Doug Hoekstra’s fourth CD, *Around the Margins*, came out on the Inbetweens imprint (Netherlands), with distribution in the U.S., as well. *Around the Margins* includes 13 original compositions, along with a cover of Bob Dylan’s "Isis," and finds Hoekstra running the full gamut of his lyrical and musical range; from gospel rave ("Birmingham Jail") to bluesy waltz duet ("Desdemona"); folk-jazz stylings("Undone"), loopy synth-pop ("Laminate Man"), and hip-hop inspired samples ("Houses Flying") included among its many surprises.

Recording for *Around the Margins* began when Hoekstra friend and collaborator Jeff Kowalkowski (an esteemed avant-composer in his own right) invited him up to his brand-new Mondale Oakdale studios in Chicago for a series of artist-in-residence recording sessions. Doug and Jeff went to it, experimenting, working morning to night, grabbing whatever instruments were available, laying down the beds for these tracks. They were later joined in the overdub process by a variety of illustrious guest contributors covering extra guitar, horn, woodwind, and vocal parts. More cuts were added in Nashville, at George Marinelli's WingDing Studios crack rhythm section whipped through another set of tunes, including contributions from former Fisk Jubilee Singers Antonio Meeks and Nirva Dorsaint-Ready (also of Toby Mac) and the fretted handiwork of Mr. Marinelli, (Bonnie Raitt, Bruce Hornsby, and his own fine thang).

Cover art was created by Chicago artist Tony Fitzpatrick of Big Cat Press and jacket man to the likes of Steve Earle, the Neville Brothers, and others. Upon its release, *Around the Margins* immediately garnered loads of critical praise and radio play across the U.S. and Europe, ignited three European tours (England, Scotland, Ireland, the Netherlands, and Belgium), was a finalist in the Independent Music Awards for Best Singer-Songwriter Album of 2001, and made several Best of 2001 lists in the U.S. and U.K.

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Lost Among the Ruins

Along the banks of Lake Michigan, I walk until I'm sore
Clouds hang black and heavy, closely to the shore
It might start to rain, but I'm not at the age
Where I watch the weather channel, and worry what they say

Will I start reading signs someday?
While my children drive me home
Will I worry about my health, and winding up alone?
Well, the will to live is strong - who knows what we will see
When we go knocking on the door of whatever we will be.

Ah, classic buildings, classic cars,
Ancient churches, burning stars
Some are found, but others are lost among the ruins
Lost among the ruins

I used to keep a diary, when I was in my teens
I thought everything was important and everything was me
Ah, bless the insignificance of walking through the grass
Barefoot like a lion on a never-trodden path

Ah, classic buildings…

I can't imagine sorrow, like seeing your partner die
Or living with the knowledge you're losing your own mind
If I try to slip on their shoes, the air is rare but clean
As I take a look down the road to whatever there might be

Nirva Dorsaint & Antonio Meeks – vocal chorus
Doug Hoekstra – acoustic guitars, vocals
Jeff Kowalkowski – vocal score
Waldo LaTowsky – drums
George Marinelli – electric, high-strung guitars
Pat Meusel – bass
Jen Paulson – viola
Allison Stanley – clarinet

Produced and Engineered by George Marinelli at Wing Ding Studios, Nashville TN

Birmingham Jail

Around the margins, of the front page, of the daily news
He wrote in plainspeak of the choices no man should have to choose
Do we remember in our comfort, some words never change?
The reporters find the angle, but the story's still the same
Give me a reason
Give me an answer
Put a hammer to the nail
Give me the margins
Of the letter
From a Birmingham Jail

There's a commercial for a movie on the nightly news
While people suffer over choices no man should have to choose

Maybe it's Jasper instead of Selma, some words never change
Where there is smoke, there's something burning under talk that's not so plain

If words are only words, revelation or cliché,
Then actions are the meter of a heart that beats in pain

_Nirva Dorsaint & Antonio Meeks - vocal chorus_  
_Doug Hoekstra – acoustic guitars, bells, vocals_  
_Waldo LaTowsky – drums_  
_Pat Meusel – bass, electric guitar_

