

Songs from “Hello George” LINER NOTES



“As You Heard Me” liner notes are from the novella “Hello George.”

There’s a Crop Circle on My Daddy’s Land: “...a rough and irresistible home recording with drum machine and rudimentary electric guitars and banjo – banjo played by someone who clearly didn’t know how to play banjo but plucked a devilishly catchy three-note riff. The whole thing shimmered with cheap, guileless magic, and it was all her: “Written, played and produced by Daisy Steinberg” in messy blue ink. The song was about a guy and girl chasing each other around a corn field on a delirious moonlit night and the next day they need an excuse for the girl’s daddy: it wasn’t them trampling the corn, it was aliens making crop circles. Easy to dismiss as a joke, and a low-fi one at that, so on my first listen, charmed as I was, I stopped the cassette maybe a minute in and went on to the next tape in my demo pile. But the chorus hook – and that banjo lick – kept coming back to me, so I dug it out and played it again.”

Waiting (Impressions of Chrysanthemums): “The second song was more of what I expected – acoustic guitar and voice, straight up singer-songwriter fare. With one notable difference – the guitar was in some strange tuning I didn’t recognize. It was also heart-stoppingly beautiful. Impressions of Chrysanthemums. After a hundred listens I still have no idea what it’s about – something bad happened and love may or may not be the answer. Quiet, moody, with its own odd edge, this was not a chart topper in any genre – what we used to call an album cut, one of the songs that won’t sell an album but once you buy that album, you play it over and over again and love it more than the single – and you become increasingly convinced that anyone who loves the single and doesn’t get this song is a shallow fool.”

Cut It Loose: “The next song took a completely unexpected turn. Cut It Loose, a funky groove like something out of the 70s, complete with cool keyboards and perfect little twangy guitar lines that had me picturing slim, graceful fingers not twirling notes but twirling hair, dark brown hair. I was sure it was dark brown hair, maybe curly, surrounding a sweet round face. Eventually, I found out I was wrong, though not entirely wrong.”

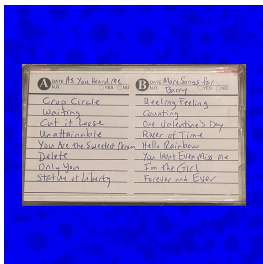
Unattainable: “...the most inexplicable of all. Unattainable. A 20-second piece of spoken word art over what sounded like some avant garde piano and street traffic in the background.”

You Are the Sweetest Dream: "...I desperately tried to remember that post. *You never know if the dream is real or not. In life sometimes you find out it is, and sometimes you find out it isn't, but in that song, you'll never know. That's the mystery – that's the sweetest dream. And the pure rising light of the verse contrasting with the darker falling away of the chorus gives us the beautiful truth of that uncertainty.* It was something trite and overwritten like that, and I suddenly felt like a butcher, taking the blade of analysis to the tender form of her art."

Delete (work tape): "...a pop-rock paeon to girl power, power over the looming danger of online stalking, a three-minute celebration of the girl who can 'use my little finger and make him disappear from my screen.' One listen and I was jamming air guitar to a power-pop chord riff that would've made Johnny Ramone smile if he ever smiled."

Only You: "...a slow rocking love ballad whose heart, harmony and melody had only one clear precedent, the early Beatles – yet was all Daisy."

Statue of Liberty (1983 demo): "...whose title included '(1983 demo).' As soon as I played it I heard why she included that brief explanation: it sounded like it had been recorded underwater. Barely a song, just two minutes of echoing guitars, a clunky cool bass line and a few lines of vocals in harmony with herself. 'Meet me at the Statue of Liberty, that's where we're gonna kiss, that's where we're gonna kiss.' Like the 19-second collage poem Unattainable on the original cassette, it had no business on a publishing company song demo."



"More Songs for Barry" liner notes are by Barry Marcus, as told to Jon Fried.

(Daisy was so thrilled to have a listening ear she sent another crop of too many songs to Barry. And she's got lots more....)

Reeling Feeling: By the time I met Daisy's older son, he was 15, three years past adding the blazing piano part on this recording, well onto bigger and better things; her younger son, the drummer, went on to play on a couple of her albums. There's a lot of talent in the Steinberg clan. Though that's not how you spell pure fun and exuberance. You spell that this way: *Reeling Feeling.*

Counting: Riding tigers, ribbons, waves of time, hope and worry – don't let the girlishness of the voice disguise the woman's truth in her search for a love she can count on, a love that can count

on her. And then there's the way she bends my heart with the whammy bar on her Fender Mustang. And how the layers of that voice in harmony and answer become that woman's truth.

One Valentine's Day: OK, so what's really going on in is this light-as-air song, sweet as the scent of a hand-plucked bouquet? The verses are all courtship, pure as the plinking of a fingernail on ukelele strings. But the choruses – what's that? Longing? Regret? Toss the regret aside, let the longing be fulfilled...at least as long as that scent and that song linger.

River of Time: Some people hear only the light and air in Daisy's music, and there sure is a lot of that. But what then do you do with the slow, tender, crushing weight of a heart in pain that lives in every note of this song, this river of blue?

Hello Rainbow: This little prism of sonic delight teases big questions out of me: Does the allure of innocence crush the innocence of allure? When innocence is entwined with desire do you want to possess it? Destroy it? Or be destroyed by it? Or possessed by it? It's all sweetness and light – can't we just let it scatter the gloom? Go ask the cowboy.

You Won't Even Miss Me When I'm Gone: Has anyone ever sung hope and heartbreak more purely than Daisy? And one last question: what would *you* say to her when she insists she's a terrible producer? This song, like all of them here (with the one exception of that piano part) is played, recorded and mixed by the songbird herself. Everything she touches sounds only and ever like Daisy.

I'm the Girl I Told Your Mama About: I've listened to this song more than just about any song ever recorded, maybe even more than **Sweetest Dream**. Yet I'm still not sure what it's about. A wild girl has finally found the one she wants to settle down with, so she visits his mother and warns her about the wild girl he's been seeing (herself) in words so considerate, polite and concerned that she's bound to take her son aside and tell him to stop seeing the wild one and settle down with someone like this? I *think* so. What I don't know is if she's ever going to change, or if she's just having more crazy fun with no idea of where it'll all go. But I don't listen for the answer. I listen because I can't stop listening to it. And maybe because of this story Daisy told me: she had a guitar-playing boyfriend who taught her a few jazz chords and she tried to write a song with them. Maybe if I listen enough, I'll be that boyfriend, at least a little bit.

Forever and Ever: Another boyfriend story. But first: Daisy grew up playing classical music. When she was very little she'd sit at the piano in her den and try to make up songs, though after her parents finally relented and got her the lessons she'd been begging for, she only played with music in front of her. Then came a boyfriend who one afternoon was jamming with a friend at their apartment. She decided she didn't have to just sit there – she picked up a guitar and played along, despite never jamming a note on guitar or piano (at least not since she was five). That night, she and the boyfriend wrote their first song, and soon he'd dragged her down into his world of pop music. Years later, Daisy saw in one of her pitch sheets that some music

supervisor was looking for a song based on Beethoven's Pathétique. She thought, "I can do that." And she did. Roll over, old boyfriend.