

In The Mix

Possible Songs for Vista (2026) - The Sandy Sutton Band

O Cheryl

A desert-night rocker about bad timing and good temptation — “O Cheryl” rolls through Tucson with smoke in the air, a lost soul at the bar, and a guitar solo that says the rest. The song tells the story of a drifter who meets Cheryl at Sammy’s bar, unfolding like a noir film set to a blues-rock groove. Its cinematic imagery — factory streets, rectory shadows, a Redding horizon — pairs with moody chord changes (Am–C–D–Dm and F–Fm–C–Am) that reflect the tension between desire and regret. A band favorite to play, “O Cheryl” thrives on its live energy — the guitars wail, the rhythm locks in, and the story burns slow under desert lights.

Day to Day (The AA Song)

A tender reflection on addiction, love, and recovery — “Day to Day” moves with quiet George Harrison-like spiritual warmth, finding hope in the simple truth of one day at a time. “Day to Day” tells the story of a man wrestling with addiction — alone in his house, fighting to keep it together while the world outside moves on. He shuts people out, convinced he has to face the darkness himself. But his partner stays — offering quiet strength and the simple, saving words: one day at a time. Built around a haunting Amaj7 to A7 movement that drifts between light and shadow, the song leans on rich, jazz-tinged changes — D to Dm, C#m to Bm — that mirror the struggle between hope and despair. When the interlude lifts a half-step, it’s like the breath of recovery itself — a fragile, rising moment. By the final verse, five years have passed, two hearts remain, and the struggle has transformed into something permanent. With its tender harmonic turns and unguarded phrasing, “Day to Day” stands as both a love song and a recovery hymn — a reminder that survival isn’t solitary, it’s shared.

How Did It Happen (Sutton-Hecht)

“How Did It Happen” begins as a question and becomes a memory. Built on a gentle piano progression — Cm7, F7, Bbmaj7, Gm7 — it circles back on itself like the thoughts of someone trying to understand where love went wrong. The song’s refrain, “How did it happen, where did it go?” captures that haunting mix of clarity and confusion that lingers long after a breakup. Its tone is soulful and reflective,

balancing heartbreak with grace. There's a touch of Bill Evans in the chords, a bit of Paul McCartney's melodic melancholy, and a conversational honesty reminiscent of Joni Mitchell. Each repetition draws the listener deeper into the echo of what was lost — and what still resonates.

Island of Mine

"Island of Mine" drifts in on an easy coastal groove — an upbeat, smooth-jazz feel that one listener dubbed The Santa Barbara Sound, fitting for the band's seaside home base. The music glides on clean guitar voicings and warm keyboard textures, anchored by a laid-back rhythm section that moves like the tide itself — steady, unhurried, and full of sun-soaked sway. A saxophone break rises midway through, carrying the song into a breezy, romantic flow. The singer coaxes Mary Rogers to come away with him — to escape the noise of the mainland and discover a place where everything slows down and hearts open. He calls it paradise, and when she finally joins him there, she understands. The island becomes both a real and imagined refuge — a symbol of love found, rhythm restored, and the quiet joy of being exactly where you're meant to be.

The Lorry Load

"The Lorry Load" turns a simple image — a truckload, a cargo — into a meditation on what we carry within ourselves. The singer invites the listener to "Look inside that big black van" and "Tell me what looks back at you / From deep, deep inside." It's an echo of Nietzsche's idea that when you gaze into the abyss, the abyss gazes back. The song transforms the lorry into a mirror of consciousness itself — the freight of memory, fear, and truth that we haul through life. In sound and tone, it draws on the reflective storytelling of Leonard Cohen and the lyrical curiosity of Nick Cave or Tom Waits, grounding philosophy in song.

Bury Me

"Bury Me" is a slow blues in A — raw, mournful, and unflinching in its confrontation with mortality. The song moves through the dim light between regret and release, with the voice of someone who has seen too much too soon. Its refrain, "bury me in the tall cold grass," feels both like a plea and a prayer — not just for rest, but for recognition. There's a stark honesty here, like a final conversation with the self: I

was a ghost in my own life. It's not despair for despair's sake, but a reckoning — the acceptance that peace might only arrive when the music finally stops. The slow shuffle of A7–D7–E7 carries that weight, every turnaround sinking deeper into the soil of the song's truth. It's the sound of a man looking back, stripped bare of illusion, facing the dark with open eyes. "Bury Me" doesn't just mourn what's gone — it honors it.

For Rich — whose friendship helped light the spark that keeps this music alive.

The Line Is Drawn

There are songs you can explain. This isn't one of them. It stands in its own shadow — part confession, part confrontation — the sound of a truth too heavy to carry and too deep to forget.

The Line Is Drawn is a raw reckoning — a song that faces betrayal with weary clarity. What begins in confusion ("I don't know where the line is drawn") becomes a declaration of self-preservation, cutting through manipulation and loss with the strength of resignation. Though the lyric speaks of money, its meaning widens to fairness, decency, love, and justice — all the things that should never have a price.