_Produced and Engineered by George Marinelli at Wing Ding Studios, Nashville TN_

**Giving Up Smoking**

I roll over on the futon, lying on my back  
Rattling sounds are driving through the crack  
Underneath the door, I hear the change into the change machine  
The one she bought in the middle of the night, tension begs relief  
Her nerves are frayed  
She hasn't smoked in five long days

I wonder if this is something that she's doing just for me  
I have thoughts of my father as I drift in and out of sleep  
Quitting for forever, when he saw me standin' tip-toed as a child  
At the edge of his dresser, looking over, trying hard to cop his style  
Catching glimpses of a world  
I could not wait to see unfurled

Sometimes I'm happy  
Sometimes I'm a mess  
But all in all  
I have been blessed  
With the gifts of the living  
As they are giving up smoking

I realize this was something that was hard for her to do
For awhile it changed her into someone completely new
My father's getting older; recently he had a heart attack
The recovery is slow, but when I go, I take his love and give it back.
Sacrifice and time
Can rebuild our peace of mind

Doug Hoekstra – acoustic guitar, harmonica, vocals
Colleen Burke Kave – vocals
Waldo LaTowsky - drums
George Marinelli – mandolin
Pat Meusel – bass

Produced and Engineered by George Marinelli at Wing Ding Studios, Nashville, TN

Desdemona

It happened on a train heading out to New York
I was traveling by coach, ten dollars short
Tired of my past and my family tree
I had a long list of things I could no longer be

Desdemona, desdemona

He walked down the aisle, tall and lean
Dark brown eyes flowed confidently
Into my heart like water in sand
Soaking up dreams on a moment's demand

Desdemona, desdemona

I sat down beside her, she smelled like the wind
And all of the places I'd never been
Chances I missed, a sad refrain
Lost in the distance, night covered day

He leaned over to kiss me, I tasted his breath
Like beauty and truth, so close to death
Balancing on the edge of a whim and
A journey to someplace I'd never been

Desdemona, desdemona

I heard rolling thunder, bold and pure
Rain hit the glass and of this I was sure
No one could touch her porcelain skin
With electric grace, the way that I did
I shook back and forth like dice in the hand
The train kept on rolling across the land
I wanted to hold him, I wanted to run
Shadows and sun, both directions at once

Desdemona, desdemona

I felt my heart slowing, my body grew cold
I was a young boy and then I was old
I could no longer hear, I could no longer see
Red turned to black, inside of me

When I pulled away, I felt the change
Something to lose is what I became
But, the things that I am I’d never possess
And whatever I gave, he’d wind up with less

*Nirva Dorsaint - vocals*
*Doug Hoekstra – acoustic guitars, high-strung guitar, vocals*
*Waldo LaTowsky – mouth percussion, concrete block, bass drum, tambourine, shaker, rainstick*
*George Marinelli – dobro, mandolin, keyboards*
*Pat Meusel – bass*

*Produced and Engineered by George Marinelli at Wing Ding Studios, Nashville, TN*

**Laminate Man**

The laminate swings back and forth
Like a pendulum from his neck
Or a clock that's always ticking
At the window while he bets
His hands reach out for balance
And he lights another cigarette
Oh, oh, oh laminate man

His hair is moussed, teeth are white
He smiles at someone he's never met
There’s a space behind his eyes
Filled with names he won't forget
He descends on this important one
Like a fisherman with his net
Oh, oh, oh, laminate man

Laminate man, laminate man, hipper than thou, laminate man
Come my way, shake my hand, talk to me, talk to me, talk to me, laminate man

(Intro)
Now, he grew up in a small coastal town
Its name rarely leaves his lips
It's as if he died there long ago
On the barren downtown strip
Tendin' bar, wiping tables down
Six nights a week, pocketing the tips
Oh, oh, oh, laminate man

Now, he gets to travel far and wide
And hang around in backlit bars
Where people laugh and buy him drinks
And all but the talent are some kind of star
It's a world all to itself
What you claim to be is what you are

Marko Ciciliani, Jan Feddersen, and Alexandra Gramatke – laminate chorus
Doug Hoekstra – acoustic guitars, vocals
Jeff Kowalkowski – synthesizers, percussion

