

Kieran Goss: Background Biography

Kieran Goss was born and raised in County Down, Northern Ireland. He was just nine years old when he got his first guitar. Growing up in a big family with diverse musical tastes meant that early on he was hearing the music of Johnny Cash, Kris Kristofferson, Willie Nelson, Frank Sinatra and The Rolling Stones. These varied influences fermented into the brew that gives Kieran his own unique sound.

Kieran supported himself while a law student in Belfast by playing club gigs and the University Students Union, earning himself support slots for Elvis Costello, Christy Moore and Joe Jackson along the way. After qualifying as a lawyer in the mid-eighties, Kieran left home for France and Germany in order to avoid being drafted into the legal profession! He came back home to Ireland in 1989 to record his first album, *Brand New Star*. It contained the songs *Brand New Star* and *Just Around The Corner*, which came to the attention of Mary Black. She recorded both songs for her album, *Babes In The Wood*.

In 1994 Kieran followed up *Brand New Star* with the album *New Day*, which contained his chart-topping version of The Four Tops' *Reach Out (I'll Be There)*. In 1998 he released the album *Worse Than Pride*, which contained the Top 10 single *Out Of My Head*. It was the second most played song on Irish radio that year. *Worse Than Pride* achieved double platinum status nine months after it was released. *Red-Letter Day* followed this in 2000, and contained the classic *Reasons To Leave*.

In the winter of 2002, Kieran released the compilation, *Out Of My Head... The Best Of Kieran Goss*, which was intended to act as a resumé of his work up to that point and to give him a breather while he holed up to write. His sixth studio album, *Blue Sky Sunrise*, was recorded in Tennessee and produced by Rodney Crowell and Peter Coleman. It was released in September 2005, and the first single from it; *Clear Day*, was an instant hit which was picked up by the Progressive Building Society for use in their television advertising campaign.

Kieran Goss Trio Live, Kieran's first ever live album, was released in June 2008 to great critical acclaim. His latest studio album, *I'll Be Seeing You*, was released in February 2009.

I'll Be Seeing You: Turning Heartache Into Art

Kieran Goss left Ireland for Austin, Texas, to record his eighth solo album. *I'll Be Seeing You* took shape in the Texan heat during a handful of loose, live sessions with the aid of co-producer and musician, Gabe Rhodes.

There's a remarkable, reflective maturity to *I'll Be Seeing You* which in many ways reflects Goss's personal life, which has been beset by turmoil over the last couple of years. During the making of the album he lost both his mother and his young sister-in-law to cancer. Then, shortly before his mother passed away, his wife was diagnosed with breast cancer. Luckily her treatment was successful and two years on, she remains cancer-free. Perhaps as a result of all this, *I'll Be Seeing You* may be the artist's most

direct work yet. “The way I write has always been from the heart”, Goss says, “and I’m less afraid to be open and display vulnerability in my writing as I get older, to dig deep into how we process life, how we play the cards we’re dealt”.

The writing and production on the album is lean and focused throughout. The beautifully crafted songs are supported by spare, spacious arrangements and judicious use of harmony vocals. The opening track, *One Boy’s Treasure*, is a series of nostalgic snapshots of precious memories which concludes with the realisation that “nothing’s lost that I can’t find” and sets the tone for this thoughtful, hopeful album. There’s plenty of Goss’s trademark sunny melodies to be found here too. The wonderful fizz of *The Reason Why* and *The One That Got Away* balance out Goss’s ruminations on loss on the title track and love lost on *Into Your Arms* and carry the album along to the reflective shuffle of the closing track, *Make The Morning Shine*, which is a prayer for peace in the midst of strife, and which has one of the most beautifully uplifting outros ever heard on record.

Much has been made of Goss’s masterful stagecraft—in the words of country music legend Don Williams, his “amazing ability to reach out to his audience and connect with them in a very special way”. On *I’ll Be Seeing You*, arguably for the first time in Goss’s career, the lyrical and melodic promise of his excellent early work, married to the spare, restrained production has crystallised to bridge the gap between his live shows and his recordings. While it may be premature to use the words “career-defining album” this early on in his career, that’s very close to what *I’ll Be Seeing You* feels like.