

SIMON BROBYN

It's All About The Song

JUST A LITTLE WHILE

by

Simon Brobyn

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Lyrics

Oh such a crazy world
We're living in
It's all going so fast
I don't know where to begin
Seems like nobody
Got no time for nobody
Always something else
Making 'em blind

Please give me
Just a little while
Won't you stay with me
For a little while
All I'm asking is let it be
For just a little while

Oh it feels like
I'm losing my way
Everything is changing
Passing me by
And I'm trying so hard
To understand
Won't somebody help me
Help me now

Please give me
Just a little while
Won't you stay with me
For a little while
All I'm asking is let it be
For just a little while
Just a little while
Ooh ooh ooh

Story Behind the Song

“The world went and got itself in a big damn hurry”.

This line from the movie *The Shawshank Redemption* jumped out from the screen, got inside my head and refused to leave. It's spoken by a character called Brooks 'Brooksy' Hatlen after being released from his 50-year sentence at Shawshank State Prison.

After such a long time in prison old Brooksy can't adjust to modern life in the outside world. He is institutionalised and longs to return to Shawshank Prison, the place he considers his real home. Tragically, unable to cope, Brooksy takes his own life. Of course, we know this prison and the character of Brooksy are fictional, creations from the mind of the great Stephen King from his novella *Rita Hayworth and Shawshank Redemption*.

Brooksy's statement sat in the recesses of my mind for a few years and then the day came for it to be used. I was reading an article on how the internet bombards us with images and information, putting forward the notion that it can have a detrimental effect on our mental health and wellbeing. This got me thinking about how much technology has advanced over recent years and the impact it has on our lives.

Even though Brooksy is talking about modern life in the 1950s I feel that what he says is relevant today. It brought to mind the time my dear departed mum was trying to get to grips with using a computer and how people of her generation, in particular, can be overwhelmed by technology.

After chewing on various thoughts about how all this affects us the phrase “Give me just a little while” popped into my head. I then wrote the chorus setting myself the task of building the song around it. The opening phrase was just an extension of Brooksy's line,

*Oh such a crazy world
We're living in
It's all going so fast
I don't know where to begin*

Whilst writing, I had this mental picture of an elderly person trying to get to grips with their device (probably influenced by my mum as mentioned above). Perhaps a grandchild is trying to teach them about their mobile phone but it's all too much and time out is needed. The well-known phrase “Slow down and smell the roses” sprang to mind.

Continued

Story Behind the Song

The rest of the first verse came to me quite quickly. A main reference point was how people can be absorbed by their phones and seemingly switched off from everything around them. This reminded me of something I witnessed a couple of years ago.

One weekday afternoon I took a break and went for a walk. School had just finished for the day, and I saw a little boy, around 7 years old, walking home with his mum. He was talking excitedly but mum was ensconced in her phone ignoring him. He tried to get her attention to no avail. I felt sorry for the lad, I remember how important it was to know that your parents are listening to you (though I reckon I must have tested mine at times!).

Unfortunately, I think this kind of situation is in no way unique which gave rise to the phrase,

*Seems like nobody
Got no time for nobody
Always something else
Making 'em blind*

The second verse was more of a challenge. It is important to reiterate the first verse without repeating yourself. This is known as “second verse hell”, a songwriting challenge I love. After working through a few ideas, I decided to get inside the mind of this technology-challenged elderly person and imagine what they might be thinking. I read various online articles on the subject and came away with the notion of everything advancing so fast some people feel left behind,

*Oh it feels like
I'm losing my way
Everything is changing
Passing me by*

Once again referencing Brooksy's line from Shawshank Redemption, life had changed so much over the 50 years he had been in prison, everything in the outside world had passed him by. This was amplified by the scene where Brooksy was walking through town a free man and was nearly run over by a car; poor chap didn't realise how fast the motor car had become.

The rest of the second verse was again influenced by memories of my mum when she was learning how to send emails. I recall one of the very few emails she sent me. At the bottom she wrote “I'm trying” and, knowing my mum, this meant she was giving it her best but struggling,

Continued

Story Behind the Song

*And I'm trying so hard
To understand
Won't somebody help me
Help me now*

Due to the subject matter, I felt this song needed to be musically understated but have a slight intensity. The piano was always going to be the main instrument, but I needed other ones in there to help it build. I experimented with a few different instruments and arrangements until I came up with what you hear...the old "suck-it-and-see" approach.

I do spend quite a bit of time selecting a vocalist as I need the right one to get the song across. However, this time I knew immediately who to contact. It had to be Andrea Tyler, an American vocalist I've worked with before (good old technology allows us to work remotely). She is incredibly talented and can create amazing harmonies and ad-libs. All I had to do was outline where I thought harmonies and ad-libs needed to be and Andrea did the rest! The results speak for themselves - she always manages to exceed my expectations.

I did contemplate writing a bridge section but felt that the song needed to be short and sweet to reflect the subject matter. After all, we are dealing with just a little while!

See you at the next song!
Simon

