

**Press release for 'The Great American Novel' EP**

I was a little reluctant to go and do this. I mean there will be a number of releases right now with all this in mind, to raise funds etc, and thank God too. The good folks that will be asked to contribute to those projects will have the ability to impact more people than myself anyhow. However, it is the rich tradition of the music I walk within to tell the story and to say when the 'king has no clothes on'. Liberty comes, but with a huge price, and in it all we forget that the 'West' is primarily responsible for having put in place these evil regimes and arming them in the first place. The word 'sorry' doesn't seem an option. It seems to me that most people who oppose 'force', if it is not the last resort, feel helpless and let down. At our web site there was months of discussion about these issues, and, after some encouragement from many and a push from a few, I decided to give it a go. Enough with the wrestling about what's cool or artistically correct, let's say something.

I have been singing 'The Great American Novel' now for around fifteen years, but apart from one obscure live recording, I have never recorded the song. Though written in the seventies by Larry Norman, it still connects deeply and is every bit as relevant today, which I guess is an indictment in itself. 'The Good In Me Is Dead' is the consequence of that lack of change, an attempt to get inside the mind of a person that the writer and journalist John Pilger describes as 'unpeople'; people who have had a lesser value placed on their lives, and indeed are seen as dispensable in view of a 'bigger' purpose by those who hold the real power and wealth. While 'Swansea' speaks of the reality of fear and life in the front line, 'Arizona Dreams' gazes at the true American Dream in order to offer a little hope. Tom Robinson's 'War Baby' was recorded live on the recent Faith, Folk and Anarchy tour, also with Steve Knightly from Show Of Hands, and I'm grateful to the guys for letting me include the track here. I should also mention the great contribution of the poet Stewart Henderson, with whom it is a privilege to write songs.

It has to point somewhere though, there is no point in anger without another path to follow, hope has to be offered up, a little light to bleed into the darkness. The human spirit doesn't need much coaxing, it has proven itself time and time again in the most desperate of times. We need to be reminded of the greater good and a bigger picture occasionally. I think that's here, the refuge seeks community in the end and puts down the gun of revenge, in the sunsets of Arizona another voice calls, and the bravery of soldiers in the front line finds a human voice in the longing for the mundane of an ordinary life. We need stuff that comes along side and tells us to keep going, this is an offering, 'The Great American Novel.'

Martyn Joseph April 03

## MARTYN JOSEPH

Bio 2003

[www.martynjoseph.com](http://www.martynjoseph.com)

Two of Britain's leading contemporary music magazines **Q**, and, **MoJo**, respectively, describe Martyn Joseph as having 'a depth, resonance and emotional punch, which belies comparisons', and as being 'an artist of enduring worth'. Meanwhile **The Guardian** was transfixed by this gifted and gracious Welshman's 'burnished voice' whilst Tom Robinson of BBC 6 Music and iconic songwriter himself, regards Martyn as one of Britain's 'most charismatic and electrifying performers'. The **Boston Globe** concluded that the man was a '**profound experience**'.

Such press plaudits, and there are many more to choose from, would make any publicist purr with pleasure, but for Martyn Joseph, he regards them in a detached, almost incidental kind of way. For Martyn, 'it's the song that matters'.

Yet such is Martyn's stature as an acoustic artist of almost hypnotic ability that **BBC Radio 2**, Britain's most listened to radio network, featured Martyn in their peak-time series on Singer/Songwriters. To be awarded the garland of your own programme on the Sony 'Station Of The Year', and placed alongside the likes of Elvis Costello, Richard Thompson and Mary Chapin Carpenter really says it all about Martyn's abilities.

