

LINER NOTES FROM THE K.O.A. TAPES DIARY

1. **Some Song** (Kate Campbell, Mark Narmore)

Acoustic guitar - Kate Campbell
Accordion - Joey Miskulin
Banjo - Laura Boosinger
Bass - Missy Raines
Mandolin - Steve Smith
Background Vocals - Kate Campbell, Missy Raines

Accordion player Joey Miskulin played on my very first album *Songs From The Levee*. I first met banjo player Laura Boosinger at Summer Acoustic Music Week (sponsored by WUMB radio). I've always thought a little banjo goes a long way but in this case, the banjo really makes the song. I had to have the right player, and Laura was my first choice. I wrote "Some Song" with Mark Narmore about three years ago. When I finished the song I knew it would be the leadoff track on the next record. Missy and I recorded it in my living room, then we sent it to Steve for the Mandolin part.

2. **America** (Paul Simon)

Wurlitzer - Kate Campbell

I bought my Wurlitzer from Nashville session player/keyboardist John Deaderick a few years ago. I first heard this tune when I was about 12 years old, and it has been my favorite Paul Simon song ever since. At first I tried "America" on the guitar until I saw the Wurli across the room and the song chose its instrument. If you listen carefully you can hear the bracelets on my left arm clinking on the instrument throughout, as well as the pedal sounds.

3. **Greensboro** (Kate Campbell)

Acoustic guitar - Kate Campbell
Bass - Missy Raines
Accordion - Joey Miskulin
Background vocals - Kate Campbell, Missy Raines

This song came to me one night when I realized I was dreaming over and over again "four young men could stand no more so they sat down at the Woolworth store." I woke myself up and wrote down the lyrics. My little guitar was lying beside me, so I picked it up and began writing the song. It took all day because there was some research required about Greensboro. At days end I was still in my pajamas, but I had the song.

4. **Lay Back the Darkness** (Kate Campbell)

Acoustic guitar - Kate Campbell
Hammond B-3 - Spooner Oldham

This song was originally on *Blues and Lamentations*. I love poetry, and "Lay Back the Darkness" is the title of a poem by Edward Hirsch. The poem is actually about Alzheimer's and Hirsch's father. "Lay Back the Darkness" is one of my favorite songs, which is why I wanted it on this record. Unfortunately I don't have a B-3, so when Spooner came to Nashville we went to a studio in town. They had a whole warehouse full of instruments, including keyboards and B-3s. Spooner got to choose which one he would play. He also found a glockenspiel in his search, but more on that later.

5. **I Am A Pilgrim** (Traditional)

Acoustic guitar - Kate Campbell
Mandolin - Steve Smith
Bass - Missy Raines
Harmony Vocals - Steve Smith

This track is Missy, Steve, and me sitting around playing at Kaufman Kamp. I met Missy and Steve for the first time at this music camp. I had already done some recording for *The K.O.A. Tapes* at home. One night around midnight we were snacking and talking and I got the idea to try recording this tune on my iPhone. We placed the iPhone on top of a chair on top of a table in the middle of a concrete-walled dorm room. Missy played the Bass from the far corner of the room while Steve and I played and sang into the iPhone. I think we did about six takes and eventually got the one we wanted. We finished about Midnight-30.

6. **Intro Galway** (Kate Campbell)

I did this song not only because it is one of my favorites but also because it references Elvis. Elvis has appeared on all of my records in some form or fashion. I remembered this song the day before leaving for Ireland in 2014. I listened to Richard Thompson's version and figured out how to play it. I set up my iPhone in the living room on my music stand and made about three passes before choosing the best one. My friend Joe Penland had given me a 50-year-old Kay "hummingbird" guitar and it seemed perfect for "Galway to Graceland."

7. **From Galway to Graceland** (Richard Thompson)

Acoustic guitar - Kate Campbell

8. **Porcelain Blue** (Kate Campbell, Ira Campbell)

Wurlitzer - Kate Campbell
Glockenspiel - Spooner Oldham
Hammond B-3 - Spooner Oldham

We were in this great studio in Nashville called *Welcome to 1979* and I had three songs I wanted Spooner to hear. We started with "Porcelain Blue" and then I heard this tinkling sound. I turned around and Spooner was playing the glockenspiel! When you put musicians in a studio they find things to play that produce what they are hearing inside their heads. This was like the time Will Kimbrough was in the studio and came up with the idea of striking the strings of an old upright piano for the opening notes of "Ave Maria Grotto" (*Sing Me Out* recording). "Porcelain Blue" is my tribute to New Orleans. Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn" inspired the third verse. I was born in New Orleans and share a birthday with John Keats.

9. **Intro Bobby McGee**

Kris Kristofferson is one of my favorite songwriters. I have recorded his songs "They Killed Him" (*For the Living of These Days*) and "Help Me Make It Through The Night" (*Twang on a Wire*). What I have yet to record is "Sunday Mornin' Comin' Down," which is probably my favorite Kris Kristofferson song. "Me and Bobby McGhee" is one of the first tunes I recorded in my living room through my iPhone 5.

