

PIANO • VOCAL • GUITAR

The
Rupert Holmes
SONGBOOK



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Rupert Holmes

THREE APPRECIATIONS

Rupert Holmes may indeed be the last of the romantics.

Melding the classic craft of the Great American Songbook with a contemporary, urbane voice, Holmes has wielded his pen, piano, and imagination to aim straight for the heart. One of his most-recorded songs asks “Who, What, When, Where, Why.” Composer-lyricist Holmes always answers those crucial questions in vivid widescreen, stretching the limits of popular song while respecting tradition. He embodies the quintessence of the songwriter as storyteller, introducing memorable characters in unforgettable, heart-tugging situations. The songs in this folio will transport you to an English music hall at “Moonfall,” the fierce domain of a “Queen Bee,” even a caved-in mine in which men are driven to do the unthinkable to a certain “Timothy.”



But more often, the music and lyrics of Rupert Holmes will immerse you in a familiar world, yet from a fresh perspective you might never have considered. The songwriter illuminates truths with empathy and insight into the human condition, bringing the sensitivity of one who has been there.

Holmes has long shed light on both the missed communications and miscommunications of couples in and out of love. The yearning “Echo Valley 2-6809” and beautifully melancholic “Terminal” address the *might-have-beens* threatening to haunt us all, as does the wistful rumination of “The People That You Never Get to Love.” While the protagonists of “Echo Valley” and “Terminal” throw away their chances for true love, there’s a glimmer of hope for the narrator of “The People” as the lyric climactically shifts from the seemingly general to the piercingly specific. Throughout his songbook, Holmes makes the universal personal, and the personal universal. The keenly-observed “I Don’t Need You” has delicious humor as well as emotional resonance as it exposes the reality of post-breakup denial. No detail is too small in his stories of love and loss: a phone number you can’t forget, an unfamiliar pack of cigarettes, the computer on the nineteenth floor, or the wind laced with pine.

Such attention to detail serves Holmes well in his thriving career as a mystery novelist. The seeds of his suspense-works were planted in the intricate, strikingly original “Brass Knuckles,” perhaps the world’s only hardboiled noir song. This musical roller-coaster ride boasts a twist ending—a Holmes signature that can also be savored on “Escape,” forever to be known by its indelible parenthetical title of “The Piña Colada Song.” There’s delectable irony in both the breezy “Escape” and its plaintive companion, “Letters That Cross in the Mail.”

Since the mid-1980s, Holmes has largely concentrated on other story and song forms, writing for stage, screen, television, and books. His last full-length album came in 1994, but the most recent composition in this collection, 2012’s tender “A Lullaby for Midnight,” finds the tunesmith as affecting as ever. Rupert Holmes, whose richly melodic, heartfelt songs brim with finely wrought wordplay, has carved out a niche of his own—or rather, he has built a place where all that is romantic can last.

JOE MARCHESE

Writer/Editor/Producer of The Second Disc

Rupert Holmes songs are bigger than life, often combining unorthodox plots with sophisticated harmonic progressions. As highbrow as that sounds, they also depict “normal” people and their basic nature—who we actually are. Even when exploring



the more exaggerated characters such as the femme fatales of “Queen Bee” and the noir detective of “Brass Knuckles,” Holmes does not resort to lazy stereotypes. We easily feel the career and creative frustration of the “Studio Musician”; the heroine’s self-imposed isolation in “Lullaby for Myself”; and not sympathy for but empathy with the luckless philanderer in “Terminal” and the inattentive romeo in “Echo Valley 2-6809,” both of whom suffer from loss of connection. Very real, very human.

While we’re on “loss of connection”—make that misconnection—those are still-more recurring themes in this catalog. Rupert’s often-recorded classic, “The People That You Never Get to Love,” is populated with momentary elevator partners and distant jump-cut sirens at train depots, bus stops, and in passing Buicks, before it queues his trademark twist, “... you don’t know who you’ll meet at half past three,” and a shot at that happy ending. And re: misconnection, Holmes’s “Letters That Cross in the Mail”—the title says it all—is the Merriam Webster definition of the word. And if you like irony, the bored couple in “Escape (The Piña Colada Song)” cook up their clandestine hook-up through personal ads, mixing comedy, intrigue, romance, and yoga.



But what most love about Rupert Holmes songs is their heart. In “The Old School,” “...the Board of Education and the leaders of this town have determined that the time has come to tear my old school down,” heard as either metaphor or description, set up a very touching story. The song’s point is the emotional declaration, “I belong to the old school,” where so many of us also reside. And just try to keep your eyes dry after the lyrics “Ginger stand beside me as they lay into the walls, toppling down like building blocks, the homeroom and the halls.”

Beyond its grounded grandeur and emotional evocations, this body of work also should be commended for its wisdom, which makes dubious the line in “Nearsighted”: “I don’t envy those of you with 20/20 vision, who see this world for all it’s worth with crystal clear precision.” Really, Mr. Holmes? These songs depict the world with amazing clarity despite their widescreen Technicolor, making us care about the characters long after the last bar of these audio scripts. We will always wonder if the estranged couple of “Letters That Cross in the Mail” ever reconciled; if the fidelity-challenged women of “Him” and “Who, What, When, Where, Why?” dump their paramours for the protagonists; if Mr. “Terminal” ever snapped out of his malaise; if the “Speechless” suitor ever found the words; if ...

MIKE RAGOGNA

Contributor for The Huffington Post

Former Senior Director of Catalog A&R/Producer for Universal Music & EMI



Rupert Holmes is that rare bird of a songwriter—a great storyteller who has the ability to craft an entire play within a song, and a melodist whose abundant gifts are right out of the Great American Songbook, with intelligence and wit that shine forth in the lyrics in a way that captures both heart and mind.

From his very first album it was evident that a major talent had arrived—songs like “Widescreen,” “Terminal,” “Second Saxophone,” “Letters That Cross in the Mail” were and still are completely fresh and unique. Since then he’s not only put out many great albums with many great songs, but he’s also given us a great Broadway musical in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. His songs have been recorded by the likes of Barbra Streisand, Dolly Parton, Barry Manilow, Vanessa Williams, Dionne Warwick, and many others. While his most famous song, “Escape (The Piña Colada Song),” practically defined an era, it’s but one of many classics waiting for you in this collection—a treasure trove of stunning material.



BRUCE KIMMEL

*Grammy-nominated Producer
Former VP, Varèse Sarabande Records
Founder of Fynsworth Alley Recordings*

THE PEOPLE THAT YOU NEVER GET TO LOVE

Words and Music by
RUPERT HOLMES

Moderately slow ♩ = 80 (♩ = $\frac{3}{4}$ ♩)

1. You're

mp

Verse:

(with pedal)

brows-ing through a sec-ond-hand book-store, and you see her in "non-fic-tion, V through
see her on a train that you've just missed, at a bus stop where your bus will nev-er

Y." She looks up from World War II, and then you catch her catch-ing you catch-ing her
stop; or in a pass-ing Bu-ick, when you've been pulled o-ver by a traf-fic








eye. cop. And you quick - ly turn a - way your wish - ful
Or you'll share an el - e - va - tor, just you








stare two, and take a sud - den in - terest in your shoes. If you
and you'll rise in to - tal si - lence to your floor. Like the








on - ly had the cour - age, but you don't. She turns and leaves and you both lose.
fool you are, you get off. And she leaves your life be - hind a clos - ing door.

Chorus:








And you think a - bout the peo - ple that you nev - er get to love. It's
And you think a - bout the peo - ple that you nev - er get to love; the

cresc. *mf*