
KING ZEPHA – BEHIND THE SONGS

Track number: 01

Title: Humility

Lyrics:

Let me tell you what I know (help)
You got to help the garden grow
'cause what you reap (reap)
Is what you sow (help)
You got to help the garden grow
'cause what you reap (reap)
Is what you sow

Description: Originally composed as an instrumental piece for the 12-piece ensemble Intergalactic Brasstronauts, as a nod to the great composer and producer Quincy Jones, 'Humility' was performed at many UK festivals in the summer of 2021, including Glastonbury, The Great Escape, Wilderness and Camp Bestival. It only existed as a demo, recorded in composer Sam's front room, until Quincy Jones sadly passed away in November 2024. At this point the decision was made to rearrange and re-record some of the parts, so that it could be included on Sam's new album "The Return Of King Zepha" as a tribute. An explosive fanfare intro dissipates into a chilled-out, brass-led, rocksteady track, with jazzy instrumental solos and an *a cappella* ending, based on a poem written by guest vocalist B Dubbs.

Track number: 02

Title: Let's Get This One Thing Right

Lyrics:

When the working day is through
But the next day's hanging over you
Let's get an early night
It's gonna be alright
When you need a breather
Baby, let me be your healer
Let's hold each other tight
Let's get this one thing right

Life's a slog sometimes
Leading busy lives
Little time to unwind
So those precious moments

With the ones you love
Can restore your piece of mind

Life's too short for fighting
Baby, we should be united
Let's hold each other tight
Let's get this one thing right

Life's too short for fighting
Baby, we should be united
Let's get this one thing right
Let's get this one thing right

Description: A soulful song, with a tasty guitar introduction, catchy horn lines and 3-part vocal harmonies. The theme of this song is a couple working together as a partnership, supporting each other through testing times.

Track number: 03

Title: Lament

Lyrics:

(King Zepha)

(Come on)

(Woah oh oh yeah)

If you look around at the people in town
You'll see many who are suffering
'cause the greedy bastards of the ruling class
Grab the biggest slice of everything
Surrounding themselves with sycophants (oh oh)
Spreading lies and propaganda around
Blaming all the mess on immigrants
And the poorest people in the land

In a world that's run by evil men
Got to strengthen our communities
Help the poor and the downtrodden
We got to give them opportunities (watch me)

(Whoa oh oh oh oh oh yeah)

There's a strain of men, maybe one percent
Who believe that they're entitled to rule (don't you know)
With industrial means and political regimes

They embezzle all the riches and fuel
It's a scary time we're living through
Folk are looking for somebody to blame (oh no)
Don't let the rulers hoodwink you
'cause division is the aim of their game (huh)

In a world that's run by evil men
Got to strengthen our communities
Help the poor and the downtrodden
We got to give them opportunities

In a world that's ruled by evil men
We got to strengthen our communities
Help the poor and the downtrodden
Got to give them opportunities (strengthen our communities)
In this world ruled by evil men
Let's empower our communities
Don't forget that we outnumber them
If we're side by side in unity

Have a look left, have a look right
Got to make sure that the things you do are right

Description: A roots reggae stomper, with a rolling bass line, dubby tape delay effects and stunning 4-part vocal harmonies. The lyrics address some of the common struggles that people face in society, as well as frustrations with corrupt world leaders and our divisive mainstream media, and they encourage people to work together as a community and help those in need.

Track number: 04

Title: You and Me

Lyrics:

This night that you yearned for
Now you're back in the saddle going out more
Your favourite location
Out soakin' up the vibes on the dance floor
The rhythm is pumpin'
Everybody in the place is jumpin'
Our pulses are racing
Like we're lovers in a film embracing

With you and me there appears to be a little chemistry
Nice energy, we're buzzin' at the same sweet frequency

Oh, you give me that fuzzy feelin', I'm worry free
Our souls collide, as we move together there's a synergy

Hold on, hold on, let the rollercoaster ride begin
If you're gonna ride this time you can count me in
I know, I know that we're rushing into something new
If you're gonna ride this time I wanna ride with you

Showboating, peacocking
Ev'rybody in the place is rocking
The dance floor's a freak show
So we find a quiet place where we can dance slow
There's calmness and oneness
In our bubble where nobody can touch us
A peaceful oasis
Where the rhythm and the bass engulf us

Yes you and me, we can't deny that there's chemistry
A nice energy, yes we're buzzin' at the same sweet frequency
Baby, you and me in our sanctuary, so worry free
Our souls connect, every tender touch is ecstasy

Hold on, hold on, let the rollercoaster ride begin
If you're gonna ride this time you can count me in
I know, I know that we're rushing into something new
If you're gonna ride this time I wanna ride with you

Hold on, hold on, let the rollercoaster ride begin
If you're gonna ride this time you can count me in
I know, I know that we're rushing into something new
I wanna ride with you

Description: A catchy and playful pop song, with elements of dancehall, afrobeat, soul and R&B. Composer King Zepha was inspired whilst attending an Ezra Collective gig and hearing the stunning sound of their keyboard player's Fender Rhodes.

Track number: 05

Title: Prez

Lyrics:

A little bit of what?
A little bit of rum and a little bit of fun
A little bit of rum and a little bit of fun
A little bit of what?

