

GOLDEN OPPORTUNITIES

MIXTAPE

Sherrill  
Piper

WILL SHEFF

vocals, acoustic guitar, harmonica

SCOTT BRACKETT

cornet, keyboards, piano on "April Anne"

BRIAN CASSIDY

electric guitar, pedal steel, keyboard on  
"Listening to Otis Redding at Home During Christmas"

JONATHAN MEIBURG

vocals, piano, accordion

TRAVIS NELSEN

drums

PATRICK PESTORIUS

bass

JUSTIN SHERBURN

keyboard on "I Came Here to 'To Say I'm Going Away"

**APRIL ANNE:** Recorded at a session for Daytrotter.com during a day off on our 2007 U.S. tour. The band didn't know the song at all—I just had the idea to try it about an hour before we left our hotel to walk over to the Daytrotter studio. We ran through the song once or twice and then recorded it once or twice and moved on. Everything on this song is recorded live, even the vocals—which is true of all the songs on here except "The Blonde in the Bleachers." Jeff Hoskins, our soundman, who recorded the very first Okkervil River EP *Sleeps Too Small To Use*, plays some loud tambourine.

**SIMON SMITH AND THE AMAZING DANCING BEAR:** I recorded this song back in 2006 in my friend Andrew Schmidt's apartment. It was recorded as a present, but then it seemed fun to actually put out in some form. I love Randy Newman.

**I WANT TO KNOW:** When I first went to New York to try to write songs for *The Stage Names*, I was reading Ed Sanders' massive fictional history of the '60s, *Tales of Bedouin Glory*, and was quite charmed by the vaguely cosmic bullshit to be found therein, not to mention the vivid images of a vanished never-coming-back Manhattan, back when people actually lived there. The Fugs are great and so is Charles Olsen. This song was recorded at a strings-and-horns-and-backing vocals fiasco we put on at the University of Texas's Hogg Auditorium a week or so after we'd wrapped up *The Stage Names*.

**DO WHAT YOU GOTTA DO:** Yet another wonderful song Nina Simone made hers eternally regardless of its original origin. A true devotional song, full of real pain and real love and real wisdom, both wrong and right. Recorded in Rock Island for Daytrotter.com.

**I CAME HERE TO SAY I'M GOING AWAY:** The people at our French distributor, Differ-Ant, somehow wangled us onto a prominent morning chat show on Radio France. Part of the deal was that we had to play a cover of a song "well-known in France." Jacques Brel is one of my favorite songwriters of all time but I ended up concluding his songs are beyond my meager ability to bring them across. The songs of Serge Gainsbourg, which I also love, are at least easier to play. Because I can't speak French, I decided to laboriously create an English translation of this song based on what I could pick out. Then I threw some other lyrics in at the end, kind of more as a message to you the listener than as something the middle-aged French studio audience would have especially noticed. Radio France had a Paul Schaeffer-like guy they forced us to play piano with on this song. He was really good. The French pop star Etienne Daho (who someone told me had worked with Gainsbourg) was a guest on the show that morning. He sat right in front of us while we played, wearing an inscrutable expression behind the mirrored shades and slicked hair you'd expect and want out of a French pop star. After we played he said something to the audience in French. I later found out he

was discussing Gainsbourg's widespread popularity, but at the time we were all hoping he wasn't telling them "that was the worst shit I ever heard."

**THE BLONDE IN THE BLEACHERS:** I recorded the guitar and vocal at the top of a five-flight stairwell at our hotel in Munster, Germany. We liked the reverb in the stairwell, so we tried to get as much of it as possible in our two little mics. The cleaning lady was angry at us because we hadn't checked out of the hotel yet. You can hear her during the solo section, two flights down, banging around. Brian recorded the electric guitar track two nights later in Berlin, standing onstage at Lido while the audience for our set wandered in. The next night, Scott recorded two different keyboard tracks in Hamburg. The higher keyboard part was recorded in the bar of the club we were playing. Knust, again as the audience for the evening was wandering in. The lower keyboard part was recorded in our hotel room at the Hotel Pacific, which we found out is where the Beatles stayed on their last stint as gigging musicians in Hamburg. There's a music store next door where they'd buy their guitar strings and Pete Best's drumsticks and whatnot. Extra special thanks on this song to the amazing work of Jeff Hoskins, who did all of this remote recording, and Erik Wofford, who mixed it from across the ocean.

**ANTARCTICA STARTS HERE:** John Cale wrote this song about Billy Wilder's *Sunset Boulevard*, apparently. One of my favorite movies ever. We recorded this version live on the Austin radio station KUTV, two days after the U.S. tour and still exhausted.

**LISTENING TO OTIS REDDING AT HOME DURING CHRISTMAS:** This song was on our first full-length record, *Don't Fall in Love with Everyone You See*. This live version of it was recorded at Hogg Auditorium. I feel like I relate to this song now more than I did at the time I wrote it.

**SOLO:** Recorded back in 2006, somewhere on the solo tour I took to pay for a long road trip. I decided to play this Sandy Denny song and I think this was the first night I tried it.

Rock Island tracks sound engineered by Patrick Stolley and Brad Koppfin.

Brooklyn track home-recorded by Andrew Schmidt.

Austin tracks recorded live in concert by Jeff Hoskins.

Paris track from *Le Fou du Roi*, Radio France.

German track recorded by Jeff Hoskins and mixed by Erik Wofford.

Chicago track recorded by Heather Copeland, mixed by Erik Wofford.

Coordinated and mastered by Erik Wofford.

"Okkervil River" lettering by Jamie Edwards. Layout by Daniel Murphy.

*Recorded live on tour, 2006-2007*



**APRIL ANNE**

(John Phillips) Recorded in Rock Island, Illinois

**SIMON SMITH AND THE AMAZING DANCING BEAR**

(Randy Newman) Recorded in Brooklyn, New York

**I WANT TO KNOW**

(Charles F. Olsen/Ed Sanders) Recorded in Austin, Texas

**DO WHAT YOU GOTTA DO**

(Jimmy Webb) Recorded in Rock Island, Illinois

**I CAME HERE TO SAY I'M GOING AWAY**

(Serge Gainsbourg/translation by W. Sheff) Recorded in Paris, France

**THE BLONDE IN THE BLEACHERS**

(Joni Mitchell) Recorded in Münster, Berlin & Hamburg, Germany

**ANTARCTICA STARTS HERE**

(John Cale) Recorded in Austin, Texas

**LISTENING TO OTIS REDDING AT HOME DURING CHRISTMAS**

(Will Sheff) Recorded in Austin, Texas

**SOLO**

(Sandy Denny) Recorded in Chicago, Illinois



OKKERVIL RIVER

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