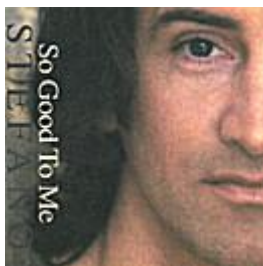


Mp3 Stefano - So Good To Me



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Italian Singer/Songwriter blends the sounds of his Mediterranean heritage with the country crossover influences of his childhood in West Virginia; Power-Pop, Beatles-Pop, and Love Ballads 14 MP3 Songs

POP: Today's Top 40, POP: Beatles-pop Details: "My father has called me Stef from as far back as I can remember. I proudly adopted the family's full original Italian name, DiPietrantonio, putting back the "Di" at the beginning and "io" at the end. The name had been altered when my great-grandfather and his brothers came to the United States. I modelled in Italy and, while there, sought out and discovered the beauty of the village from which my relatives came: Gallo Matese. The village and the church where my great-grandparents, Maria Perrino and Joseph DiPietrantonio, exchanged their wedding vows before coming to America to start a new life, can be viewed at GalloMatese.com. Gallo Matese sits high in the hills in the Caserta Region, about two hours southeast of Rome and northeast of Naples. I spent time there, meeting my family's oldest living relatives and absorbing a great deal about our amazing heritage. Music is a heritage that was passed on to me by my parents, both of whom have great musical gifts. Mom has always sung and participated in church and youth chorale groups. For a brief period in her teens, she played the accordion. I still threaten to buy her another one if she will play for me; so far she mostly laughs at the offer and declines. My father studied the piano in the early 1950s under the tutelage of Spanish classical pianist and violinist Herman Virden of Weirton, WV. Like my father Frank, I was playing the piano as soon as I could touch the keys. My earliest memories are of banging on the piano, mimicking nearly every song I heard after a single listen. Catchy commercial jingles and television theme songs would soon drive my family crazy, as I played Alka-Seltzer's "...Plop, plop, fizz, fizz..." and "....here's a story...of a man named Brady...." over and over until a shout from a sibling or parent from upstairs put a stop to it. I never fully learned to read sheet music. When I compose, it all comes together in a way I can't

explain. I hear it in my head and it transfers itself by way of my hand onto a piano keyboard or guitar. If I am out of reach of a keyboard or guitar, I will call my voicemail and sing a melody that has just popped into my head, before it seemingly disappears into thin air. I regret the two or three times I didn't pick up the phone and call when inspiration hit. I grew up singing and cantoring (leading the congregation in song) at St. Vincent De Paul Church in Wheeling, WV, under the dotting eye of my longtime friend and mentor, Sister Alicia Marie Weiskircher. For a very brief period in my early childhood, Sister Alicia tried to instruct me in piano, but my ear was already developed in a way that would not and could not accommodate the study of piano scales or focus on traditional methods of instruction. I was stubborn and refused to see the virtue in reading notes when I could already play them by ear. Instead, I played with my eyes closed for hours, proving to myself and others how tuned-in I was and how well I could play without looking at the keyboard or sheet music. Despite my lack of interest in studying the piano, I still loved to sit and play and sing for hours. In vocal class, I began making up my own harmony lines or counter melodies and sang them while my classmates were following Sister Alicia's instructions. At first, Sister Alicia's glances toward me portrayed mild annoyance, but soon she added a smile of approval. She never once told me to stop. I studied guitar with Sister Alicia for three years, performing mostly solo and duet with her and other students at our school masses. Since age 6, I have sung at every Christmas mass with Sister Alicia, cantoring at the altar in St. Vincent's. Regardless of where I am in the world, I come home to sing with her for Christmas. It is one of the greatest joys I have known. It will always remain a cherished tradition and an honor for me, singing with this great person who has made such an impact on my life musically. There were loads of family get-togethers and, if someone had a piano, eventually my father or me ended up playing it and singing, putting on an impromptu show. I consider my very first public performance to be at the St. Vincent's Variety Show back in 1976. We started with a chorus of "The Candy Man," after which I was whisked away and placed in some Oliver Twist outfit, complete with street urchin floppy hat and, for some reason, white gloves. The gloves were made of a poly-something material and my hands were sweating as I was riddled with stagefright. I was terrified that my hands would slide off the piano keys, I would be unable to play, and I would die of embarrassment. I barely remember getting through the piece. I do, however, remember a huge round of applause afterward though and thought, "Hey, I could get used to this . . ." In terms of my musical influences, my siblings and I grew up listening to it all. Although it was the 1970s and Disco fever was everywhere, my vinyl album

