

## bee: *Break Through Overground*

### Track-by-Track Summary



1. Oh Yeah Come On Take it Easy Baby It's Alright
2. Birdy Deluxe Superstar
3. Disappear
4. Spinning Around in Circles
5. I Heard You Twice the First Time
6. Gimme All You Got
7. Smile
8. Make a Difference
9. My Twin Bed
10. Crow
11. Hello Sun

*As a Japanese record reviewer wrote of bee leader Nicholas Markos: "He just standing on the edge break through major or indie world. If he getting some small chance from major label, I feel he has big possibility break through overground." Indeed.*

***Break Through Overground*** is the debut full-length album from **bee**, the brainchild of eclectic songwriter, singer, and multi-instrumentalist Nicholas Markos. It's soulful, melodic, and rocking; these are the songs that feel like they've been hits forever--the songs you turn up and sing along with in your car at the top of your lungs.

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### A breakdown of the tracks:

1. **Oh Yeah Come On Take it Easy Baby It's Alright:** By way of explaining the title, Markos says, "Shakespeare wrote, *the empty vessel makes the greatest sound*. Many of the most meaningful rock songs have literally meaningless choruses, but the overall lyrical and musical essence of the song injects that nonsensical verse with meaning, even more so than literal lyrics could. Whether it's the 'Sha la la la' of 'Brown-Eyed Girl,' the 'baby baby bay, light my way' of U2's 'Ultraviolet,' or the 'doo da-doo da-doo' of 'Walk on the Wild Side,' those essentially meaningless words carry potent significance." From the opening beat-boxed notes, through the chorus and gospel-infused backing vocals, this anthem sets the tone for record: bee is a band with no small aspirations.
2. **Birdy Deluxe Superstar:** The blistering guitar melody (courtesy of a \$45 garage-sale vintage Silvertone guitar that Markos calls "The Secret Weapon") leads right into a series of killer vocal hooks that, Markos says, "Oasis stole from the Beatles, and I'm stealing them back." The drumming of Mike Zelenko (Material Issue) is the perfect, muscular complement, driving the song with an energy that makes it jump out of the speakers.
3. **Disappear:** A deceptively simple pop song, with layers of countermelodies that add depth. A savvy reference to "Any Day Now," a favorite of Markos's from the *From Elvis in Memphis* album, is just one of the little gems in this feast of hooks, again held together by Zelenko's drumming. A cover version of this song is currently in production by Taylor Mills, vocalist for Brian Wilson's band, who heard the track in progress while touring to support Wilson's historic *Smile* record.
4. **Spinning Around in Circles:** bee stretches out with the floating, soulful psychedelia of the verse, and grounds itself again in the catchy chorus. Lead guitarist Georgie K comes out of the bridge absolutely burning up the track. The hypnotic quality of the chorus adds depth, taking the listener from a mellow place to a head-bobbing rock track.
5. **I Heard You Twice the First Time:** In a song whose title was borrowed from a Branford Marsalis album, Markos details the peaceful resignation that closes out a failing relationship. Georgie K's beautiful lead guitar was recorded live in the studio in one pass with the rest of the band. An extra rhythm guitar and backing vocals were added later, and the rest was done in one take, yielding an intimate, musically sensitive vibe. Bassist Eddie Carlson (Poi Dog Pondering) adds tasteful, melodic themes.
6. **Gimme All You Got:** Written on a cross-country drive, heading through Nevada on Highway 50 (known as "America's Loneliest Road"), this track captures the scope and feel of longing when you're alone in the desert. Over a unique two-drumkit backing by Howie Kantoff (Poster Children) and Todd Sucherman (Styx, Brian Wilson), Markos delivers one of his best and truest vocals: "I believe to my soul/we could change a lot/if you'd give me all you've got." A ringing guitar melody lifts the song's coda, and the listener's spirit. It would be a challenge to resist being swept up in this song.
7. **Smile:** A change of pace after the epic tone of the preceding track, this song was recorded live on a quiet winter morning, just acoustic guitar and vocal. An electric guitar and organ were later overdubbed and set far back in the mix, leaving listeners to focus on the simple emotion of the lyrics and performance.

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8. **Make a Difference:** Underscoring bee's fundamentally optimistic and humanistic viewpoint, this pensive song is all heart and musical instinct. The drumming of Matthew "Monkey" Payne (Hot Glue Gun, Yam) and Eddie Carlson's bass set up a serious chill groove.
9. **My Twin Bed:** A favorite at bee's live show, this song is a paean to the tender charms of an old twin bed that's barely big enough to be the venue for a sweet love. A little bit of The La's, a little bit of The Million Dollar Quartet sessions, and undoubtedly bee, it's got charm without the twee.
10. **Crow:** Closing out the main body of the record is this rocking track, with its Keith Richards-style guitar riffing, killer honky-tonk piano by Marcos Sueiro, and classic chorus. You won't be able to resist singing along with the "ooh-ooh-oohs" and "yeah yeah yeah yeahs" of the outro jam.
11. **Hello Sun:** This acoustic track features a particularly raw and soulful vocal by Nicholas. Originally intended as a full-band track, this song fit perfectly as a pensive but immediately emotional denouement. From the mature verses, where the bitter and the sweet mingle, the listener travels through the redemptive chorus: "Hello Moon, Hello Sun/I'm back among the living/Hello Earth, Hello Sky/I'm back to be forgiven." The message here is that life cannot be traveled without pain and disappointment, but that ultimately the value is in finding some peace and embracing that life. Serious stuff, but again, delivered via a melody that stands on its own—this is not an essay or a didactic lesson, it's a song—and an album—that resonates and taps into the sense of musical wonder that true pop music fans have.

### Postscript:

bee leader **Nicholas Markos** has built a significant reputation with solo records and performances, as well as his work with English chanteuse Cath Carroll (*Factory*, *Teenbeat*), Last Gentlemen (*Zoo*), and other artists. His songwriting and sound have been compared to the most respected work of Oasis, Pete Townshend, and David Gray. Fresh, sing-along melodies like the chorus of "The Theme From Hot Doug's" and the driving hook of "Birdy Deluxe Superstar" are irresistible hits that make you want to put the top down and turn up the radio on a summer day.

Markos's live-performance credits include opening sets for **Bob Dylan**, **Melissa Etheridge**, the **Violent Femmes**, **Todd Rundgren**, **Roger McGuinn**, **Squeeze**, 10,000 Maniacs, The The, Curve, and many others. The other bee musicians have similarly impressive credits: Todd Sucherman (*Brian Wilson*, *Styx*), Mike Zelenko (*Material Issue*), Howie Kantoff (*Poster Children*), Eddie Carlson (*Poi Dog Pondering*), Mark Schwarz (*David Singer & the Sweet Science*), and Matthew Payne (*Hot Glue Gun*) all appear on the recordings.

"New Girlfriend" has been licensed to be a pivotal song in the E<sup>2</sup> Films feature film *Wrecking Ball*, coming out in late 2005, and the song was also featured on the Starbucks/WXRT compilation CD *Home-Brewed in the Windy City*. Several bee songs were used in *National Lampoon's Not So Silent Pictures*.

**Comparable artists:** Oasis, David Gray, Keane, The Killers.

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