

Once Soundtrack

On the 2001 release, *For the Birds*, The Frames front man, Glen Hansard asked the question "What happens when the heart just stops?" A simple, rhetorical question and yet one that won't go away, as the song has went on to become a staple of the Frames live set. While we may never know the answer Glen has went on to provide us with a whole album of like minded questions with his new project, *The Swell Season*.

With *The Swell Season*, Glen has teamed up with classically trained Czech vocalist and pianist, Marketa Irglova to produce an album of affecting songs and compositions. The record side steps many of the conventional strategies offered on Frames records and is most akin to Glen's solo shows or their 2001 release, *for the birds*. From straight songs to piano instrumentals *The Swell Season* affords an insight into a whole other side of Glen/The Frames, as well as offering a perfect introduction to this very talented newcomer in Marketa.

Fresh off another year of constant touring and gigging with The Frames, Glen retired to the Czech Republic for some down time last fall. It's here that he spends much of his time writing songs. A winter in Eastern Europe can be unkind, yet it also loans itself to an indoor creative energy that can often stir the muses. It was around this time as well that old friend and former bandmate, John Carney asked the two to star in a film he was making. Set in Dublin, this modern musical was based around a street busker who befriends a female from Eastern Europe. A bit of type casting, but the two took the challenge and in Jan 2006 the film won the Sundance Audience Award.

This batch of songs, which didn't wholly loan themselves to the anthemic nature of The Frames, were perfect for the film. Upon completion of the film, Glen decided to enter the studio with Marketa and the two were left with the chilling and intimate, *The Swell Season*. For the soundtrack to the film the studio and label wanted to keep things simple since the characters never name their band in the film. Thus all songs on the soundtrack are credited simply to either Glen or Marketa.

The Swell Season project takes its name from author Josef Skvorecky's book of the same name. Set in Nazi occupied Czechoslovakia the story centers on one mans love of music and pursuit of unattainable women as a country comes unglued. Like the book The Swell Season deals with the pains and hopes of those struggling to make sense of their lives. A place where characters fade into the picture only to be eclipsed by their own darkness, pursuing the unattainable, wishing for that one love, that one great chance that will give meaning to their lives. Whether it comes or not is all how you see things.

GLEN HANSARD BIO:

With a host of real-life songs and lilting vocals that reflect his passion for his influences (Leonard Cohen, Bob Dylan), Glen Hansard (born Dublin, Ireland, 21 April 1970) is the vocalist and guitarist for Irish rock group The Frames. Born to a working-class family in Dublin in spring 1970, Hansard quit school at age 13 to begin busking on local Dublin streets. Busking in the local streets of Dublin during his teen years was trying at times, but having his mother's support ultimately led the budding singer/songwriter to shape his descriptive world-view quickly, and work on his playing style. By his late teens, and thanks to a loan from the bank courtesy of his Mum, Hansard recorded his first demo. One of the 50 tapes landed in the hands of Island Records' Denny Cordell (Tom Petty and Joe Cocker). Upon a meeting at Cordell's flat, the 17-year-old Hansard also met Ron Wood, Marianne Faithfull, and Stewart Copeland. The meeting, to say the least, left a lasting impression on Hansard, and in the end, Cordell signed him with the approval of Island founder Chris Blackwell. From there, Hansard quickly gathered a group of fellow buskers and formed The Frames.

However he first came to public attention as guitar player 'Outspan Foster' in the Alan Parker film The Commitments, which led to a Grammy nomination. The film led to many accolades and opportunities, most of which Glen turned down to focus solely on The Frames. Their debut grunge-influenced release Another Love Song came and went (the band members don't even consider it part of their discography now), forcing the label to drop the group. A trip to New York gave Hansard the space and time to dream it all up again, and a newfound focus

and desire to keep the music alive was enough for him to write the guitar-blazing anthem "Revelate" and "Say It to Me Now," both of which eventually landed on the Frames' proper debut album, Fitzcarraldo (1996). Fitzcarraldo along with their next record, Dance the Devil brought the band a new level of recognition in Ireland and the U.S. Unfortunately ZTT/Universal feel on tough times and the band were let go.

As another chapter closed, so began the re-birth that would bring the band their greatest success. The Frames traveled to Chicago where they recorded with noted engineer, Steve Albini and made their best selling record to date, for the birds. In Ireland the record was issued on the band's own label and so have all subsequent releases. Outside of Ireland the band hooked up with independent label, Overcoat before moving onto noted larger independent label, Anti Records. Those releases, Set List, Burn the Maps and The Cost have cemented the band's place in the American musical landscape. At the center of each record lies Hansard's songwriting, with each record being both a critical and commercial success. In concert his charismatic charm and ease in front of a crowd has made The Frames one of the top live acts on the concert circuit.

In 2003, Hansard played host to Other Voices: Songs from a Room, a popular television show featuring Ireland's best in new music. Then in 2006 recorded a record together entitled, The Swell Season. The collaboration grew out another project the two were working on, a film entitled, Once. Once was written and directed by former Frames bassist John Carney. In the story Hansard plays a Dublin busker, and Irglová shines as the immigrant street vendor who strikes up a friendship with him and helps him fully unleash his musical passion. The film had its American Premiere at the Sundance Film Festival in 2007 and received the World Cinema Audience Award at the closing ceremony. It has since been picked up by Fox Searchlight and received strong reviews. A soundtrack featuring songs from both Glen and Marketa, has subsequently been issued by Canvasback/Columbia.

Glen Hansard
Discography

Glen Hansard as member of The Frames
Another Love Song Island 1992
Fitzcarraldo ZTT 1996

Dance the Devil Universal 1999
For the Birds Overcoat 2001
Roads Outgrown Overcoat 2003
Set List: Live in Dublin Anti 2004
Burn the Maps Anti 2005
The Cost Anti 2007