



JEFF BIEN

Songs of Forgiveness & Prayer

INTERNATIONALLY ACCLAIMED POET
RELEASES FIRST CD OF SONG
"SONGS OF FORGIVENESS & PRAYER"

www.jeffbien.com



The much anticipated release of "Songs of Forgiveness & Prayer" is Jeff Bien's first recording of song and features his original music in collaboration with many of Canada's finest musicians. With fraternal greetings from Leonard Cohen, and accolades from Mercan Dede and a host of other international artists, it is an auspicious debut. Bien's work embodies diverse musical and cultural influences, engaging oral and formal traditions which include the migrancy of folk, jazz, classical, African and spiritual idioms.

An all-star ensemble of musicians gathered at Hugh's Room in Toronto to celebrate the CD release. Performing with Bien were George Koller (bass), Rebecca Campbell (vocals), Rick Lazar (percussion) Ravi Naimpally (tabla), John Gzowski (oud/guitar), Anne Lindsay (violin), Richard Underhill (saxophone), Ray Montford (guitar); Kobena Aquaa-Harrison (African vocal).

"Living proof intelligence can sing."
CBC Radio

"The silent prince of words"
Mercan Dede, Istanbul

"He is great artist"
- *Kris Caldwell, CKHA 100 FM*

"Compelling, a great debut"
Doug Gibson, CKWR

"I can understand and feel the sublime poet in his voice and music ... it is a joy and honour to perform and record with him."
George Koller

"an amazing record"
Val Cormier, Folk Oasis, CITR, Vancouver

"A superb Cd...haunting..."
-*Steve Clark, Acoustic Planet, Chez 101.5 FM*

"Jeff Bien brings magic to the spoken word."
Rick Shadrach Lazar

"the merging of music and lyric shines..."
Rob McLennan, Ottawa Xpress

"a major artist"
Free Times Cafe

"This music has already stood the test of time."
Bob Cohen (Tim Hardin, Stan Rogers)

"This really was a testament to Jeff's work that so many outstanding musicians with different touring commitments put aside their busy schedules for the show," noted Underhill, a Juno Award-winning jazz musician.

Since the launch of "Songs of Forgiveness & Prayer", Bien's music has received repeat airplay across the country, been profiled nationally on Bravo, selected by CBC's "Fresh Air" as one of the top releases of the year, broadcast on Radio Canada International, and a live video recording of the concert will soon be released.

Bien, an internationally acclaimed poet, has been published and translated in more than twenty countries. His songs have been praised for their vision and lyrical quality, and for inspiring and awakening social and spiritual consciousness.

Besides appearances at such Canadian venues as Ontario Place and The Great Canadian Theatre Company, he has performed at Amadeo Roldan, Havana, and at an open-air concert at Shakespeare & Company in Paris, which drew one of the largest audiences in their landmark history. In addition to the musical guests who joined him for the CD launch, he has worked with some of Canada's most prominent musicians including: the late Oliver Schroer, David Travers-Smith, Mercan Dede, Mark Duggan, Jason Fowler, Andrew Downing, Thom Gossage, Ken Pearson, Michel Pepin, Danny Greenspoon, Yannik Rieu, Frédéric Alarie, Rob Frayne, John Geggie, Joel Zifkin, Kim Richardson, Derek Debeer, Julie Michels and members of Montreal's Jubilation Gospel Choir.

Publicity:

Lisa Weitz LW Communications www.lwcommunications.ca

1. Prison Song (6:22) (Jazz/Folk) First recorded and performed in Paris, with veteran French guitarist Pierre Chaze and a guest singer from the Notre Dame Choir. Vocal harmonies and scat from Rebecca Campbell and grounding strings of George Koller and Jason Fowler accompany a plaintive lyric.

2. Answerless (4:18) (Folk) An ubiquitous background vocal transports and illuminates the romantic lyric which rises and disappears into its own footprint. Guitarist Bob Cohen contributes to a magical piece engineered by Rob Heaney and David Travers-Smith.

3. Kol Ha'olam (2:59) (Roots) This teaching saying of Nachman of Breslov, from the early 19th century, has been spontaneously rewritten, and lifted by a midwifery of mandolin and cello.

