

## Lest We Forget How Fragile We Are

By Michelle Duffy From front man of one of the greatest new wave acts to come out of middle class Britain in the Eighties, to world - concerned, Global pioneer, singer songwriter in the Nineties. Sting has managed to launch a thousand careers from one voice in a fairly short space of time. Regarded as one of the most intelligent of pop music's deep thinkers, this man grew from the moody, adolescent, self obsessed, trio we came to love as The Police. With absolutely nothing in common with the actual boys in blue driving around in panda cars, this band gave us, not just a few songs to get sullen for, but the shy, blond mop top of Gordon Sumner. Sting himself. Stretching out his utter most creative wings in 1982 with the dire 'Spread A Little Happiness,' it would have appeared to the discerning listener that his solo career was doomed to be short lived, but how wrong could we have been? Sting has made it a life long ambition to disperse his thought provoking melodies across our pop charts for now, over twenty four years. Daring not to rest for only one brief moment, only to perhaps ponder over the plight of the Amazon rain forests, he has never let his audience drift over to another artist for long. It is perhaps, not totally surprising when on embarking on a more in-depth look at this album, 'All This Time,' to find that it was actually recorded on the 11th of September 2001. None of us, naturally, need any reminding as to what this day stood for in the history of the human race. It also goes without saying that in the greatness of respect to those who lost their lives, this album was solely dedicated to them. Is it then that we see this album in a sobering light? With this dedication on the first page of the inside sleeve, that we change our mood somewhat vigorously, especially when it is only the lyrics to the opening track, 'Fragile,' are the only ones included in the sleeve booklet. The rest of the pages are dedicated to the various moody poses of Sting, the God of Lyrics. Age brings an introverted and retrospective influence to the fore when one is an artist of a certain calibre. With Sting, the World in it's current state became simply a source of defining music around heart felt lyrics. The very essence of the man and his music plays no more of an important part in engaging his audience in this album as it has done in any of the other collections of Sting melodies. What is defiantly significant is fundamentally, the date on which it was recorded, at Il Palagio in Italy. As a live recording, it flows, especially in the second track, 'PerfectLoveGoneWrong,' as the mood is more Dave Brubeck than up to date Sting. Each musician takes a two minute centre stage in true Gladys Knight style to cool applause. In 'All This Time,' the opening flutter with the drum stick across the side puts the listener immediately in thought of Belinda Carlisle's 'Circle In The Sand.' Yet it is with this lighter moods that we discover the idealism of Sting. He had learnt, at some stage in his existence how to master each genre he put his creative abilities into. He is as much at home with a group of stunningly pronounced Ethnic backing singers as he is with the edginess and rawness of 'Every Breath You Take,' which you will be pleased to know makes an appearance as the last track of the album. It gives us a familiar wink as it has hardly changed at all to fit in with the rest of the gentle touch of the album. What we do have here is a mixture of Sting and Police collaborations and some new twists on these old songs will not be appealing to some hardened new wave ears, mine included. If we put aside our own musical up bringing, then life being breathed into these old songs again, isn't so bad. What is interesting is how the Police tracks sound so strange, slowed down to Sting mode, yet his own tracks sound beautifully drenched in emotion, romance and dream like qualities, that they seem to be quite angelic. Some of us cringed at the new workings of 'Don't Stand So Close To Me,' and 'Roxanne,' which, has been unduly slaughtered here. The latter has never once been designed to be a drippy slow folk song. Not ever. However, some of these reworkings do actually work, dare I say it. Even the 'Set Them Free,' sounds predominately better when a few trumpets and some stronger drum beats are added. Even 'Brand New Day,' gets The Commitments treatment. There is one track that he could never tamper with and that's the pasteurised 'Fields Of Gold.' Could it be said that actually, anything that Sting turns his hand to, turns into fields of gold. A nice jazz touch is added to 'If I ever Lose My Faith In You,' but it is with tracks as strong as this, that their structural impact could never be destroyed, no matter what genre you decided to dip them into. Despite the sobering dedication at the beginning of the sleeve, the majority of the album can be described better as a visual description rather than musically. Picture a smoky bar with dimmed blue lights. Imagine a cool looking black guy rocking ever so easily while he teases the keys on a shiny piano with his freshly manicured fingers. Think of the singer, half perched on a tall stool, black leather clad shoulders, hanging on to the equally tall microphone stand for all his worth. The music may not actually stir up any emotions other than the usual respectful head swaying at the genius of Sting, but what it will do is appreciate him as an English institution. His music may not be full of boxer like punch anymore, but he has found, that it doesn't need to be. He has made, certainly more of a statement about himself since embarking on his journey through his mind and the World around him, than he ever did as a young, impressionable singer. He continues to please with his charming melodies as well as educate us to appreciate the World. We may still long for the days of the monochromed Police but that was only to train Sting for the great outdoors- the World beyond new wave. He has shown us over the years that he has grown, although we all may not have grown with him. I for one, still dust off the vinyl once in a while for a fix of the old days, but, Sting, in recent years, has taught us to listen. Tracks include; Fragile, A Thousand Years, Perfect Love, All This Time, The Hounds Of Winter, Mad About You, Don't Stand So Close To me, When We Dance, Dienda, Roxanne, Set Them Free,

Brand New Day,  
Fields Of Gold,  
Moon Over Bourbon Street,  
Shape Of My Heart,  
If I Ever Lose My Faith In You,  
Every Breath You Take.

All songs written and composed by Sting, (additions by Kipper, Kenny Kirkland and Dominic Miller. Produced by Kipper and Sting A+M Records Inc. 2001. HMV £9.99 (2004) ©michelle duffy (posted sometimes elsewhere as sam1942) 2006.

## About the Author

Michelle is a freelance writer in England and owner of the websites, [www.generationsounds.co.uk](http://www.generationsounds.co.uk), nevermindthebloggers.bravehost.com and their successful sister, 'Never Mind The Bloggers' at paperback-writer29.tripod.com. She has been writing over the last year, for five major consumer websites across the world and is one of the only two music category advisors for one website in the U.K. Her websites promote young, amateur and professional bands/artists and their fan clubs whilst also reviewing them for local and world wide promotion. She has also recently launched the blogs; 'The Ramblings Of An Old Rocker,' 'Bohemian Waffle,' 'The Rhythm Rock And Blues Machine' and 'The Moped's Musings.' She is currently working on a third website and fourth web log. Article Source: [http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Michelle\\_Duffy](http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Michelle_Duffy)

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