



ATTACHMENTS, SONG COMMENTS

Attachments is about the connections we have or form as we go along in life—to our families, friends, lovers, to animals, to places.

A couple of the lyrics are almost entirely about a real event. Most are a combination of the past and present, my take on what other people might be thinking or feeling; books, films, and just imagination, all “bubbling up from the swamp.”

1) “A Little Like This”

Russell Ferrante came up with some beautiful music right off the bat when I brought the lyrics for “A Little Like This” to his house. He then did a second version that was just as lovely but in a minor key, and we decided that it was more in keeping with the mood of the song. At this point I didn’t have a title for the project, but described the concept to Russ. He closed his eyes for a couple of seconds, opened them, and said, “Attachments.”

2) “Attachments”

This was conceived as a “list song,” detailing the singer’s various romantic entanglements. I had many scraps of ideas written, and for the middle part, Eddie Arkin chose some lines that veered off the main subject to describe the person’s non-romantic emotional ties. Eddie wrote an evocative, impressionistic accompaniment for this section. We then went back to a verse, continuing the “list” theme. The song ends with two people having a drink together and one of them making a confession.

3) “I Thought You Did”

Last year, Dave Grusin called me to write some lyrics for a vocal album he was working on. In the course of this, one day I mentioned to Dave how I loved his “Memphis Stomp” theme from the all-solo-piano score of *The Firm*. Dave suggested I write lyrics to it. The original music has such an infectious feel, and I didn’t want to

crowd it; I tried making the words somewhat sparse, offsetting the phrases in an asymmetrical way. I was excited to be able to work on this gem, and to have Dave himself on the track.

4) "Anna Lee"

One day, Russell played me some unrecorded compositions of his, including one piece simply entitled "In G." I had recently come across a note that a dear and late friend of mine had written me on my twentieth birthday. The lyrics are about her, with a few details changed, including her name. The poem I quote is Edna St. Vincent Millay's "Prayer to Persephone." Violinist Charlie Bisharat has many standout moments on *Attachments*; one of my favorites is the descending line he plays before the last verse of "Anna Lee."

5) "159"

My husband Tony helped me greatly with the up-tempo songs, by recording grooves I could listen to while writing the lyrics. The tempo of this one was 159. It features Grant Geissman's super-cool guitar soloing; Eddie wrote the music and plays rhythm guitar. The lyrics describe a family having dinner in the kitchen. The drummer son is laying down the groove to the Motown hit "The Clapping Song," his metronome set to 159. On the intro, Michael Valerio scats along to his bass a la Slam Stewart, and drummer Michael Shapiro—who told me that he likes to introduce something he hasn't used before to each project of mine—plays a frame drum.

6) "We Have the Stars"

Pianist Joey Calderazzo wrote "La Valse Kendall" for an album he did with Branford Marsalis, *Songs of Mirth and Melancholy*. I had been thinking of doing a lyric called "We Have the Stars," based on the last line of the Bette Davis melodrama *Now, Voyager*. I asked Shelly Berg if he thought "La Valse Kendall" would be a good choice for something I could lyricize and that we could record as a duo. Shelly loved the music, and thankfully, Joey was happy with the words I wrote to it.

7) "I Love You Guys"

I've been around musicians since I was a tot. I knew I wanted to write a song about them with Shelly, and it was a great opportunity for him, drummer Gregg Field and Michael Valerio to show off their chops (check out Mike's solo at 1:25). The lyrics contain references to conversations I've had with musicians, jokes about chick singers, etc. The seven-stroke roll I refer to at the end, demonstrated by Gregg, is a drum pattern that starts out with three alternating double strokes and ends with a single stroke. If you're right-handed, it would be abbreviated as RLLRRL.

8) "I Hope I Never Leave This Place"

This is about someone living by herself in a cabin near the water. The weather is often fierce and she's far from civilization, but she can't imagine living anywhere else. It was, as always, fascinating to go through the writing process with my friend Eddie as he discovered the perfect melody, chords and dreamy accompaniment for these lyrics. *Attachments* has more ballads on it (five) than any project I've done so far, and "I Hope I Never Leave This Place" is the most joyful overall.

9) "Hearing Things"

This is another Eddie collaboration. To me, "A Little Like This," "We Have the Stars" and "Hearing Things" feel like parts of the same story, in which the singer is always alone—reflecting on a love that is intense but elusive. Somewhere along the way, we decided that there should be a choir at the end, with me overdubbing the harmonies. We were intending that it should fade out, but the chemistry between the guys led to a real ending, after a monstrous piano solo by Russ.

10) "The Veil"

I was having lunch last summer with a friend of mine, and telling her about the album's theme. She pointed out that I'd never written about my mother. I said that I didn't think I could, and started explaining why, but she encouraged me to try; I'm glad that I did. I have been working with Shelly for many years now, and his writing and playing on this track may be my favorite ever. By the way, for those who might not understand the Nick and Nora Charles reference, they were the lead characters (played by William Powell and Myrna Loy) in the old *Thin Man* films—elegant, urbane, and hard-drinking.

11) "Smitten With You"

There had to be a dog song on the CD, and as Russ and his wife Gerry are also dog-lovers, I knew he'd be the perfect co-writer. The music he wrote is so charming and quirky, I can't help but smile every time it starts. It continually modulates and goes around in a kind of circle. Russ's Yellowjackets band-mate, the great Bob Mintzer, guests on bass clarinet. I snuck a little PSA in there at the end, about not leaving your dog in the car on a hot day (seriously, even with the windows down!)

12) "True"

The day before Dave Grusin and I recorded "I Thought You Did," we were just wrapping up our rehearsal of the song when Dave started playing a classical piece, Bach's "Air on the G String," and asked what I thought about the possibility of writing words to it. That evening I came up with about half the lyrics, then sang it for Dave the next day. At the last session for *Attachments*, we recorded the elegant arrangement he wrote, with Charlie on violin.