

The BOOMCHASERS



Signifying Nothing



CD Credits

Joe Wilford: Vocals, Acoustic and Electric Guitars, Piano, Keyboards, Bass, E-Bow, Mandolin.

Don Bear: Drums, Tambourine.

Duane Larson: Bass.

Tim Randall: Acoustic and Electric Guitars.

Produced by Joe Wilford

Mixed and Mastered by Joe Wilford

Recorded at ICE-Nine Studios, Linn and Johnson Counties, Iowa August 2002 – October 2005.

All Words and Music: Joe Wilford © 2005 ICE-Nine Music except tracks 10, 11, 15, 16, and 20.

Head Out: Lyrics- Duane Larson, Joe Wilford / Music- Duane Larson, Don Bear and Joe Wilford.

Annette Clark-Triplett-Cello on tracks 3, 9 and 18. Violin on track 9.

Marty Letz-Steel Guitar on tracks 1, 7 and 11.

Pablo Unidos-Lead Guitar Solo on track 11. Pablo appears courtesy of Groovy Times Records.

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All selections BMI.

Signifying Nothing

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Dusty 'Ol Towne

Here I am, just riding in my black pick-up truck
Heading down the road hoping I'll run into some luck
But I don't know most likely I'll just run right out of gas
'Cause over me a shadow has been cast

Now you tell me you won't be seeing me no more
You packed your bags and you're headed out the door
You say you're looking for something you ain't found
I doubt you'll find it in this dusty old town

Here I am, just a-wondering what the hell I'm gonna do
Well first I lost my farm and now I'm losing you
I cannot say I blame you for all the things you feel
But somehow I got the short-end of the deal

And now I'm begging you, babe please don't leave this way
You shake your head and tell me there's nothing left to say
Who will I talk to baby, when you're not around?
You are the only one I know in this dusty old town

Here I am, just a sitting with my stray dog and a case of beer
There's really not much going on, there never is 'round here
Sometimes we take a ride up yonder to the canyon road
That dog ain't never left, so I named him, "Alamo"

As I walk the fields I think about you still
I wish you'd come back but you probably never will
And I would tell you even if you came around
There's no way I'm ever gonna leave this dusty old town

Like That

There were shots in the Jersey Night
It was J.D. bathed in the dim lamplight
Of a barren apartment over the dentist's office and shoe store

A scrabble board lies on the trunk
And we were 3 notches past drunk
We laughed so hard and loud when I scored 23 points with "plowed"

You were my strength you kept me sane
From a life that threatened to be so plain
You were the best protection, using a magician-like misdirection
A diner on Route 22
The perfect place to write a song or two
On the back of a place-mat or even a napkin will do

There was Elvis, BBAC, The Big Book, Platinum Blonde
And I Died In Line At Bradley's
Not to mention Deli Trek or the Dan Tanna Show
And driving round till the sun in our rear-view mirror started to glow

Tom—You were like that
Nobody else was quite like that
Stubborn, passionate, uncompromising
Always saw your love for life within
Can't believe I'll never see you again
No memory can fill the void of a lost friend...

Trapped in Amber

Well I've wasted all my time here
Tattered pages of this book ripped out and scattered on the floor
And I finally see the error of my ways
I should have backed across that threshold and simply closed the door
That's why they say hindsight's twenty-twenty
But that ain't going to help this fire I'm in

Our conversations are steeped in history
The same mistakes just different versions of the story
And as we argue I sense you smell the victory
But you can't see that long ago I stopped caring
I should've stayed away
I should've stayed away
Love fades away...

I was naïve and young had gasoline in place of blood
And just a glance from you was all the spark I needed
As the vapor of our love burned off diluted into silken mud
Damned in a field of passion, never seeded

And there was you and me was it just illusion or really love?
The pictures paint a peculiar portrait
Are we just that naïve or are we blind
to the moment of...

