



MAIA SHARP

Bio

"It's not a concept album," Maia Sharp says of *The Dash Between the Dates*, her sixth solo album and her eOne debut, "but I was trying to look at things with a wider-angle lens and bring more breadth to the songs without sacrificing the intimacy. Maybe that's the concept."

In a career that spans two decades, the California native has established a reputation as a songwriter's songwriter, possessing a seamless sense of craft as well as an uncanny knack for cutting straight to the heart of complex emotional issues. In the process, she's won a passionate grass-roots fan base, while seeing her compositions covered by artists from across the musical spectrum.

Among the artists who've recorded Sharp's compositions are Bonnie Raitt (who also guested on Maia's last album, *Change the Ending*), Cher, the Dixie Chicks, Crystal Bowersox, Keb' Mo', Lisa Loeb, Trisha Yearwood, Jessie Baylin, Paul Carrack, Terri Clark, Kathy Mattea, Edwin McCain, Lizz Wright, Kim Richey, Joey Ryan, Mindy Smith and David Wilcox. She's also spread her wings as a producer, overseeing recordings by Bowersox, McCain and Art Garfunkel.

But it's on her own recordings that Maia Sharp's vivid lyrical insight, infectious melodic sensibility and soulful vocal grit truly shine. That's certainly the case on *The Dash Between the Dates*, on which such effortlessly eloquent originals as "Nothing But the Radio," "Phoenix," "You're Alive" and the stirring title track offer pointed meditations on life, love, sex and mortality that are steeped in hard-won personal experience. The album also features "I Don't Want Anything to Change," which is already familiar to fans through longtime admirer Bonnie Raitt's popular version.

Sharp co-produced the album with multi-instrumentalist and longtime collaborator Linda Taylor. In addition to Sharp's vocals, guitar, keyboards and saxophone, and Taylor's guitars, bass, keys and programming, *The Dash Between the Dates* features notable contributions from Eurythmics co-founder Dave Stewart, who co-wrote and plays guitar on "Maybe Tonight"; acclaimed solo artist Lizz Wright, whose distinctive tones enrich

"You Know Where I'll Be" and "I Don't Want Anything to Change"; singer-songwriter Gabe Dixon, who sings on "Underneath"; legendary vocalist Arnold McCuller, who adds his voice to "Nothing But the Radio," "Phoenix" and "Real Love."

"I love being on a team, and there's no better ego boost than when people you admire want to be part of your team," Sharp asserts. "Getting that kind of validation is like a B-12 shot to the soul, and it was definitely a big highlight of making this album."

The emotional urgency of Sharp's new songs reflects the fact that most of them were written during a period in which the prolific tunesmith battled, and eventually overcame, a creative crisis that had left her feeling disconnected and unsure of her next move.

"I just hit this patch where nothing was moving me, and the ideas that kept me excited weren't flowing as freely as they had," she explains. "In 20 years of writing professionally, I had never been in a hole like that. So all I could do was write my way out of it, and 'Phoenix' is the one that got me back on track. I just kept digging away, hoping that life would imitate art and I could get a fresh start. It took weeks to finish, but finally it did reawaken my natural exuberance for writing."

"I've always taken care to put in however much time the song is asking for, and on this album the songs just took a little longer," she continues. "I don't know if that's because I was in a tougher place, or because I wanted to say something bigger. But songs like 'Phoenix' and 'You're Alive' and 'The Dash Between the Dates' are definitely different for me. They're focused on general life experience, rather than being little vignettes."

The level of dedication that defines *The Dash Between the Dates* has been a consistent thread through Maia Sharp's musical life. She started writing songs and playing a variety of instruments during childhood, and began performing her compositions in Los Angeles-area venues in her early 20s.

A meeting with record company executive Miles Copeland led to her 1997 debut album, *Hardly Glamour*, being released on Copeland's Ark 21 label. Subsequent albums—*Maia Sharp* (2002), *Fine Upstanding Citizen* (2005), *Echo* (2009) and *Change the Ending* (2012), as well as 2002's *Everything Waits to Be Noticed*, a collaboration with Art Garfunkel and Buddy Mondlock—found Sharp continuing to develop as an artist, while her impassioned live performances helped her to expand her fiercely loyal audience.

Her prior achievements aside, Maia Sharp has little interest in resting on her resume. As *The Dash Between the Dates* makes clear, she's emerged from her experiences with a renewed sense of purpose.

"Writing these songs and making this album took me to a place where I had to dig deeper," she states, adding, "I feel stronger and better equipped because of that, like I have more tools in the belt, and I'm enjoying the work now more than ever."