

Gilbert O'Sullivan – Himself (1971)



01. Intro - 0:22 02. January Git - 3:07 03. Bye-Bye - 3:16 04. Permissive Twit - 4:05 05. Matrimony - 3:13 06. Independent Air - 5:01 07. Nothing Rhymed - 3:20 08. Too Much Attention - 2:30 09. Susan Van Heusen - 2:56 10. If I Don't Get You (Back Again) - 2:41 11. Thunder And Lightning - 2:57 12. Houdini Said - 5:20 13. Doing The Best I Can - 2:34 14. Outro - 0:30 Bonuses: 15. Disappear (1967, original demo) - 1:36 16. What Can I Do (1967, original demo) - 1:28 17. Mr. Moody's Garden (B-side "I Wish I Could Cry", 1971) - 2:58 18. Everybody Knows (B-side "Nothing Rhymed", 1970) - 2:16 19. Underneath The Blanket Go (A-side single, 1970) - 3:03 20. We Will (A-side single, 1971) - 3:51 21. I Didn't Know What To Do (B-Side "We Will", 1971) - 1:42 22. No Matter How I Try (A-side single, 1971) - 3:00
Personnel: - Gilbert O'Sullivan - vocals - Johnnie Spence - arranger - Gordon Mills – producer

In 1972, MAM/London saw fit to let the U.S. have its first proper Gilbert O'Sullivan record, a repackaging of his 1971 U.K. debut release, Himself. The repackaging included new cover art (with Gilbert sporting the first of his famous "G" emblazoned varsity sweaters) as well as an altered track listing. "Susan Van Heusen" and "Doing the Best I Can," from the U.K. release, were omitted in favor of "We Will" and his Number One, U.S. smash "Alone Again (Naturally)." In an effort to make sure every American knew exactly what they were getting, the album title was even augmented to read, 'Himself (Featuring Alone Again (Naturally))'. The two songs omitted from the original release are missed, mostly, for their role in the nice flow and careful sequencing of Side Two. "We Will," however, proved to be a welcome addition to the U.S. version. An epic and beautifully arranged ode to the simple, unspoken promises kept between friends and family, the tune showed that Gilbert O'Sullivan could be as good as Ray Davies at painting touching pictures of the ordinary. Also fantastic is Side One's "Permissive Twit," a song about an unplanned pregnancy that, through O'Sullivan's thoughtful treatment, ends up surprisingly warm, witty, and wholesome. "January Git" and "Matrimony" roll out the barrel in true dancehall- tradition, while "Houdini Said" and "Thunder and Lightning" take a stab at good old piano driven rock & roll. Whether it be the U.K. or U.S. version, Gilbert O'Sullivan's debut is essential to any lover of Beatles-tinged Brit-pop, and any fan of the mundane made profound.
--- J. Scott McClintock, Rovi

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