Remembrance Day

When all hope is lost
And all seems darkness
There comes a new light
"Yes this is what I need,"
The dark night of the soul
Comes just before revelation

Unfurl My Soul Part I—Requiem

(Instrumental)

Opaque

In the town that I grew up in
There was this girl I knew next door
Her name was Eileen May Frances Winfield
I called her Ellie just for short
Ever since I can remember
We were as close as kids could be
We fished for bull-heads at the culvert
She even climbed that big oak tree

I used to say "Hey Ellie May, won't you come on out to play
I need you just to hold my hand and tell me stories all day long
Hey Ellie May, I'll just wait out here all day
Until you come on out and run with me down through the trees"

Now she was a little older
A little smarter just the same
She used to quote me lines from Shakespeare
While I read aloud Mark Twain
And we savored all the good times
We stuck it out through all the bad
And through the early years of my youth
She was the only friend I had

I used to say "Hey Ellie May, won't you come on out to play
I need you just to hold my hand and tell me stories all day long
Hey Ellie May, I'll just wait out here all day
Until you come on out and run with me down through the trees"

Now around the time I went to high school
Ellie's family moved out of town
And though we wrote each other every single day
I never, never felt so down

One day the letters stopped coming
And some of mine came back returned
So I took all those of hers that I saved
Put them in the fire and watched them burn
How can time ruin friendships?
How can distance play a part?
How can fate be the dull blade that severs the ties
That bind our lonely hearts?
Why do children have to grow old?
Why do old friends always change?
How can something that once meant so much
Mean less than anything?

218

My Daddy was a farmer outside a Midwest town
My backyard stretched as far as I could see
I remember walking barefoot down that old dirt road
I had a burning curiosity
'Cause the dirt met with asphalt and concrete
Thick yellow lines, well they cut it in two
Big trucks rolled by and sent the dust rolling
This boy began to wonder where they were going

Down 218

My oldest brother Bobby- he used to take me riding
He had a '67 Chevrolet
He used to drive so fast, my Father would get so mad
He swore to take ol' Bobby's keys away
One night I woke up 'cause I heard ma was crying
She cried out that her baby was gone
Bobby sped through the night down some old lonesome highway
A truck had swerved and the two hit head on

On 218

Well I'm older now and just out of high school
I look back on how my life has changed
I see these folks around me, and I respect their ways
Still I wonder if I'll end up just the same
I'm proud of my home and my family
But I'm like a wheel that has just started rolling
Maybe I'm just looking for a little a little adventure
'Cause when the sun comes up I guess I'll be going...

Down 218

Without the Sin

Into the wind my hair was blowin'
as I walked straight down that road
I didn't even turn around to see if you were watchin'
I just couldn't bear to stop and look
if I was crying, the rain was hidin' it
if I felt hurt, the cold was numbing it
if I only had a single dollar in my pocket
I would find a warm place to stay

Oh baby how you make me wonder
what is love without the sin
sweet child of the devil's thunder
your lightning strikes me down again

I'm on my way- now don't you try and stop me
I've just got to make a break this time
well you entice me here and you seduce me there
with your story-telling candle lit eyes
it's as I stagger down onto the open highway
that I understand it wasn't real
you're just a lonely spirit in a world of confusion
looking for a lost soul to steal

Oh baby how you make me wonder
what is love without the sin
sweet child of the devil's thunder
you will haunt me once again

Angel @ the Door

There she stood in the doorway
A scarlet, black and silver robe 'round her
At first I thought it was just the drug
But she shook her head no

Then she reached out her hand and she led me away
Oh but I had so much left to do, I had so much to say
And if you're callin' me no I won't be home
And if you're callin' me no I can't come home
Cause I - yes I've seen your face before
Oh I - I know you're the angel at the door

There I lay in the jungle heat
Amidst the flies and the stench of death
I was bleeding hard yet still alive
Heard a faint whisper-her icy breath
She said now you're gonna be just fine
Though soon I'll come back again
And you can light your candles and bolt your door
But I'm just gonna walk right in

And if you're callin' me no I won't be home
And if you're callin' me no I can't come home
Oh cause I - yes I've seen your face before
Oh I - I know you're the angel at the door

Head Out

(Words and Music-Duane Larson, Don Bear and Joe Wilford)

Head out—like a pioneer
Don't you wish there was still a frontier here
Burnt out—on the old routine
Don't want to see what I've already seen
Went out—once or twice before
Came back a little more wise, but a lot less sure
And I'm heading out again

Head out—but which way to go
My mind's too fast and my head's way to slow
Thrown out—by my own design
Don't think I'll know till I've made up my mind
Wiped out—over-thinking it
Second guess is another chance to quit
Head out—gotta do it quick

