

# THE ABSTRACT MAN



Tom Fuller is a man who knows what it is like to chase a dream. After living the life of a corporate worker he decided to change direction completely and follow his passion, which was music. A quick learner with sharp focus and a continuing desire to better himself, Tom's first album 'Chasing An Illusion' came in 2005, and found no less than five of its songs receive airplay in the States.

Now Tom's second record 'Abstract Man' is being prepared for launch and the Chicago native has turned his attention to the UK. With a sound that features some Tom Petty-esque touches married with a love for British classic rock, nods to the Beatles and a stunning cover of The Hollies 'The Air That I Breathe' in his arsenal, Tom played some dates in the UK which ended with a gig in the famed Cavern Club. We'll be hearing far more about him in 2009, so James Gaden was on hand to help everyone get acquainted...

writer, a performer, how to record professionally - y'know, I just kept taking baby steps.

So that kind of thing, taking place over the last decade, resulted in me writing a lot of songs, but making only two albums, featuring the songs I consider to be well done. In this journey James, it's been weird but it's like people have been sent to me or I've been sent to them.

Like in the UK - I love the UK, and I write rock music, classic rock music, and when I think of that kind of genre, I think of London, and England. That's where it all came from in my opinion. So

when I come over here and I play, I feel like I'm home. I'm very comfortable and happy here - the music industry in the United States is insane. For the last two or three years, I've known, as an artist, to break out I need to focus on the UK. After 'Abstract Man' comes out here, it'll be released in Japan so I'll probably have to go there for a bit, but my primary focus is here.

Don't get me wrong - I play a lot in the United States and I have fans there, and I've been played on the radio a lot there, but I really like the idea of having my base be here. I played a few shows here and stuff, but next year I'll maybe be living over here. I may end up commuting from Chicago to here for a while, but I'm a free spirit and I don't really have anything to tie me down.

I have a guy in my band called James Wold and he's single, a phenomenal background singer and my musical soul mate - I plan on him coming with me and we'll put the band together here and hit the road, do what we do best.

I noticed a quote on your website, which said the title track 'Abstract Man' is "about a person who is in the midst of changing, walking away from a traditional normal and expected way of life into exciting, unknown areas" - was that autobiographical, about you leaving the corporate world to pursue music?

You're right, I'm the abstract man. When I wrote that, it was a true story. Most people I've met get a job, get a wife, have some kids, get a routine and they do the same thing every day. That could have been me, but I've completely reinvented who I am. You see

a business guy in a suit and tie - I've done that. I came to a crossroads - it was either stay in the safe, comfortable world, or leave that to try a zone you don't understand, you don't really know, it's scary but you want it. I chose to do that. People I worked with, my family, they didn't want to lose the guy they know, they wanted to keep that identity, because change frightens people a lot. I was aware of that - I love those people but I've gotta do what's right for me. There was no middle ground, I had to make a choice - the song says "Abstract man a montage of endless thought... Clarity perfect crossroad moment... Knowing there will be side effects... What price for this entitlement".

I really related to the breaking out of the routine - that was similar to how I ended up doing this. I was running a studio in a printers and the opportunity to work with Fireworks and spend time writing and designing for something I'm passionate about came along. So I ended up leaving and setting up my own business - I make a lot less money but it allows me to spend more time doing what I love.

Totally - and it really takes courage to do that. Sometimes you put roadblocks in front of yourself, but you have to stay focused.

I notice you take a lot of pride in your lyrical work, and put a lot of effort into them. With that in mind, do you start with lyrics and set them to music?

No, it's the other way around. The majority of what I do is feeling based. I'll get an idea and it'll make me feel a certain way - I'm able to take that feeling and convert it into music. From there, the challenge is to then write a three minute story for it. On 'Abstract Man', most of the music came pretty fast, and now I have a good idea what a song needs to make it right. Lyrically, I really craft them - I might rewrite the words twenty times. The lyrics can change right up until recording. It's only when it's on the record, set in stone if you will, that it becomes finished. I always want what's best for the song.

One of the things that really surprised me was your cover of 'The Air That I Breathe' by the Hollies. When I get a promo, I tend to play it without reading all the promotional blurb that comes with it so I don't have any prior expectations. With that cover, you did it in such a style it fitted perfectly with your original material - it was only when the chorus kicked it that I realised I knew the song.

