

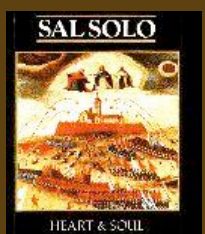
- HOME
 - ACTS E&W, INC.
 - LIVE DATES
 - BLOG
 - FORUM
 - ORDER CDS
 - IMPORTANT NEWS
 - CONTACT US
- YOUTH LEADERS
 - ESPAÑOL
 - POLSKA

NEW VIDEOS...

- SAL SOLO HISTORY
 - THE EARLY YEARS
 - THE NEWS
 - CLASSIX NOUVEAUX
 - ROCKETZ
 - END OR BEGINNINGP
 - SAN DAMIANO
 - IN BETWEEN YEARS
 - LOOK AT CHRIST
 - ANCIENT EYES
 - BORN TO DIE
 - SAL SOLO: LIVE
 - ANNO DOMINI
 - STARTING ACTS E&W
 - PILGRIMAGE
 - I WORSHIP
 - YES! BEST OF STUDIO/LIVE
 - TEEN MASS
 - DISCOGRAPHY
 - ALBUM REVIEWS
 - LYRICS/CHORDS
 - ORDER CDS

CONTACT WEBMASTER

san damiano



By the time Classix had reached its peak in 1983, I was becoming disillusioned with success. Despite the adoring crowds in Poland, and the various hits in other countries, I was finding that fame was not all it's cracked up to be. On our Indian tour in 1982, we were all shocked to come face to face with total poverty. In a song called The Unloved on the album which followed, I wrote "Poverty for you and me is a black and white TV". With hindsight, that experience seems to have sowed the seeds of discontent with the privileged escapist lifestyle. One night on our first highly successful Polish tour, I found myself rather depressed in the hotel room after a concert. 10,000 people calling for more and 20 minutes of encores had not been enough to lift my spirits. I thought there must be something more, and silently said "God if you're there, I want to know." Nothing happened immediately, but I began a path of searching.

I had made friends with a new young band named Kajagoogoo and bass player Nick Beggs was a born-again Christian. We hung out together quite a bit, and decided in October '83 to go to Italy on a pilgrimage. The place was called San Damiano. Over the years, many people have found it hard to understand why go to a particular place to find God if He is everywhere. I think the answer is that making a journey is a helpful physical sign for us of the search, and having removed ourselves from normal routines and environments, we are more likely to be able to hear the voice of God if He should speak to us. At first I hated the pilgrimage, but after a couple of days, having listened to the conversion stories of simple people, and soaked up the atmosphere of prayer, I believed as they did, that God is real, He is alive, and He does care for us.

At first I thought I'd have to give up music and go off to a monastery but then one pilgrim said to me "Young people of the world are looking for answers – they listen to music – you've found what they're looking for – you can use music to tell them." From then on, to the present day, my music had a complete change of direction. At first I made a record about San Damiano which became a Top 20 hit in Britain and number one in Poland. It was followed by the album Heart & Soul and a few other singles. Then in 1987 I made a record which more or less ended my commercial career. It was a love song called "How Was I to Know", from an unwanted unborn baby to the mother. When people tried to buy the record, they were told it was not available, never released, they knew nothing about it. In one Glasgow shop, the assistant told a customer not to buy the record because it was about abortion.

There was a total radio blackout and one major station said "Considering the subject it would be unsuitable for a family audience." I had always thought in rock n'roll you could say what you wanted, so this came as

something of a rude awakening. I decided I didn't want to make music anymore, and never made another commercial record of my own again.

In 2003, British singer Aled Jones recorded a new version of San Damiano, for his album "Higher" which remained in the UK Top 40 for several weeks and earned a silver disc.

HEART & SOUL has been reissued on CD by Cherry Red Records in the UK, and includes "**How Was I to Know**" as a bonus track. See our news page for link.

HEART & SOUL - album review

In the annals of new romantic history, riddled as it is with tales of debauched glam-ery and cosmetics-wielding bad boys, no story is more bizarre than the tale of Sal Solo. What's more -- it's a wholesome one. While fronting the largely underrated Classix Nouveaux, skin-headed frontman Sal Solo had a revelation during one of the band's several extensive Eurasian tours. At the height of the Classix's popularity, Solo felt that there was something major missing from his life -- despite the massive crowds the band was attracting (as many as 15,000 in Poland, and 25,000 in Helsinki, Finland) -- and turned to Christianity for some answers and healing. During a 1983 Italian pilgrimage (with born-again Kajagoogoo bassist Nick Beggs!!!) Solo found God, and became a born-again Christian himself. This turn of events didn't end his musical career though, in fact, it jump-started a new one -- Sal Solo, the contemporary Christian artist. He did continue on with Classix Nouveaux, recording and touring through 1985, but, as their popularity waned, Solo began concentrating more and more on his musical ministry. After an amicable dissolution of Classix (following two successful farewell shows in Spain and London), Solo took his first tentative steps into Christian music with the release of 1985's Heart & Soul. "Tentative" is certainly the word to use too, as Heart & Soul proved to be intelligently subtle in light of Solo's major, life-changing event. Where other popular-artists-turned-born-again-Christians of the era tended to water down their musical output in order to make room for their message, Sal Solo worked to further develop the stylistic trajectory he was on with Classix. Helped in large part by the musical muscle of former Classix bandmates Mik Sweeney, Rick Driscoll, and Paul Turley, Solo's solo debut was alight with perky synths, funky guitar and fleet-fingered bass. It had none of the saccharine or stodgy tendencies of other Christian bands of the period and, save for some of the lyrics, could easily be passed off as a fine late-period new wave record in its own right. The production was more spacious and detailed than any of the Classix's earlier work -- choir backing, lush keyboard beds, and slow-developing melody lines dominated the bulk of Heart & Soul's offerings -- and had more in common with the grown-up romantic stylings of Midge Ure's solo efforts than the angular disco of Duran Duran. Album opener "Heartbeat" and the surprise U.K. hit "Shout! Shout!" featured that classic Classix sound, while "San Damiano" and "Contact" explored a more world music-based palette. In 2006, El Records reissued Heart & Soul with five bonus tracks. Among them: Solo's controversial 1987 single "How Was I to Know" -- a pro-life love song, sung from the viewpoint of an unwanted, unborn baby to its mother and, in Solo's own words, "...a record which more or less ended my commercial career." He was only partially right in that statement though. As Solo's less-secular direction certainly served to alienate some of his more superficial fans, stalwart supporters (both Christian and non) did indeed continue to love the man and his music -- and they loved him enough to support a dozen albums that followed in the wake of Heart & Soul.

~ J. Scott McClintock, All Music Guide