Hanging out there like a carrot on a stick
Passed out—in a corner trapped
Can't find my way out till I find a map
Worn out—like a passing fad
Feel older than old and sadder than sad

Powderfinger

(Lyrics and Music --Neil Young)

Tragedy

There were movie posters all over your room
They're still on the wall
But the Theatre programs, Hawaiian shirts and TV Guides
They're in boxes down the hall

Shouldn't be left here
Should've been gone
Shouldn't be kept here
With an unfinished song
Think of all of the people
Saying God why me?
Staring into the face of
Tragedy

Creating brilliance from the bits and pieces
Of the broken rules and tattered style
Using channeled aggravation
And some misplaced indignation
You made it all worthwhile

Should've been left here
Should've been gone
Should've been kept here
To harmonize this song
I try to find a good reason
What good would that do
Should've been left here
Somebody like you

Flyers litter the streets; the photographs and descriptions
Wind has set them free
The hope is gone if it ever even existed
Crumbled like brittle leaves

Should've been left here
Should've been gone
You should've been kept here
To finish this song
I think of all of the wonder
You never lived to see
On my shoulder I feel it
Tragedy

Head down in the pouring rain
Head down on the blackest day

Unfurl My Soul Part II--The Odyssey

Addie:

As I lay dying- descending into hell
I can hear them building the box
Driving in the nails...
You cannot bathe me of my sins-oh no
A matter of words just the same- salvation too
Don't try to save me - you can only forestall what must be
Life is preparing to stay dead
no shining light to see
Unfurl my soul...

Vardaman

(Spoken -- from William Faulkner's 'As I Lay Dying')

Darl:

I cannot love my mother- my mother is no more
Death a constant familiar- life its sullen core
She cannot be if she is was- oh no
Her eyes like two flames just blown out
And I said, " Jewel, your mother is dead"
The odyssey continues
Her only wish to be fulfilled
Their motives are in question here
Despite what she has willed
Unfurl my soul...

Hidden Track 1

Silver Fox Jam

(Instrumental--Sample: Hound Dog Taylor's 'Give Me Back My Wig.')

Folsom Prison

(Lyrics and Music--Johnny Cash)

Hidden Track 2

Hidden Track 3--Across Your Echo

I'll take off see me
Faders down on it
I finally read up I would
Across your echo
I'd say some swan he made
That horrible racket

Na na na na na na

"I must repair," the stripper said
Her disgrace is mine
To skate is gain
Shout - hey

Na na na na na na

To be swayed
See it
Friends, yeah

(Solo)

Way bad leaves
Her throne for me
Serve her up on the board
And I will ask myself

Na na na na na na na

Steady
Fade away
Throw it away

And when you want
A lot of love
Friends don't cure
And I ain't blind
If you want to know

I all of sudden blood
Dance once, Jesus
Sober up on the flood
And I will dance myself

Stay away
Keep it
Oh yeah

Bonus Track: Kick Out the Jamz/Rock For Light

(Words and Music: MC5 / Words and Music: Bad Brains)

Interview with Joe Wilford:

I sat down with Joe in the very colorful but chilly ICE-Nine Studios in Mid-December, to talk about the upcoming release of The Boomchasers CD-- 'Signifying Nothing.' We sipped hot rum punch and listened to a few tracks of 'Fiskodoro' a band emerging from the deep south of Brazoria County, Texas. We then spoke casually of the mysterious circumstances surrounding The Boomchasers; a band that dropped out of sight at seemingly the height of their existence; their breakthroughs, the breakup and the CD that almost never saw the light of day. --Rufus Ahnphire

The Boomchasers broke up in June of 2004. Why is 'Signifying Nothing' just surfacing now? Why is it being released at all?

When the band parted, I was just sick of us, of what we were and what we had become. It wasn't fun anymore. Though we had all the basic tracks recorded, I couldn't stomach mixing them down and putting out the CD right away. I wanted to distance myself from it for awhile. It's being released now because I thought we owed it to those dedicated fans that supported us for so long. Not to mention the others in the band who put so much of their time into it, and the guest musicians who contributed. It also allowed me to develop some producing and engineering skills. We had a lot of tracks laid down, so I had an enormous canvas to work with. Once I got back into it, the music became precious to me again.