There's a primal honesty in the delivery, closer to Lennon's Plastic Ono Band confessions than to a traditional breakup song. Each refrain of "Do you? I think you do" carries both accusation and ache — the sound of someone finding truth in exhaustion. The closing lines don't lash out; they let go. The Line Is Drawn is not about blame, but about reclaiming peace when the storm has finally burned itself out.

But The Line Is Drawn can also be heard as pure confrontation — not acceptance, but rage. The singer is no longer seeking understanding; he's naming the betrayal out loud. "Do you? I think you do" becomes a pointed finger, an indictment of someone who crossed a sacred bond — perhaps even within the same family.

This is anger unmasked, shouted through clenched teeth: I don't know you. I don't like you. I hate you for what you did to me. The repetition of "anymore, anymore, more, more, more" turns into a hammer blow, breaking the last tie. The Line Is Drawn doesn't end in peace — it ends in defiance, the kind of truth that's too hard to whisper.

Head in the Clouds

Head in the Clouds lifts off with pure joy — a rootsy, sunlit rocker that feels like a drive with the windows down and everything finally falling into place. Built on bright open chords (A–E–D) and a sing-along refrain, “I’d do anything for you,” it radiates the kind of love that doesn’t need to be explained. It’s a love song disguised as a road song, or maybe the other way around. Beneath its easy rhythm and country-road imagery, there’s a secret smile: this is a man on his wedding morning, still trying to play it cool but bursting inside. The sound lives where Full Moon Fever meets The Lumineers — classic rock warmth wrapped in modern Americana ease. Even the title doubles back on itself: Head in the Clouds as both the bliss of being in love and that floaty disbelief when dreams become real. It’s an open-hearted celebration, not of forever, but of right now.

I Ride Alone

“I Ride Alone” rolls through a wide, lonesome landscape — a country-western meditation on heartbreak and endurance. With the emotional directness of early Neil Young or Springsteen’s Nebraska, it tells the story of a man who leaves, rides, and keeps on riding — not out of anger, but because it’s the only way he knows how to survive.

Somewhere in Pennsylvania, he sees the woman he loves with another man. He could fight, but it’s “not his way.” Instead, he keeps moving — stoic, restrained, carrying the ache of what’s been lost. The refrain “I ride alone” becomes both mantra and confession, the sound of a man reckoning with his choices under the endless road ahead.

Musically, the steady pull of A to E keeps the song grounded, while the shift to F#m opens a space of quiet yearning — a single minor chord that captures the loneliness between the wheels and the wind. By the time he reaches the bridge (C#m–A–E), it feels less like motion than memory, the sound of someone circling back through the emptiness.

Months later, when the miles fall quiet and the headlights fade, he realizes he wants her back — but she’s gone. By then, it’s too late. What remains is the road, the guitar, and the truth that some men are born to keep riding.

In spirit, “I Ride Alone” rides alongside the great solitary guitar men — Townes Van Zandt, who turned sorrow into poetry; Steve Earle, whose outlaws always had a heart beneath the dust; Neil Young, whose lonely chords could break a heart in half;

Guy Clark and Rodney Crowell, who gave voice to the drifting souls of Texas; Bruce Springsteen, who found grace in desolation; and Johnny Cash, who carried the road and its ghosts in his voice to the very end. Like them, this song finds its power in restraint — letting silence, distance, and a single minor chord say what words alone never could.

[The Long Train Station \(Life on the Road\)](#)

A song born from the long, lonely nights of a gigging musician. The Long Train Station tells the story of a man barely getting by — broke, exhausted, and stranded far from home. He doesn't even have enough money for the train ride back to his family. Still, he waits on that platform, guitar in hand, caught between fatigue and faith. When he sings that he's "seeing trouble," it's more than just the law or the station guards closing in — it's the trouble of his own making, the reckoning of a man who's gone too far down the road. But then, as the night lights fade, the morning's electric glow begins to rise. It's a moment of wonder — fragile but real — reminding him why he keeps playing, why the road, for all its hardship, still calls. The rhythm of the song mirrors his journey: steady, human, and full of heart — a hymn to the struggle and beauty of life on the road.

[End Of Summer \(One Last Song\)](#)

A quiet masterpiece of closure — not dramatic heartbreak but the acceptance of time and distance. Built on soft, major-seventh chords and a slow, reflective pulse, the song floats between memory and release. "The end of summer's here and gone, and with it one last song" feels less like loss than surrender, a moment of grace where love fades but beauty remains. As the final chords fade, the listener is left in that tender space between remembering and letting go. Emotionally restrained, harmonically rich, and narratively complete, "End of Summer" captures the instant when love turns to memory, and memory becomes art.