Produced and Engineered by Jeff Kowalkowski at Mondo Oakdale Studios, Chicago IL

Houses Flying By the Window

Houses flying by the window
The next stop will be Downers Grove
Streets are wet, sidewalks swept
Clean of alabaster snow

The train rocks on into the city
Like a lover searching for a groove
The rhythm sends me backwards spinning
To a place where was less to prove

I went to school in that brick building
Played kickball on its cinder ground
Sometimes it's me, sometimes another
Little boy who makes those cheerful sounds

All the children run in circles
Circles take us through our times
Like the snow that melts into the river
You can see it coming if you look behind

If I am the sum of all my actions
It's no wonder we all die
Sometimes the weight can pull you down
Make you want to drop and cry
Houses flying by the window
A pile of boots left outside
If we’re the sum of all our actions
It’s no wonder we get lost inside

So, when I visit in the winter
I try to leave behind a tear
Which freezes as it hits the ground
Into an icicle, so hard and clear

Al and Irene Hoekstra - interview
Doug Hoekstra - acoustic guitars, vocals
Jeff Kowalkowski - drum loops, samples
Pat Meusel - bass
Tina Paulsen – cello

Produced and Engineered by Jeff Kowalkowski at Mondo Oakdale, Chicago, IL

That’s Where He Was Living (Doug Hoekstra/Gary Michael Smith)

He was in Grand Rapids when she died
Dogs howling kept him up all night
He was in Grand Rapids when she died

He left for Oklahoma when she died
Somebody said they never saw him cry
He left for Oklahoma when she died

A twister took his trailer far away
He had to find a better place to stay
He found himself in Birmingham, that’s where he was saved
He found himself in Birmingham one day

The heat of Birmingham became too strong
He left that town, some say he stayed too long
He stopped awhile in Knoxville, then headed north a spell
He was busted in a South Detroit hotel

They took him back in handcuffs when she died
Policeman flanking him on either side
They took him back in handcuffs when she died

The state told the story when she died
A dozen blank faces fit him with the crime
The state told the story when she died

He was living in Grand Rapids when she died
Dogs howling kept him up all night
Begging for a pardon, Bible at his side
That’s where he was living when he died

Doug Hoekstra - acoustic guitar, harmonica, vocals
Jeff Kowalkowski - accordion
Pat Meusel – bass, vocals

Produced and Engineered by Jeff Kowalkowski at Mondo Oakdale, Chicago, IL

For the Woman

Lawrence lives in the Mission District
Through open doors drift colored smells
Bakeries, restaurants, children laughing
And on Sunday mornings the sound of bells

Quetzalcoatl on a playground mural
But he doesn't notice as he passes by
When he walks, his heart is beating
For the woman he will lie beside

For the woman, for the woman
For the woman he will lie beside

Under covers; sheets soft and smooth
He hears every sound she makes
They move like serpents in the grass
In the distance crickets chirp away

In the dark, he cannot see
Kaleidoscopes behind her eyes
Out on the bay on a blue grey day
The water’s choppy, so he holds on tight

Sometimes he falls into a daydream
He's running fast and his feet they burn
But, he keeps getting farther from his destination
Like a man who just cannot learn

Down the block in Balmy Alley
She likes to paint upon the wall
Rainbows flowing from her fingers
She loves the moment best of all

At his job, he juggles numbers
He's popular with the office types
He never knows what the jokes about
He never says what's on his mind

Lawrence lives in the Mission District
His windows face the eastern sky
He still doesn't notice Quetzalcoatl
But, every day is glorified
For the woman he will lie beside

*Doug Hoekstra – acoustic guitar, vocals*
*Colleen Burke Kave – vocals*
*Waldo LaTowsky – drums*
*Pat Meusel – bass*
*George Marinelli – electric guitars*

*Produced and Engineered by George Marinelli at Wing Ding Studios, Nashville, TN*

**Broken Tower**

I was climbing the stairs of a broken tower
Holding the stem of a fractured flower
All the dreams that lay beyond repair
Are scattered on those slowly rising stairs

The courage to stay, the courage to change
As I climb past one, the other still remains
I watch the wheels go 'round and round for hours
From my window up in the broken tower

She said "life is a river, washin' out across the plain"
I didn't know a thing until I looked past the rain

I saw birds in formation, flying in a v
Bleached and broken bones strewn across the beach
The smallest one was leading, blue spots on his beak
I followed with my eyes, my soul began to speak

They were headed to a place that none of them had ever been
In their minds, but in their hearts, they're going home again.