That was some exile...over a year.

The finished project took about a year and a half, but I started seriously working towards completing it the summer of 2005. The break was good, because the music was fresh again. I felt a creative freedom to experiment a lot production-wise, so I let myself go completely wild.

So you've altered the signature 'Boomchaser' sound?

Not at all—I just expanded on its possibilities. I thought some layers would really compliment our style. On stage we were the epitome of economy—it was practical and we liked it that way. Easy set up and take down. In the studio, it was just the opposite. We brought in steel guitars, cellos, keyboards, piano and liberal amounts of rhythm guitar. Not to mention the sound effects laced throughout.

So what led to the demise of the band?

It's a cliché to say so, but honestly it was creative differences. The Boomchasers were always struggling internally with what direction each of us wanted the band to take. In the beginning this was not an issue that divided us, but over time it eventually took its toll. As hard as this is to admit, we were slowly conforming into one of the very bands we were trying to distance ourselves from—the traditional classic rock cover band. It became very sterile. Tim was happy to play cover material, the rest of us were not interested in that. It ended up becoming a breaking point. As a band we had run our course—it was as simple as that. But I felt like we left our mark.

In what way?

The Boomchasers started out as 'all original American rock' in a local market dominated by cover bands. It was our intention to make a place in Cedar Rapids, Iowa for original music. Bars and clubs didn't want to book us because we were up front about that, but we showed a majority of them that original music can stand up on its own. This was our goal from the very beginning and without a doubt we were successful in doing that. This area is rife with

cover bands. Original bands don't get much respect in the live music scene around here. They have to fight for gigs and accept lower pay than cover bands. I don't know that we changed all that; it's still much the same today. So if we didn't knock the damn door down, we certainly shook the hinges loose. Crowds in these bars weren't used to hearing original music all night long either, so that too was a challenge. But we never packed up our gear without winning a good majority of them over. Looking back, it feels great.

Initially then, where did the breakdown within the band occur?

It was when we started headlining clubs that it first began— we simply didn't have enough original material to play the 3 plus hours that the bars demanded from us. Oftentimes we invited other original bands to play with us, to share the stage and thereby divide up the time. This worked for awhile, but also came with it's own problems; money, stage time, sharing of the PA and equipment, etceteras. We lost some friends that way. It became unmanageable, so we resorted to having to play all three sets ourselves— and that was when the issue with cover songs began. It ultimately became our downfall.

People who know of your other band, the Trailside Rangers, say The Boomchasers are just an extension of that band. A Trailside Ranger 'cover band' some have said. What are your thoughts on that?

I disagree completely. Being a Trailside Ranger 'cover band' would imply that The Boomchasers were trying to sound like the Trailside Rangers, and that's not true. I don't even feel I need to mention the fact that we were lacking 2 of the driving forces that made TSR so special. Rowan and Jason are irreplaceable, style-wise. But we had 3 hours a night to fill, so pretty much everything in my catalogue of songs was considered. It was either that or lean towards (as Tim suggested) more cover songs. Eventually, the latter won out. And the more cover songs we learned, the less important the band became—not just to me, but to the community of original music we were trying to fortify.

But there are cover songs on the new disc! Isn't that a bit hypocritical?

Despite our dislike of cover material, this disc represents a true Boomchasers playlist. We had laid down these tracks, I saw no reason to exclude them. Without at least a few covers, it would not have been an accurate representation of what we were.

What about the inclusion of some previously released Trailside Rangers material on 'Signifying Nothing?'

I had no reservation about that. The Trailside Ranger songs The Boomchasers played were played well. A few we even played better than the Trailside Rangers did. And vice-versa: The Boomchasers couldn't touch many of the Trailside Rangers standards. 'Flamingo Johnny,' for instance—we wouldn't, couldn't even attempt it. The important thing was that the songs we did do, we did differently; especially those on the CD. We tried to distance ourselves and play on *our* strengths. It's evident when you listen to 'Opaque.' The Boomchaser version expands on the foundation laid down by TSR on 'Promise and Prayer.' And 'Unfurl My Soul' has become the epic I always felt it should have been. The Trailside Rangers never had a grasp on 'Angel @ the Door' or 'w/out the Sin.' The Boomchasers own those songs now. And excluding material from 'Signifying Nothing' just because TSR recorded versions is silly.

