



JIMMY WAYNE on the album *Sara Smile*

“Things I Believe” (Keith Urban / John Shanks)

This is such an amazing song written by Keith Urban and songwriter and producer John Shanks – both of whom have won Grammys. I don’t know why Keith didn’t keep this song for himself, but I’m sure glad he didn’t!

“All the Time in the World” (Steve Robson / Hillary Lindsey)

What drew me to this song more than anything was its melody. It is just so singable. Derek Bason is the studio engineer for Mark Bright, and he is just incredible. He knows how to record the human voice like nobody I’ve ever seen. He is the reason my vocal on this sounds the way it does. He is so good with singing. He’ll say, “Why don’t you try this or that?” He has these great ideas. He really helped pull this song together.

“Sara Smile” featuring Daryl Hall & John Oates (Daryl Hall / John Oates)

I was in New York at the Sirius Satellite studio. They said, “We hear you do this Hall & Oates song. Would you mind singing it?” So I played it. When we were finished with the interview, I walked out in the hallway and Daryl Hall and John Oates were standing there! It was almost like I was being pranked. Anyway, I spoke up and said, “Hi, I’m Jimmy. Your song ‘Sara Smile’ got me a record deal and I just wanted to say thanks.” Three weeks later, John Oates left a message for me to call him, inviting me to co-write with him. Then he came to Nashville to record an album. I invited him to sing background vocals on my album, and he invited me to sing on his. When I got the go-ahead to record “Sara Smile” for this album, I couldn’t wait to call John. I asked him if he would mind singing on it, and if he would ask Daryl. It meant so much to me, because they were some of my biggest influences.

“Just Knowing You Love Me” (Jimmy Wayne / Brett Beavers / Tony Martin)

I feel like my strengths are in song ideas. I write a lot. I’ve been keeping a journal since I was 12 or 13. I have lists and lists of song ideas. Brett Beavers had this melody. I went through my song list and said, “I have a title that fits that. It’s called ‘Just Knowing You Love Me.’” I sang it, and it was the perfect marriage. It was amazing how well it fit. Brett and Tony Martin have both proven that they can write hit songs. It was Tony who said ‘Jimmy, this is a hit.’

“Just Look at You” (Jimmy Wayne / Bob Regan)

This is an old song. Bob Regan and I wrote it in the upstairs room of the old Famous Publishing Company. We wanted to write something that maybe a guy could take to his girl, saying, “I can’t put my feelings into words, but maybe this song will help.” We worked on that song for over a year. It was incredible how long it took us, because it is so simple. But sometimes those are the hardest ones for me to write. I love the song. It’s one of my favorites.

“Counting the Days” (Andrea Stolpe / John Kennedy / Steve Robson)

One day we were trying to decide what background singers to use. I said, “I always use Wes Hightower, because when he’s singing with me, he sounds like my shadow.” That’s the exact word I used, and that’s what you hear here. His voice just blends with mine perfectly. John Shanks was in the studio across the hall producing Bon Jovi. Mark Bright met him in the hallway and said, “Hey, man, do you mind coming over and laying down a guitar solo?” He came over and just did it.

“There’s a Memory” (Sean McConnell / Clint Lagerberg)

I heard this song months and months ago, and I fell in love with all the twists and turns in its melody. It rose to the surface right away. It just made its way into the studio, if you will. We had a lot of fun recording it. There are a lot of cool little moments in there. That’s Ilya Toshinsky on the banjo. He’s so talented. The producer on this one was Dann Huff, and he loves that song. It’s just one of those, get-in-the-car-and-drive things.

“Belongs to You” (Rivers Rutherford / Dave Berg / Tom Shapiro)

I recorded this first. But then there was that long time between albums, so it never came out. It got lost. Just because you’ve recorded a song doesn’t make it yours. The writers have to make a living, and you can’t hold a song forever. I understand that. Anyhow, Emerson Drive didn’t know I’d recorded it when they put it out as a single. And I didn’t know they’d recorded it. I feel strongly enough about this song to want to get it out there for people to hear it, so when we were putting together the song list for this CD, I went back to this song. I still think it is a huge, monster song.

“I’ll Never Leave You” (Jimmy Wayne)

I was sitting on the couch one night in the dark with light coming out of the bedroom so I could see what I was writing down. I was holding my guitar and thinking about a conversation that two of my friends had earlier that day. They were both going

through a divorce, so they had a lot in common. I was thinking about their conversation and thought to myself, “Man, I never, ever want to go through that. It sounds so painful.” I started thinking, “If I could write it down, what would I say?” And it just came out. Probably 40 minutes later, the song was finished.

“Elephant Ears” (Jimmy Wayne / Don Henry)

I’ve been there. I didn’t say I loved someone until I was a teenager, because I wasn’t used to hearing it. I remember how it felt to move around so much to so many different foster homes. I mean, I went to 12 schools in two years. I chose to make the character a little girl, because it just sort of fit that she was carrying around a little stuffed elephant. When I was in the fourth grade, there was a girl across the room. She looked at me and mouthed the words, “elephant ears.” I thought she had said, “I love you,” and I was so incredibly excited. She laughed at me, “Ha-ha, I said ‘elephant ears!’” I was so embarrassed, and I never forgot it. Don Henry is a very creative and different writer. I thought he’d probably get into this idea. I had all this paper and all these notes about the song, and we started writing based on them. It unfolded like it had already been written. I couldn’t believe that we pulled it off.