A little bit of rum and a little bit of fun
A little bit of ganja in the sun
A little bit of rum and a little bit of fun

Description: A tribute to the Cuban composer and bandleader Prez Prado, who was popular in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, and penned famous pieces such as Guaglione and Mambo No. 5. This track was composed and recorded by Sam Thornton, a.k.a. King Zepha, at his 8-track home studio in Leeds, UK, with Sam laying down vocals, tenor sax, organ, guitar and percussion, before getting in his band mates to record trombone, double bass, drums and additional vocals.

Track number: 06

Title: I Can't Take It

Lyrics:

My baby wants to rock all night
I can't take it no more
I'll end up as a sorry sight
In a heap down on the floor
My baby wants a messy night
I can't take it no more
We'd visit every pub in sight
Then I'd stumble and I'd fall

'cause I am Arthur Arthritic
And I suffer from skanker's knee
Ask the people on the dance scene
It's a commonplace injury

I am Arthur Arthritic
And I suffer from skanker's knee
Ask the people on the dance scene
It's a commonplace injury

Old King Arthur Arthritic
And my knees are a fuckin' mess
But when they ask me
Was it worth it?
I say, abso-fuckin-lutely yes!

Description: A jovial, upbeat ska number with a catchy lead vocal hook, horns and 3-part backing vocals. Composer Sam Thornton, a.k.a. King Zepha, wrote this in hospital after a knee operation, whilst still under the influence of very strong painkillers.

Track number: 07

Title: Distorted Horizons

Description: An instrumental track that fluctuates between jazz fusion, with screaming trumpets and thunderous drums, and chilled-out reggae, with muted guitar and sparse, dubby bass. A beautiful brass soli section morphs into an otherworldly guitar solo, followed by a very melodic trombone improvisation by Will Osborne. King Zepha composed this piece specifically for a performance at Glastonbury 2021 with his 12-piece band *Intergalactic Brasstronauts*, but it has been reworked significantly for this album version.

Track number: 08

Title: I Wouldn't Change Things

Lyrics:

Clearing out the bedroom
There's stuff you left behind
Loads of happy memories
It's funny what you find
It's rather therapeutic
Getting rid of stuff
But one or two things must remain
'cause getting rid's too tough

Those were the wild days
We laughed a lot
Some of the best times
Some best forgot
We were so reckless
Young and carefree
I wouldn't change things
'cause they're a part of me

Do you ever wonder
How it might have been
If we'd met at thirty
Instead of seventeen?
We'd have made wiser choices
Less fire in our eyes
But was that youthful mischief
Romance in disguise

Those were the wild days
We laughed a lot

Some of the best times
Some best forgot
We were so reckless
Young and carefree
I wouldn't change things
'cause they're a part of me

Description: A pop song, with a rocksteady feel and a catchy trombone hook. The lyrics deal with reminiscing about past relationships, and recognising how past experiences can shape who we are.

Track number: 09

Title: Meditation

Description: A semi-improvised instrumental piece, recorded in January 2025 as a tribute to the Indian composer and percussionist Zakir Hussain who'd recently passed away. It is loosely based on the Mayamalavagowla raga and is intended to evoke *shanta* (peace), pathos and love.

Track number: 10

Title: Arabesque

Description: Chilled-out, instrumental rub-a-dub with an Arabic influence and a blistering trombone solo from Will Osborne.

Track number: 11

Title: Come Back To Bed

Lyrics:

It's so early in the morning
And you're stomping 'round again
You've been up since fuckin' seven
And we don't need to get up 'til ten
Come back to bed!

('ow you mean?)

('ow you mean?)

Come back to bed

(King Zepha, move it man, come on)

(Woah oh oh yeah)

(Listen to me)
(Come back baby, come back)
(Watch me!)

Come back to bed
(Don't ya know know)
(Don't ya know know)

Description: A playful, gang vocal a cappella intro gives way to an incredibly bouncy, saxophone-led ska number. Imagine 'One Step Beyond' meets the theme from 'Men Behaving Badly' and you're in the right ballpark. A funky King Zepha guitar solo is followed by a glorious, bluesy offering from the trombone of Will Osborne.

Track number: 12

Title: I'm A Brass Band

Lyrics:

I'm a brass band with melodica
I'm Jamaican blues
I am John Holt and the Paragons
I am Carlton and the Shoes
I am the Skatalites in the studio
King Tubby at the controls
I'm the bells of the Alpha Boys home
I'm Lester Sterling's saxophone
And all kinds of music
Is flowing out of me, 'cause
Somebody loves me I know

And all kinds of music
Is flowing out of me, 'cause
Somebody loves me I know

Description: Sam Thornton a.k.a. King Zepha's arrangement of 'I'm A Brass Band' originally featured on the Specialized Project's 'Our Way' album, a compilation of ska and reggae reinterpretations of Rat Pack songs, released to raise money for charity. Sam altered some of the lyrics, in order to pay tribute to some of the Jamaican artists who've inspired him, including the Skatalites (who King Zepha Band were lucky enough to support, on their UK tour, in 2016). The track has a bouncy, big band feel, a blistering tenor saxophone solo and an ending that gives a clever little nod to Prince Buster's 'Madness'.