It's weird that you said that man, because I thought when I heard the version played back, it sounded like something I'd write! Here's the deal - my people in the US had said 'Ok, you've had all this success on small town radio, you wanna get mainstream, you need a way to do it and that would be a cover tune'. So I thought ok, and I spent six months trying to figure out what song to do, and nobody knew. Finally, my producer Rick, said 'The Air That I Breathe' by the

Hollies. I was like shit, that's a classic! I listened to all the other versions people had done of that song, and they all did it like The Hollies, reverb laced, slower ballad tempo, so I said 'It's a cool tune, I think I can nail this, but if we do it, let's make it edgier - pay homage but do something cool'. I wanted someone to say 'Whoa, who is this, this isn't the Hollies!'.

Speaking of your producer, Rick Chudacoff, I looked him up and his C.V. was amazing, he'd worked with some really big names like The Temptations, Smokey Robinson, Alison Krauss and others, so I was wondering how you managed to be able to secure his services?

I had met a friend who thought I should go to Nashville to do some recording - they record everything there, not just country music like a lot of people think, so I went there. I was dealing with some guys before who were nice guys, but really, they didn't give a shit about me. It was just money, so I never learned anything from them. I learn fast so I went to a songwriting seminar, and the guy who was giving the lecture, he told the group some names of good people to work with in Nashville if you felt you'd written a song worth recording. The last guy he mentioned was Rick, and at heart Rick is a rocker so if anybody wanted to do rock music, Rick is a good guy to know. I called him and met up with him, he asked me to play something for him, I picked up a guitar and played him some new material, he heard something he liked so he kind of adopted me. He got me to quit cigarettes because he felt that would be detrimental to my voice, and because I wanted to succeed I did it without question. I felt in my gut I needed him, so I quit within a week - his advice was that important. Rick's a good friend and I don't think I'd be sat with you here today if he hadn't taught me how to write, learn about structure - he's my mentor.

I'd like to ask you about your record company, Mesa Blue Moon too - I've not come across them before?

They're a California label who do rap and pop - they used to do rock but left it alone for a while. They were interested in some rock again and they liked what I did... other labels made offers but Mesa gave me the option of distribution via Universal, so it made logical sense.

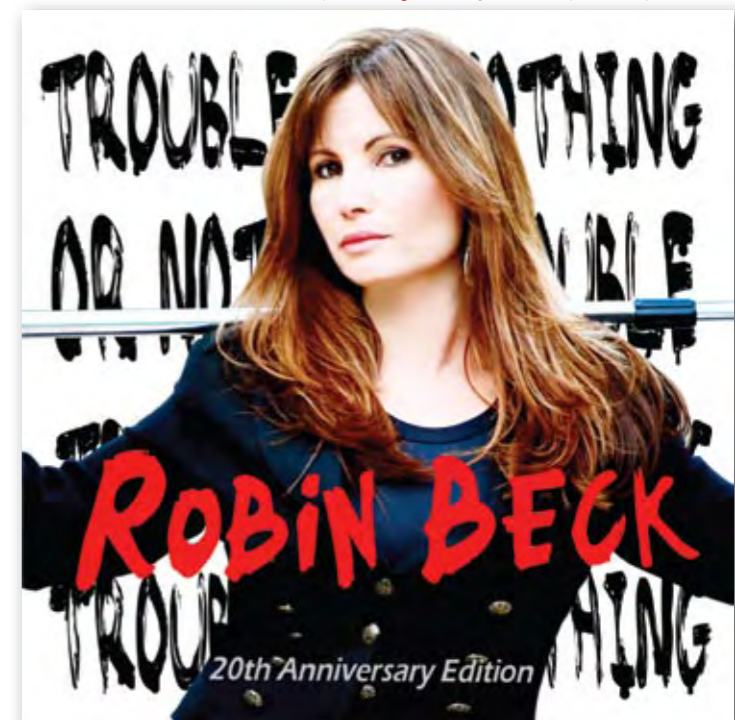
Finally, while I can hear all kinds of influences in your music and you still retain an original sound, there's definitely some Beatles in there, and you got to play the Cavern Club. I bet that was quite something!

Yeah, I played there in September and, oh man, it was cool! Lennon and McCartney have influenced everybody, so yeah, standing in the Cavern Club, I really felt the spirit. Man, I'd do it again in a heartbeat! I'll be back, count on that!

Tom's single *Lollipop Guild* will be released in the UK on 16 March 09, with the album 'Abstract Man' following on 23 March 09. Check him out at [www.tomfullerband.com](http://www.tomfullerband.com)



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