So, I beckoned with my hand and took her to my broken tower
Where I offered her a kiss and this fractured flower
She took it to her breast like a maiden fair
As we left the wreckage on the slowly rising stairs

The wheels go round and round for hours
From our window in the broken tower
The Life We Love

I watched you sleep, arm over me
Dreams slippin away on the breeze
The room is quiet and I felt a chill
The moment holds me perfect and still
Look out the window and try to shape my will

A circus game when I was a child
Had me spun through the air by hands of guile
I worried I might break his bones
But my father melted like the winter snow
Is the life we love, the life we show.

Ooh, oh, the life we love
Oooh, oh, the life we love

Mountains rise from the deeper green
Into a sky so blue it can humble me
And the peaks are covered with alabaster snow
All year round - I can feel you close
And the life we love is the life we show

Ooh, oh, the life we love
Oooh, oh, the life we love

Crazy timing, tender chance
Lives thrown together like a fifth-grade dance
Take my number and watch me twirl
Around the room like a gingerbread girl
Let me close my eyes and be taken to a world

Nirva Dorsaint & Antonio Meeks – vocal chorus
Doug Hoekstra – acoustic guitar, vocals, one-hand piano
Colleen Burke Kave – vocals
Waldo LaTowsky – drums
George Marinelli – organ, fuzz keys
Pat Meusel – bass
Produced and Engineered by George Marinelli at Wing Ding Studios, Nashville, TN
Isis (Bob Dylan)

I married Isis on the fifth day of May
But I could not hold on to her very long
So I cut off my hair and I rode straight away
For the wild unknown country where I could not go wrong

I came to a high place of darkness and light
The dividing line ran through the center of town
I hitched up my pony to a post on the right
Went in to a laundry to wash my clothes down

A man in the corner approached me for a match
I knew right away he was not ordinary.
He said, “Are you lookin’ for somethin’ easy to catch?”
I said “I got no money.” He said “that ain’t necessary.”

We set out that night for the cold in the North
I gave him my blanket, he gave me his word
I said, “Where are we goin’?” He said we’d be back by the fourth
I said, “That’s the best news that I’ve ever heard.”

I was thinkin’ about turquoise, I was thinkin’ about gold,
I was thinkin’ about diamonds and the world’s biggest necklace.
As we rode through the canyons, through the devilish cold,
I was thinkin’ about Isis, how she thought I was so reckless.

How she told me that one day we would meet up again,
And things would be different, the next time we wed,
If I only could hang on and just be her friend
I still can’t remember all the best things she said.

We came to the pyramids all embedded in ice.
He said, “there’s a body I’m trying to find.
If I carry it out it’ll bring a good price.”
‘Twas then I knew what he had on his mind

The wind it was howlin’, and the snow was outrageous
We chopped through the night and we chopped through the dawn
When he died I was hopin’ that it wasn’t contagious,
But I made up my mind that I had to go on.

I broke into the tomb, but the casket was empty.
There was no jewels, no nothin’, I felt I’d been had
When I saw that my partner was just bein’ friendly,
When I took up his offer I must-a been mad
I picked up his body and I dragged him inside,
Threw him down in the hole and I put back the cover
I said a quick prayer and I felt satisfied
Then I rode back to find Isis just to tell her I love her

She was there in the meadow where the creek used to rise.
Blinded by sleep and in need of a bed,
I came in from the East with the sun in my eyes
I cursed her one time then I rode on ahead.

She said, ‘where ya been?’ I said, ‘no place special’
She said, ‘you look different’ I said, ‘well, I guess
She said, ‘you been gone,” I said, ‘that’s only natural”
She said ‘you gonna stay” “If you want me to, yessss!”