4. Song of Forgiveness and Prayer (6:59) (Folk) This ecstatic poetic ballad, which lends its title to the album, was inspired and written as a love song turned into a song to the beloved. With the noble left hand of pianist Ken Pearson (Janis Joplin), percussionist Rick Lazar (Loreena McKennitt) and vocal harmonies of Kim Richardson.

5. Song of a Broken Man (6:06) (Roots/World) A spectral cast of African players includes Derrick De Beer, (Johnny Clegg), Kobèna Aquaa-Harrison and Jamisse Jamo who began "African Night" in Toronto.

6. Beauty Song (5:31) (Folk) Born of a single, haunting guitar piece, written and first recorded in Montreal in the early 90's. This heretical love song invokes the anecdotal and allegorical, an aphrodisiac of muse and moving musical energy. Elegiac cello of Erich Kory (Leonard Bernstein) augments percussion by Thom Gossage and Pierre Cormier.

7. Here's to You (4:05) (Folk) First written for a then-beloved, this piece was re-recorded and re-mixed with tabla and dumbek and features the percussive work of Ravi Naimpally.

8. Adon Olam (5:27) (World/Roots) A liturgical piece re-envisioned musically and lyrically, retaining its traditional refrain. Cello, violin and vocal harmonies.

9. Sufi Prayer (8:08) (World /Roots) Originally recorded to the reed flute of Mercan Dede, with the later addition of violin from the late Oliver Schroer, who had just returned from Rumi's grave.

10. Kaddish (7:35) (World/Roots) An ancient Aramaic prayer for the dead, rewritten after listening to the musical interpretations by Ravel and Bernstein for many months. The lyric and music has been rewritten with traditional lyrical refrain. Violin by Joel Zifkin, and percussion by Mark Duggan.

11. Gratitude (4:42) (Jazz/folk) With a wandering "old Montreal" feel, this song's poetry aches with the concrete of urban mystery. Featured are members of the Montreal Jubilation Choir, veteran sax player Yannick Rieu, double bassist Frédéric Alarie and Dave Gossage (co-arrangement).

12. Let It Be (5:37) (Folk) Recorded variously in Paris, Cuba, and Montreal. Pared down to the guitar line of Jason Fowler (first outlined by Michel Pépin and later Danny Greenspoon), and the bass of Andrew Downing. Accompanies the original scratch vocal recorded on a pin mic a decade earlier.

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INTERNATIONALLY ACCLAIMED
POET RELEASES FIRST CD OF SONG
"SONGS OF FORGIVENESS & PRAYER"

Jeff Bien until this point has been regarded more as a poet than a musician. He's well-known world wide and major poets like Ted Hughes and Irving Layton have sung his praise over the years... He's now released a full-blown musical album 'Songs of Forgiveness and Prayer... If Neil Diamond were doing a Leonard Cohen record this would be the result ... A star studded cast of supporting players.

Mark Rheume, CBC Radio

Produced by Jeff Bien
with production assistance by David Travers-Smith
Engineered and mixed by David Travers-Smith,
Rob Heaney and Jeremy Darby

MUSICIANS:

Jeff Bien - vocal, guitar	Ellen Hamilton - vocal
Kobena Aquaa-Harrison - guitar	Jamisse Jamo - bass, vocal
Frédéric Alarie - double bass	George Koller - double bass
Michael Ballet - vocal	Erich Kory - cello
Rebecca Campbell - vocal	Rick Lazar - percussion
Pierre Chaze - guitar	Julie Michels - vocal
Bob Cohen - guitar, mandocello, electric sitar	Members of Montreal Jubilation Choir
Chris Coleman - guitar, bass, mandolin	Ravi Naimpally - tabla, djembe
Pierre Cormier - percussion	Ken Pearson - piano
Derrick De Beer - drums, vocal	Michel Pépin - guitar
Mercan Dede - ney flute	Kim Richardson - vocal
Andrew Downing - double bass	Yannick Rieu - saxophone
Marc Duggan - percussion	Jessica Rose Princetown - vocal
Jason Fowler - guitar	Dama Scène - goni
Thom Gossage - drum	Oliver Schroer - violin
Danny Greenspoon - guitar	David Travers-Smith - trumpet
Sheila Hannigan - cello	Tim Walker - guitar
	Joel Zifkin - violin

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