn completed a whole other solo work to be released separately.

By the time the band reconvened at a Toronto rehearsal hall in the fall of 2005, they had around 35 songs to learn, arrange and rehearse, which they eventually pared down to *only* 29.

"I can't believe the sheer volume of songs we had," Stewart recalls.  
"We cleaned out all of the cupboards with this CD," adds Hearn.

In showing their new songs to the group, Page and Robertson abandoned their previous method of making elaborate multi-track demos, a process which Page admits was sometimes a little limiting to the other guys.

"This time," says Page; "Ed and I did very simple acoustic guitar and vocal ideas in GarageBand to allow for other members to be as creative as they could be and to put their own personal stamp on each song."

As a result, *Barenaked Ladies Are Me* more accurately represents a group dynamic where everyone workshopped each other's ideas into full Barenaked Ladies songs.

"The place where we intersected," says Page, "was where the band exists."

Creeggan 's congenial "Peterborough and the Kawarthas" is a case in point.

"I had the line in the chorus '*I left you in the rain, Peterborough and the Kawarthas*' for about two years," says Creeggan, " Kevin encouraged me to keep at it and offered '*I watched you from the train.*' Kevin's new line gave me hope. Steve helped organize the order of some of the lines of the verses just before I recorded the lead vocal. Ed suggested that I develop the melody of the verses as the song progressed. Every bit of advice went a long way."

Creeggan recalls saving Page's previously abandoned "Everything Had Changed" from the scrap heap.

"It wasn't until we unearthed it during the practices for this record that we found the right tempo for the song. Ed suggested that we play it double time with a Django Reinhardt lilt, which brought it to life."

"Kev wrote the first verse and chorus for 'Adrift'," Page recalls, "and Ed and I wrote the rest of the lyrics."

"It's the type of song that I like to hear Ed's voice on," says Hearn, "so I am very pleased that he adopted it. I am also happy that Steve sang one of the other songs I brought in, 'Sound Of Your Voice.'"

In October, Barenaked Ladies moved into Page's home studio, Fresh Baked Woods, recording and living together in a manner reminiscent of the sessions for their first album *Gordon*, which had been recorded in a chalet studio in rural Quebec.

"Everyone seems very comfortable there," says Page. "The surrounding woods, the pond, etc., are lovely and hopefully inspiring."

“Because it was Steven’s house,” Stewart adds, “we were all still close to home, so we could skip out and see our families if the kids got sick or our wives were really missing us.”

“Working with [*Stunt* producer /engineer] Susan Rogers again was a real treat,” says Page. “She’s a great fan of music and has a great sense of what serves the song best.”

“She’s very adept in steering us in the best musical direction,” says Hearn, adding, “one morning she even cooked us a pancake breakfast!”

After initial tracking, the band took a break from recording to tour their perennial *Barenaked For The Holidays* (also on Desperation Records) before returning to Fresh Baked Woods in January 2006 to complete overdubs and final touches.

Stewart cracks that Robertson wore his “Southern Ontario Prog Rock hat” when they enlisted Canadian rock guitar hero Kim Mitchell to play on “Wind It Up”.

“‘Wind it Up’ is *huge* for me,” Robertson states proudly. “Kim Mitchell playing that guitar solo is the realization of everything I wanted to be in high school. Having him show up at the studio knowing, and *liking*, a song that I wrote was really special for me. My high school band played about 15 of his songs. I was, and still am a huge fan. He's a really sweet guy, and in my opinion, the best rock and roll guitar player on the planet.”

Creeggan once again took an active role in arranging, performing and recording the string parts for the album. At times, such as on “Rule the World With Love,” he played all the parts himself.

“It was like creating a symphony with a whole lot of Jims,” jokes Creeggan.

In May, renowned engineer Bob Clearmountain came to Toronto’s Metalworks Studios to mix it all into a cohesive whole.

“The man's incredible,” declares Robertson, “full of great stories about working with some of the coolest artists ever, on some of the most memorable recordings of our lives. He really brought out the absolute best in these tracks. It's incredible to watch him work and he’s so *insanely fast!* He mixed 29 songs in 15 days!”

“Bob would understand the intention, or the humor, behind the simplest percussion part in a 60-track song,” Creeggan reports, “and find room for it to shine in the final mix.”

Having come full circle from the days of their homemade indie cassette, the little indie band that could have returned to self-rule with Desperation Records...albeit on a grander scale.

“Desperation Records and *Barenaked Ladies Are Me*,” Page explains, “are about forging new relationships with our fan base - online, in concert and on their stereos. It's the fans who make our music and the lives we lead possible, so we're trying to get the music to them in innovative ways.”

“Musically, we were very excited that we were on our own. It was daunting at first, but ultimately really liberating, to know that we were the masters of our own destiny in this new world.”

“We’ve always been successful when we’re in the D.I.Y. mode,” notes Stewart. “And now, with the Internet, it’s never been easier to have that direct connection with the fans.”

“We treat our employees, *us*, well,” adds Hearn. “The music industry is in a state of reinventing itself, and we are very fortunate to be able to create and sell our music as we see fit.”

