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**THE SENSATIONAL COUNTRY BLUES WONDERS! ARE HEADING YOUR WAY WITH *THE WORLD WILL BREAK YOUR HEART* (November 13, 2020)**

**“The Sound Of America, Starting At The Intersection Of All Its Best Influences”**

**Jersey City, NJ August 31st, 2020—**Gary Van Miert is a local cult figure in his area of the country. Known for looking as if he stole his clothing from Ernest Tubbs closet, the singer-songwriter, musician and all around entertainer honed his skills playing the nightclubs of New Jersey, Manhattan, Brooklyn and beyond. He and his band have played unorthodox venues such as cemeteries, lumberyards, mansions and even a department store and have opened for luminaries such as Marshall Crenshaw, Evan Dando and The Smithereens. So what’s a musician who relies on live shows to get his music out into the world going to do when gigs come to a halt? He takes it on the virtual road!

The Sensational Country Blues Wonders! started as a vehicle for Van Miert to start performing and take advantage of the vibrant art and music scene in Jersey City. The band’s name is an homage to all the great groups from the golden age of gospel. The band was designed to replicate the original instrumental lineup of acoustic rhythm guitar, electric lead guitar and upright acoustic bass used on the first rock and roll records made by Elvis at Sun Studio in Memphis, TN.

“The music that inspired me was born in Nashville and Memphis, Tennessee as well as in the Mississippi Delta,” he admits. “I’ve always been interested in that point where blues, country and gospel music intersect. Elvis Presley and a few others captured lightning in a bottle in the 50s and changed the world.”

Since performing live has gone out the window, Van Miert was left figuring out how to get an audience to hear his music. He had written several original songs and knew exactly how he wanted them to sound. He then sent guitar and vocal demos to Nashville Master Tracks and told them what instruments he wanted used for each song. The company brought in session musicians to record the instrumentals according to Van Miert’s specific directions. “For example, I would tell them I want this song to have that Bakersfield/Buck Owens sound,” he explained. “It’s an interesting way to make a record to say the least. I felt like a kid in a candy store. I could add virtually any instrument I wanted to a track. On “Double Barrel Blues I wanted a real ragtime feel and used tuba, banjo and tack piano. On “Second Fiddle to a Steel Guitar” I got to use a lap steel and fiddle player. And I envisioned “I’m a Heartbreaker as a slinky Blues number and used a wonderful blues harp player to give it that flavor--and I never left my house to make this record.”

*The World Will Break Your Heart* is Van Miert’s first album of original material. (He released an album of covers in 2012). The album is a 10-song cycle of American roots music. “I have my own unique interpretation of American roots music,” he described. “Classic country music from the 50s and 60s, down-home spiritual songs from the golden age of gospel, and time-honored blues numbers that go back to the greats hailing from Mississippi and Chicago. I combine all these elements to create a one of a kind musical experience.”

Although the album wasn’t planned as a concept album, most of the songs are about circumstances and things in life that can and will break your heart. As Van Miert describes it, “This release turned out to be a *loose* concept album.” Along with the aforementioned songs, there is the tongue-in-cheek “I’m Afraid of Every Goddamn Thing”, the waltz-like “When Your Heart is Blue”, the punk-inspired “Love Murders Your Heart” and the contemporary murder ballad, “My Baby Stabbed Me With a Steak Knife”.

In addition to making *The World Will Break Your Heart,* Van Miert has also been putting together and recording episodes of an entertaining/educational half hour program for the Jersey City Free Public Library called, “The Sensational Roots of American Music. Van Miert performs classic country, gospel and blues numbers and gives a little history lesson on the artists and songs. “I’ve been soaking up music like a sponge over the years and have expanded my musical knowledge, as well,” he said. Before the lockdown, he also wrote and performed music for the Jersey City Theater Center and performed as The Gospel Wonder! for local church services. “My philosophy of saying yes whenever I’m asked to do something outside of my comfort zone has taken me to some very interesting places,” he admits.

“I attempted to write my own songs when I was younger and they weren’t very good,” said Van Miert. “I think what’s working for me now is life experience and a greater understanding of music. With age I’ve broadened my horizons and developed an appreciation for many different genres of music. If the songs I’ve written are any good, it’s because I am standing on the shoulders of giants.”

*The World Will Break Your Heart* releases on November 13th, 2020.

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