and 45 record collection still includes artists like the Beatles and John Lennon, Linda Ronstadt, The Eagles, Jeff Lynne and ELO, the Carpenters, Fleetwood Mac, Emmylou Harris, and Tom Petty. Still, I had this groovy pair of roller skates and I roller-disco'ed with friends at the Wheeling Park Skating Rink all summer. Meanwhile, my mother was a huge fan of Andy Williams and Johnny Mathis, and my father loved Frank Sinatra and Elvis. In addition, there was always a phenomenal mix of country music coming from a stage in downtown Wheeling; the Capitol Music Hall, home of radio legend WWVA/1170-AM. Later I would headline there with annual Christmas benefit concerts. All of these sounds came together in my life, helping me form my own eclectic music style. For many years, I did not pursue music full-time. I had heard a cautionary tale of a not-so-great experience that my father had in his early 20s in the music business, along with the traditional advice of others to me to get a 'real' job. I headed south and attended Florida State University, where I did some modeling. To an 18-year-old, the money seemed incredible. My true love, however, was singing, and I jumped in to sing occasionally for local Florida bands. Soon I felt ready to leave school to pursue music full-time. Instead I transferred to West Virginia University, got a degree in Broadcast Journalism, and had a so-called 'real' job for 6 years as a Television News Reporter and Anchor. For 8 more years, I was a Weather Anchor. During that underpaid period of my life, I coined a phrase "SSP," which stood for "Shameless Self Promotion." While it may not be exactly a new concept in the entertainment industry, it worked well for me at the time. In this case, my high visibility as a weatherman attracted large audiences to my concerts. While at WTRF-TV7, in Wheeling, WV, I shared the anchor desk with a great friend of mine, Steve Mazure. I also did the weather forecast for a local radio station, whose talkshow host Howard Monroe dubbed me "The Singin' Weatherman." Thankfully, I never sang a forecast, but the TV station heavily promoted and supported my musical endeavors and my annual Christmas benefit performances for children's causes and the homeless. My brother, Mike Anthony, is a Sports Anchor and Reporter on WTRF-TV. At the time, I sang cover tunes and big hits from established performers, while I wrote my own material on the side. The first song I ever recorded was not one of my own, but one of my father's songs he and a buddy had recorded while in the Air Force back in 1959. It is a sweet little doo-wop number called, "One Lonely Prayer," included as a bonus track on my up-coming album "So Good to Me." The track on the album features 6 seconds of the original recording by my father, taken from a scratchy 45 rpm record single, one of the only remaining copies in existence. Initially, I went into the Longvue Studios, in Wheeling, WV, with Musician/Producer Jamie Peck in 1995 to

update the song with a more current sound, and to give a surprise recording to my father as a Christmas gift. After recording the track, I could not contain my joy at how I felt it sounded and I broke the surprise to my father, who was thrilled. When my dad was 23 years old, he recalls trying to keep a similar surprise from his own father. Dad called Grandpa, asking to borrow three hundred dollars, but wanted to keep the nature of the project, a set of musical recordings, a secret. He too was unable to keep the secret, so he eventually told him; the money would be used to cut two songs he and his air force buddy Eddie Spencer had co-written for the Echo Records Label. The songs were "One Lonely Prayer" and "Dancin' Girl." The pair would co-write and record two more tunes together, "Connie", an ode to my mother, and "There Goes Love", both of which will be re-released on my second album.

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