Isis, oh Isis, you mystical child
What drives me to you is what drives me insane
I still can remember the way that you smiled
On the fifth day of May in the drizzlin’ rain

*Guillermo Gregario* - alto sax, clarinet
*Doug Hoekstra* - acoustic guitars, vocals
*Colleen Burke Kave'* - vocals
*Anthony Zator* - trumpet

*Produced and Engineered by Jeff Kowalkowski at Mondo Oakdale, Chicago, IL*

**Undone**

On a farm in the country
Fences around their land
The nearest neighbors miles away
The wind blowing through their hands

The voices of the prairie
Tears carried in the rain
Samuel Pickett was a different child
With different seeds to lay

Samuel's ways, like the seasons change
One day became undone
One day became undone

The nearest town was Topeka
It was nothing like New York
But there were hustlers on the street
And in those days, money was short
Samuel would ride all Saturday
Just to spend the night in town
Soak up everything he saw
And then go home to write it down

Samuel's ways, like the season's change
All became undone
One day became undone
One day became undone

His father's face was worn
Creases like the deepest valley
His back was hard as granite
And his eyes as black as alleys

Later on, Sam would write about
His family's brittle ways
Always quick to criticize
And far too slow to praise

Samuel's ways, like the season's change
All became undone
One day became undone

He'd spent all his life denying
His father's rigid blood
But it ran so deep within him
It reappeared in his own son

He tried to teach him of the life
An artist only knows
But his son preferred the garden plot
And watching flowers grow

Samuel's ways like the seasons change
One day became undone
One day became undone

*Guillermo Gregorio – alto sax, clarinet*
*Doug Hoekstra – acoustic guitars, harmonica, bottle, vox*
*Colleen Burke Kave – vocals*
*Jeff Kowalkowski – keyboards, bottle, jawharp, vox*

*Produced and Engineered by Jeff Kowalkowski at Mondo Oakdale, Chicago IL*
Black and White Memories

When I was young, I looked up to him
My older brother was the man
He knew things I didn't know
Some I didn't understand
Posters on every wall
45s on the floor
No one entered my brother's room
Without knocking on the door

Black and white memories
Shades of gray in-between

I can still see Ron Santo
About to hit one out
James Brown with his microphone
Ready to scream and shout
Outside the window apples fall
From the apple tree
I can hear our Mom having a fit
When he came home at 3

(chorus)

Some say people never change, they only put on different clothes
Sizing up the sleeves, trying out a pose
You can see 'em in home movies, putting on a show so long ago

Nowadays we've drifted
And I'll have to let that be
When I was young his advice
Was suspect although free
I can't tell what he's thinking
He's busy chasing air
Trying to cross the barrier
That separates the here from there

I bet those apples still are falling the way the always did
There ain't no use in lying to the voice within
I'll dust off my record player and watch those babies spin once again

Doug Hoekstra – vocals
Colleen Burke Kave – vocals
Jeff Kowalkowski – piano

Produced and Engineered by Jeff Kowalkowski at Mondo Oakdale, Chicago IL
Stranger’s Eyes

So many people all over the world
Seems I’m always passin’ through at night
Lights in windows, streetlamps burnin’
Train tracks under moonlit skies
Corner bars, small white bungalows
Where people love and live and die
Who’s the mayor and who’s the clerk
What does it matter to a stranger’s eyes?

All these towns and all these people
And the courthouse clock with its hour hand
Moving slowly as the earth itself
As if everything in life was pre-planned
People go to work on Monday
Some are walking, some will drive
Past hollow trees or crowded lawns
What does it matter to a stranger’s eyes?

The stranger listens without talking
Like the billboard children play behind
The stranger watches and walks away
Into another space and time

Sophie Frost, Dixie Carroll
Names that hang on mailbox signs
Graceful hands in darkened corners
Callers come with flashing smiles
I hear the wind blow through the curtain
I leave a piece of me behind
I watch the candle burn and smolder
What does it matter to a stranger’s eyes?

Doug Hoekstra – acoustic guitar, bass, vocals
Molly Hoekstra – fade out piano
Jeff Kowalkowski – electric funk piano
Pat Meusel – electric guitar (w/spinning Pignose)

Produced and Engineered by Jeff Kowalkowski at Mondo Oakdale, Chicago IL