

# Songmill: Jesse Liam's This Is Where I Am



Sometimes the fun in receiving new releases is hearing the continued growth and maturity of an artist. With each recording, and with each new song, Jesse Liam is no exception. Jesse has morphed from just a kid who likes to sing into a fast-maturing vocalist and performer. His new release, a 5-song collection titled *This Is Where I Am*, is a recorded continuum of what Jesse does best — entertain.

In previous recordings Jesse has been forthright about selecting tunes from catalogs of local writers and this production is no different. This time, however, he was more involved in the writing process and cowrote two of the songs with regional songwriters.

The EP opens with "It's Alright," a tune cowritten with Greg Lato. Greg Lato's catalog has a fair share of average-looking, hard-working-guy, in dead-end-job songs. It's hard not to appreciate the spirit behind Greg's tunes - most men can relate to his universal message. Now take his pop sensibilities and Jesse's vocal gusto, toss a guy-loves-great-girl theme in the mix, and you have a pretty upbeat take on the upside of being a hard-working man.

The lyric lines in "This Is Where I Am," cowritten with Todd Thibaud, might capture a little bit more of Jesse's personal side. It's a shy-guy meets confident-girl in a dance hall number. It rings a bit true as when not on stage, Jesse can be found at the Mishnock Barn in East Greenwich hanging out by the lake and kickin' up his cowboy heels on the dance floor. This tune about a young guy who wants a bit more than the promise of a dance is nicely arranged with Mike "The Monster" Welch playing some beefy guitar solos over Jack Gauthier's sweet and steady mandolin rhythms. If you download one cut from this collection, this one would be this reviewer's pick.

Three of the tunes on *This is Where I Am* are covers. "Quitters Never Lose," written by young blues roots man Andy Poxon, is a fitting selection for this CD. Jesse delivers this pop melody's theme - a young man trying to convince a friend that the girl he is dating is the wrong choice. I am sure some might find his cover of Bruce Springsteen's "I'm On Fire" refreshing, but this listener is not convinced. Being a Boss fan, it's hard to hear this sing-songy uptempo rendition. It is nicely arranged and smartly performed with Paul Dube on accordion, Matt Dube playing keys, and Dave Tegelaar on dobro slide guitar. Vocally, however, it lacks the passion of the original. However, Jesse's cover of Michael Bubl 's "Home," is incredibly beautiful. It suits Jesse's voice and clearly evokes the emotion the writer intended.

Jesse Liam and Jack Gauthier have put together another solid studio recording with Dan Hann laying

down thoughtful rhythm tracks and Duke Robillard appearing on a cut or two. Jesse easily converts that energy from studio to stage and his performances are just as spot-on as his recordings. The result of much hard work and practice.

He loves performing and is not happy unless you leave one of his shows just as happy. So I strongly suggest that you put your smile on and go see him live while the sun is shining. This month he will be performing with his band at the Saltwater Anglers Association's Galilee Fishing & Seafood Festival on Saturday, September 6, 4:30pm at the Port of Galilee or Wednesday, September 10, at the Bellingham Shopping from 5 to 7pm. Learn more at [jesseliam.com](http://jesseliam.com)