Martyn's 20 year career has embraced some notable achievements including **5 Top 50 UK chart positions**, with such songs as 'Dolphins Make Me Cry', 'Working Mother' and 'Let's Talk About It In The Morning', and appearances and tours with, amongst others, Suzanne Vega, Marc Cohn, Joan Armatrading, Clannad, Chris De Burgh, Jools Holland, Art Garfunkel, and even, Celine Dion. However, for Martyn, these various accomplishments, satisfying though they are, count as just part of the process, the necessary presentation aspect. As he says, 'Really what I do is try and write songs that might make a difference'. His touring work and appearances over the years, on both sides of the Atlantic, have helped to establish this gifted and gracious Welshman as one of the **foremost singer/songwriters of his generation**. As Janis Ian said of sharing a stage with Martyn 'I loved working with him. I loved listening to him, I'd love to work with him again, anytime, anyplace'.

Martyn's particular strength is in the lyrical narrative of his songs, be they contemporary protests against injustice and inhumanity, a musical psalm to the fulfilment and fragilities of love, or a piercing précis of social history, 'it's the song that can soothe, explain, and even in a small way save us'. In this manner he carries on in the tradition of the six string balladeer as both catalyst and interpreter of our raddled and rewarding times, our personal and communal stories sung out loud in the spirit of Woody Guthrie, Ewan MacColl, Hank Williams and Bruce Springsteen. That tradition, and sound, that thankfully still emerges from The Hallowed Hobo's Hall of Fame.

Across a 10 year cycle of albums from the Sony days of 'Being There' to his recent two volume live compilation 'Don't Talk About Love, Martyn's song catalogue is an awesomely impressive archive of our times, our tribulations, our wonder and our wounds. Amongst the considerable collection of positive reviews of Martyn's recording and live work, the two regularly recurring words describing, in particular, his performances are 'passion' and 'humour'. One observer after seeing Martyn in concert likened the experience and content to 'the beautiful business of being alive with all its jokes, absurdity and sadness, seared by music for the heart and head'.

## Press Quotes

“Joseph proves that the path to integrity is a celebration not a chore. An artist of enduring worth”

**Mo Jo**

“One of the most charismatic and electrifying performers in Britain today...tough and passionate.

**Tom Robinson**

“A depth, resonance and emotional punch, which belies comparison. One of acoustic music’s most original voices and most forward looking of his generation of singer/songwriters”.

**Q Magazine**

“I loved working with him. I loved listening to him, I’d love to work with him again, anytime, anyplace..”

**Janis Ian**

“Opener Martyn Joseph was a profound experience of his own. He combined edgy protest songs that reached a Phil Ochs intensity at times, but also had a droll sense of humor that kept the audience pleasantly off guard throughout. A fine talent.”

The Boston Globe

“A burnished voice, intimate manner and unhurried guitar style”

**The Guardian**

“He creates an intimacy that transforms a cavernous hall into a cosy front room”

**The Western Mail**

“Martyn sings with such a passion that you feel every ounce of love and pain”

**The Tip Sheet.**

“Somewhere between Chris Rea and Mark Knopfler, with touches of Springsteen grit and Big Country’s social compassion. Accomplished work like this deserves to be heard”.

**Q magazine**

“Truly magical. His music and art speaks to all”

**Doug Simpson, director of the Vancouver Folk Festival**

## **Discography**

<b>1988</b>	<b>An Aching And A Longing</b>	<b>Shark</b>
<b>1992</b>	<b>Being There</b>	<b>Sony Music</b>
<b>1993</b>	<b>Being There/Undrugged</b>	<b>Sony Music</b>
<b>1995</b>	<b>Martyn Joseph</b>	<b>Sony Music</b>
<b>1996</b>	<b>Full Colour Black And White</b>	<b>Grapevine</b>
<b>1998</b>	<b>Tangled Souls</b>	<b>Grapevine</b>
<b>1999</b>	<b>Far From Silent</b>	<b>Pipe Records</b>
<b>2000</b>	<b>The Shirley Sessions</b>	<b>Pipe Records</b>
<b>2000</b>	<b>Thunder and Rainbows..the best we could find 88-00</b>	<b>Pipe Records</b>
<b>2001</b>	<b>Don't Talk About Love Live 92-02 Vol 1</b>	<b>Pipe Records</b>
<b>2002</b>	<b>Don't Talk About Love Live 92-02 Vol 2</b>	<b>Pipe Records</b>