'Unfurl My Soul' is now multiple parts and clocks in at around ten minutes...that's quite a departure from the acoustic version on 'Promise and Prayer.'

Exactly. For whatever reason, in the Trailside Rangers, we never sunk our teeth into that one.

How did that song grow into such a juggernaut?

From the beginning I had in mind some cellos and a long break during the middle of the song. And it just grew from there, I really had no idea where it was going—but I felt the creative freedom to let it take its course. Once it took off, it was hard to reign in. It had a life of its own. The inspiration, Faulkner's 'As I Lay Dying' is one of my favorite books of all time. There are plenty of characters. Maybe one day it'll bloom into a concept album or a rock opera! Hmmm...

Talk about the special guests for a moment.

We had the awesome Marty Letz come in and play steel guitar on a few tracks. I've admired his work for some time and he was great to work with. Locally here in Iowa, he's a legend. I've always told him that I wished we could've had him play on the Trailside Rangers recordings. So when we began cutting this disc I called him up. The searing choruses he scorched into 'Dusty ol' Towne still give me chills; and he took one of the lead solos in 'Powderfinger.' '218' was a natural for him. That song has craved a steel guitar part forever. Marty is the only reason we even put that version on the disc.

I worked with Annette Clark-Triplett on 'Portrait of the Artist' and other miscellaneous projects. She is always diligent about making time to rehearse and record, even with her hectic schedule. She played great—I have such an affinity for the cello.

Pablo Unidos came to us from the Groovy Times Records camp down in the Brazos of Texas—He was formerly in 'The Spies,' and currently leads the dub-influenced trio, 'Pablo Unidos and the Sound of Revolution.' He's actually the younger brother of Clash producer Jose Unidos (Mustapha Dance). He was only in town a couple days— I was working on 'Powderfinger' at the time. So I asked if he wanted to rip a solo on it. And did he ever! Be sure and watch for the Sound of Revolution release on Groovy Times.

I'd also like to throw in what a great job our bass player Duane Larson did. I did less f`ing around with his tracks—they simply didn't need it. True to form, he played and recorded very well. Duane was Duane—rock solid. And Don too—not just for the terrific drumming, but his belief that the CD would turn out sounding great. There was a point when I wasn't convinced of that. He never let me throw in the towel on this project. Because of that, he's a major factor in the CD being released at all.

Name a few significant Boomchaser milestones.

We did a Lymphoma cancer benefit gig that was one of our finer moments—and for a great cause. 'My Waterloo Days' – When we cut through the sludge of all those Nu-metal bands. The promoters of the concert sure thanked us for that.

I remember in the very early days, we were known as "The Reconstruction" and we played a barn party in Norway, IA. Kids backed their pickup trucks around the stage, and watched the show sitting on the tailgates. Farm animals roamed freely about. It was a riot—a real Midwest homecoming, for sure.

And there were a string of gigs we did at a bar called Chester's where we really cut our teeth. The owner at the time was one of our big supporters. Those were good times.

The new CD will be available at no charge in a limited edition hardcopy and also available to download for free online. What was the deciding factor in that?

This release is not about money. It's about getting the music out there to those who may want it, nothing more.

What's with all the hidden and bonus tracks?

I used the hidden tracks (which are not really hidden at all since they appear in the track listing) as 'spacers' between the extra material. Silence has its place. I wanted to distance the official tracks from the bonus tracks—since they are really just thrown in because there are no plans for a future release of BC material. The extra version of '218' is

from our 1st demo, so we have both extremes of that song—from alt country to punk rock. ‘Kick out the Jamz/Rock for Light’ was my remix of ‘Like That.’ Oh—and don’t adjust your CD players, ‘Across Your Echo’ is supposed to sound like that. Check out the lyrics and see.

The title—‘Signifying Nothing’ – is there any significance to that?

We had tossed around a few ideas before the band broke up and I remember that was one of them. After we split up, it seemed to be the most fitting. Especially when you insert the rest of the Shakespeare quote.

What about the power-lines pictured in the artwork of the disc?

Duane and I are huge fans of Twin Peaks...and David Lynch in general. You can take it from there, I’m not giving away all the secrets. Things are not always what they seem...