[Crescent Heights](#)

"Crescent Heights" is a reverie set in 1967 Los Angeles, when art, film, and music all seemed to spill out of the same wild house on the hill (Dennis Hopper and Brooke Hayward's house). The song drifts between memory and dream — part documentary, part love letter to a vanished moment when beauty and chaos felt

inseparable. With its floating Amaj7 and Dmaj7 chords, it shimmers like sunlight on old film stock, capturing the afterglow of a scene that once believed art could save the world. The spoken intro drops the listener straight into that time — Hopper, Hayward, Fonda & Vadim - with art by their friends on the walls: Warhol, Hockney, Ed Ruscha — while the outro looks back from the present, haunted by what's gone.

The Moody Blues meets Ray Davies in late-'60s Los Angeles, but through a modern cinematic lens. It's both elegy and echo: the sound of Los Angeles still breathing somewhere up on Crescent Heights.

[The River Was Misdirected \(Run River Run\)](#)

Part spoken, part sung, "The River Was Misdirected (Run River Run)" unfolds like a remembered journey through Northern California backroads — a river that once turned the wrong way, and a life that did the same. The spoken verses move with the quiet rhythm of storytelling, sketching the café at Hook-e-hay, the dam at Grindstone, and the valley below. The sung refrain, "run river run," becomes both prayer and remembrance.

At the heart of the song is the image of a woman who swam in the waterfall beside the stream — a vision the narrator still sees "beneath the stream, inside the setting sun." Her presence turns the river from geography into memory, a flowing echo of what once was and still lives in the mind's current.

Built on open C and G chords and a circling Em-A7-Dm7-G7-C progression, the music drifts between folk and jazz-tinged meditation — gentle, unhurried, and luminous. As the final "run river run" fades, what remains is the movement of time itself — a current carrying love, memory, and place downstream together.

[Tell Me Now](#)

A quiet plea at the edge of heartbreak — "Tell Me Now" captures the moment love ends but the truth still lingers just out of reach. Built around the tender movement of Dmaj7 to D+, then G to Gm, the chords mirror the slipping of certainty into loss — major to minor, warmth to shadow. It's simple and devastating, a song that asks the one question that can never be fully answered: was it real?

There's no resolution, only feeling — the kind of emotional openness that recalls Lennon's "Because." The music drifts away like memory itself, unresolved and echoing. This is not a song that concludes; it fades into silence, leaving the listener with the question still hanging in the air.

Snow in the Morning

Snow in the morning / when the light hits the trees / and the air is so sharp / and hard to breathe.

Set high in the mountains, "Snow in the Morning" is a love letter to a moment that never really left. What begins as a recollection becomes a reawakening — a vivid return to the stillness, the light, and the person who once stood there. The open chords — E, F#m7(add4), G#m7(add4) — create a suspended feeling, like breath caught between remembering and letting go.

When the singer says "it's all so present, I can't escape," it becomes something close to what actors call sense memory — when a smell, a sound, or a glint of light summons an emotion so real it overrides time. The song lives in that instant, where past and present merge, and the heart remembers what the mind has tried to release.

It's all so present / I can't escape / our time together / and your pretty face.

Catalina (The Lonely Pier)

It begins with the classic "four chords of pop" — C-Am-Dm-G that have carried so many stories of love and loss — but here they take on a reflective weight. "The Lonely Pier" moves with a late-summer Sinatra mood — "Summer Wind drifting across dark blue water and soft harbor lights. The melodic phrasing and the shift to F-E-Am give the song its ache, turning memory into music.

It's the memory that pulls him back to the pier — not the place itself. Night after night he walks there, drawn by what's gone. We don't know why he took his eyes off her, only that he did, and that moment has followed him ever since. The verses roll gently like the tide, and the chorus — repeating that quiet confession — becomes a mantra of regret and remembrance.

The song feels timeless and unhurried, suspended between past and present. It could have been sung in the glow of an old harbor lounge, a muted trumpet tracing

the melody, or today by a modern voice like Norah Jones — quiet, jazz-tinted, and full of emotional understatement.

The Oaxaca Blues

A 4/4 blues in E that laughs through the chaos. *The Oaxaca Blues* turns misadventure into philosophy, following the singer across Mexico — “a mess in Oaxaca” and “not much better in Michoacán” — where mezcal, recovery, and mortality blur together. What starts as a hangover song becomes an existential road trip, a darkly comic search for meaning in a world that keeps spinning out of control.

The humor is sharp and self-aware: “It’s only three chords in search of a rhyme,” he confesses, before wondering if it’s “the second coming or the end of time.” The guitars — a Mexican Tele and a Japanese Strat — keep the song grounded in pure rock and roll, even as the lyric drifts toward the cosmic. A funny, fatalistic take on the blues, drawn from real life and a road that still runs both ways.

Notes and Credits

Sandy Sutton — Keyboards / Duffy Hecht — Guitar and Vocals

Liner Notes by DH, SS and AI / Music & Lyric sheets to follow

All songs © Duffy Hecht except where noted

