

MORE THAN I CAN SAY

FEW MUSICIANS CAN CLAIM A CAREER SPANNING MORE THAN FOUR DECADES. THOSE THAT CAN BECOME LEGENDS IN THEIR OWN RIGHT. **GISELLE WHITEAKER** CHATS TO LEO SAYER ABOUT WHAT KEEPS HIM TICKING

Woah-oh, hey-hey. I love you more than I can say. I'll love you twice as much tomorrow. I love you more than I can say."

So go the lyrics to just one of the many hits by British singer-songwriter and pop legend Leo Sayer. Sayer is celebrating an incredible forty years since topping the charts with a box-set of studio recordings and an anniversary tour of the UK later this year. "It was 1971 that my first record came out," he says with a hint of disbelief in his voice. "Then Adam Faith came into it. He said 'Right kid, you're in the studio on Thursday. It's in London and we've all got to drive up from Shoreham by Sea and get everyone together...So we scramble up to London and we make a record called Living in America which sold absolutely nothing but it was a great experience."

It was more than an experience. It was a kick start into a whole new world; one that Sayer has inhabited with aplomb and boundless energy ever since. "This year is the anniversary of the Pierrot," Sayer explains - with his second single "The Show Must Go On", he wore a Pierrot style costume and make-up and the song went quickly to number two.

His first seven hit singles in the United Kingdom all reached the top ten but in his four decade plus career, Sayer cites the highlight as The Who's Roger Daltrey making a solo album of Sayer's songs in 1972, giving him a strong platform to build his career from. "I'll never forget driving around Brighton all day in a car with my co-writer, David Courtney, to hear Roger's single, "Giving It All Away" on the radio. It was a big moment, the first airplay. We set off at 7am. Finally, at 6pm it came on. Our little song on the radio."

Sayer still considers "Giving It All Away" to be one of his personal favourites. "I wrote it as my resignation note," he confesses. "It's a song about perceived wisdom; 'I'm just a boy giving it all away, I know better now' and you never know better," Sayer exclaims. "It's kind of ironic. You always think that you're not going to give it all away again, but you know that you will. That's the weird thing about show business and keeping your head above the water. That's probably also what makes it exciting and challenging."



Sayer attributes his longevity to the lasting quality of the songs. "They sound like they were recorded today. I don't know how we ever got to that. We were very honest in the way we made records," he muses. "Nothing gets in the way of the song and the message." He also believes working with the best musicians of the day (and he can list off an impressive selection of collaborators) and great co-writers has helped the tunes along. "The contribution of musicians and producers is undeniable," he says.

"We made great records in the 70s and 80s," he says. "We were creating songs of the moment. We never thought they'd last. It's ironic that artists like myself were only creating songs that described our time; we never planned for the future, yet here we are, still relevant today." There's no denying that tunes like the romantic ballad "When I Need You" and catchy disco number "You Make Me Feel Like Dancing" have stood the test of time. The latter was a jam track that worked - even Homer Simpson has a crack at it in series three of The Simpsons. DJ Meck also got in on the act, remixing "Thunder In My Heart" and racking up another number one in the UK Singles Chart for Sayer in 2006. >>

He makes it sound effortless. "The thing about magic is that if you put yourself into a situation and open up to it, a bit like meditation, if you put yourself in the right frame, something always happens," Sayer claims. "It doesn't happen every day," he qualifies. "That's how all good creative things are done."

It doesn't stop for Sayer. His soon-to-be-released box-set covers his complete recorded history from 1971 to 2006 and contains a whopping 164 songs. "What's lovely about doing a box-set like this is that it really exposes the breadth of the writing as well as the fact that I was probably in the right place to sing some lovely pop songs and ballads that came along." The music icon is still recording – now living in Australia, his latest single "No fracking way" is due out any day, an album to follow next year.

"I keep going, because I've never known how to stop," he says. "I don't have a sell-by date." Touring the UK with a headline show, Sayer is planning to pack out each



"I wrote it as my resignation note," he confesses. "It's a song about perceived wisdom; I'm just a boy giving it all away, I know better now' and you never know better."

show with hits spanning his career. "I've decided to do this tour without a support – I must be mad," he laughs, "...but how else do I fit everything in?"

"Forty years have gone by in a flash, but it's going to be great bringing my show back to the UK and Ireland. We'll be covering the entire country and concluding the tour in my home town of Brighton, where it all started. I can't wait!" says Sayer. ■

For more information and tour dates see:
www.leosayer.com