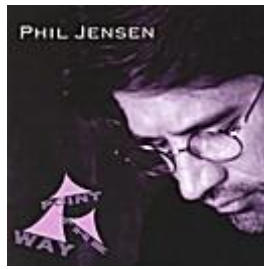


## Mp3 Phil Jensen - Point The Way



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Pop rock with a touch of folk, country and blues and lots of passion. 11 MP3 Songs POP: Folky Pop, ROCK: Acoustic Details: Debut release marks new direction for singer / songwriter / guitarist, and performances win fans as title track impacts adult contemporary radio If singer, songwriter and acoustic guitarist Phil Jensen would have seen his future three years ago, he wouldn't have believed it. What was then inconceivable, while in the throes of personal changes, is now an ear-pleasing reality for the Canadian-born-and-bred artist - and for the fans he wins whenever he performs. With the release of Point the Way, his Monkey Boy Records debut, the Denver-based Jensen is moving in a new, acoustic guitar-oriented direction that marks a departure from his front man days in an established local blues-rock band in which creative visions became increasingly and irreconcilably divergent. Adept and appealing in a range of styles, Jensen blends genres for an intriguing mix that he describes as "a little folk, a little country, a little rock and a little blues. It's eclectic, though there's a common feel to my songwriting style, but I cross boundaries, so the album isn't just any one thing." Respectful comparisons have been made between Jensen and Lyle Lovett, and Jensen admits, "He was very much a strong influence on my writing. It's a combination of him, Steely Dan and James Taylor." Jensen has chosen wisely. Point the Way is straight from the heart of a clearly gifted songwriter who knows a thing or three about captivating melodies and poignant turns of phrase. The title track, "Point the Way," with its catchy, up-tempo flair and romantic lyrics, is the first single to impact adult contemporary radio. The follow-up, also a perfect AC fit, is the gorgeous ballad "By My Side," which was co-produced by renowned jazz saxophonist and AC and light jazz chart topper Warren Hill for major market distribution. But Hill, who also lays down some agile sax work on the song, isn't the only heavy hitter who rallied to Point the Way. Radio promotions guru Tom Mazzetta, who has wielded considerable airwave clout for three decades on behalf of Shania Twain,

Garth Brooks, Barry Manilow, Paul McCartney, Robert Palmer and many others, is the compass for the project. "His experience and background have opened many doors for me," Jensen states reverently. "It's very significant to have met him." Significant, indeed. A guy of Mazzetta's caliber doesn't work with just anybody - especially a new artist - unless he's relatively certain they're going to fly. "And that's what he tells me -- he wouldn't work with me if he didn't think he could make it happen," Jensen laughs modestly. "He's sticking his reputation on the line with me." Former Firefall guitarist Steve Manshel produced the album, contributed backing vocals and all manner of guitar styles, from high string to guitjo. Another Firefall alum, Mark Oblinger, along with Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee Richie Furay, of Poco and Buffalo Springfield fame, lent their voices, as well. All are Denver area residents with whom Manshel has worked. So how does a relatively low-profile musician get a relatively high-profile producer to work with him? In Jensen's case, it was being in the right place at the right time, paying attention, and having the guts to ask. Fresh from his split with the band and preparing for a string of solo gigs, he recalls, "I was buying some equipment, and Steve was at the counter discussing his band opening for Poco here in Denver. That immediately sparked my interest, because of my interest in Poco's music. I introduced myself to Steve, did not know who he was, and we just started talking. I asked him if he would listen to some of my music to give some feedback, and an hour meeting became three-and-a-half hours long, with his very strong interest in my songwriting and then offering to produce my CD." Jensen and Manshel met in October 2000, and by January 2001, they were in the studio. Point the Way was completed in May of that year, with the songwriting tracing and culled from three intense, previous years. The album is slated for a national, mid-summer release, but is available now at [monkeyboyrecords.com](http://monkeyboyrecords.com), [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com), [CDNow.com](http://CDNow.com) and [cdbaby.com](http://cdbaby.com). A Border's Books cross-country tour is in the works, which will include small venues, as well. Though Point the Way is replete with excellent songs, Jensen reveals, "One of my personal favorites is 'Her Dance,' which was written about the same person that I wrote 'Point the Way' and 'By My Side' about, so there was some common inspiration. "The other thing I like about that song," he continues, "is that Richie Furay plays a significant part in that tune. I was a big Poco fan, so it was a real treat for me to have Richie participate on the album. He had just flown in from New York and said he'd be able to come into the studio for a couple of hours. We thought we might get one or two songs out of him, but he wound up having so much fun and enjoying the project so much that he stayed for the rest of the day and sang background vocals on five songs." It's precisely this sort of fortuity that has guided

this project from the start, and though Jensen couldn't imagine the gratifying outcome when he made the commitment to touch lives through music, he's never looked back. Point the Way is as much a collective experience for listeners as it is Jensen's personal cathartic journey, marked by artistic growth and personal transformation, in which he carves an empathetic path for others to travel.

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