10. **Me and Bobby McGee** (Kris Kristofferson)

Acoustic Guitar - Kate Campbell

11. **Hope's Too Hard** (Kate Campbell)

Acoustic guitar - Kate Campbell
Wurlitzer - Kate Campbell
Accordion - Joey Miskulin

I originally wrote this song to accompany a book about birds of the Bible. It is one of my favorite songs that I've written. It is a very intimate song about life's journey. At times the road is hard and it's difficult to see the beauty all around us. Birds inspire me with their songs. When I wake up every morning I hear them "chattering" outside my window.

12. **Intro Pilot Me**

The word "Savior" in the 1940 edition of the Broadman Hymnal is spelled "Saviour." These are the kinds of details I notice and ponder.

13. **Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me** (Edward Hopper)

Acoustic guitar - Kate Campbell
Background Vocals - Kate Campbell

14. **Passing Through** (Richard Blakeslee)

Wurlitzer - Kate Campbell
Bass - Missy Raines
Tambourine - Ben Surratt

I always think of Pete Seeger singing this song but many people have recorded it. There are lots of verses but these are the ones (and their particular order) that I prefer. I also like the historical references and the subtle wordplays throughout the song.

15. **The Locust Years** (Kate Campbell, Ira Campbell, Johnny Pierce)

Acoustic guitar - Kate Campbell

This song is from my debut album *Songs from the Levee*. I played this song the first time I auditioned at the Bluebird Cafe. Afterwards the guy running the sound said, "I've never heard a song called 'The Locust Years' before." I was invited to come back and sing three songs on Sunday Evening Songwriter's Night. The title came from a verse in the Bible that says, "I will return to you the years the locusts have taken away." I sang in a lot of coffeeshops when I first started performing. Every time I sang this quiet number someone ordered an espresso and the sound of the machine loudly accompanied the song.

16. **Strangeness of the Day** (Kate Campbell, Walt Aldridge)

Acoustic guitar & Background vocals - Kate Campbell
Dobro - Sally Van Meter
Bass - Missy Raines
Accordion - Joey Miskulin
Hammond B-3 - Spooner Oldham

I was flying home to Nashville on September 10, 2001 after singing in New York. Although I prefer an aisle seat, on this day I had a seat by the window. It was a bright, sunny, beautiful day and I could see the Statue of Liberty, the Twin Towers, the Empire State Building, and the Chrysler Building. The next morning I was driving down to Florence, Alabama to write for the *Monuments* CD with my friend and producer Walt Aldridge. I was listening to NPR's *Morning Edition* when they reported that a plane had hit one of the Twin Towers. I immediately felt a sense

of danger. When I arrived in Florence Walt had the TV on in the studio. One tower had collapsed and the other one soon followed. I don't even remember what song we worked on that day.

I left the studio and drove to Fretted Instruments in Birmingham to pick up my first Collings guitar. I was on my way to Mars Hill College in North Carolina for a concert. On September 12th I arrived at Mars Hill and was again listening to the radio. It seemed odd and quiet because there were no planes flying overhead. One of the NPR reporters close to ground zero said, "I can't get over the strangeness of the day." I don't know if he was quoting someone else but his sentence stayed with me.

Walt and I got together a couple of weeks later to work on the *Monuments* recording and of course we talked about September 11th. I told him about hearing the "strangeness of the day" comment on the radio, which led us to write the song. On the *Monuments* album we used space sounds to go with the lyrics. I hardly ever sang it at concerts even though people kept requesting it. Gradually I began singing it with my guitar and decided to include it on *The K.O.A. Tapes*.

17. **Intro Seven Miles**

18. **Seven Miles Home** (Kate Campbell)

Acoustic guitar - Kate Campbell
Fiddle - John Kirk

I sang this song at WUMB Summer Acoustic Music Week and my friends Erica Weiss and Lorraine Bennett accompanied me on fiddle and dulcimer. I had hoped that the recording we made that night was something I could use on *The K.O.A. Tapes* but unfortunately the sound levels weren't right. I still like the notion of this song with the mountain dulcimer, so maybe I'll record it again someday. When Ben and I were listening in the studio we decided to add a fiddle. John Kirk (another one of my music camp friends) was available. I think his part is very haunting and absolutely perfect for the tune.

19. **Intro Freebird**

20. **Freebird** (Allen Collins, Ronnie Van Zant)

Acoustic guitar - Kate Campbell

I sang at a birthday party for a college friend where the audience requested songs of mine they wanted me to play. One of the organizers of the party asked me to do "Freebird" at the end as a surprise. I had never played it on guitar before but agreed to do it if my friend would sing with me. Everybody loved it and sang along. I recorded it on my iPhone later just for the heck of it and then decided to include it on the album. "Freebird" was actually the first song I sang through my iPhone. I experimented over the next year and a half with recording other songs this way. This song describes how I feel about my life. And then of course, I use the phrase "Freebird humming" in "Some Song."

Final Thoughts for Now

I made this record the way I did because it reminded me of being 12 years old, sitting in my room, singing and playing the guitar. Hope to see you on the road somewhere across America!