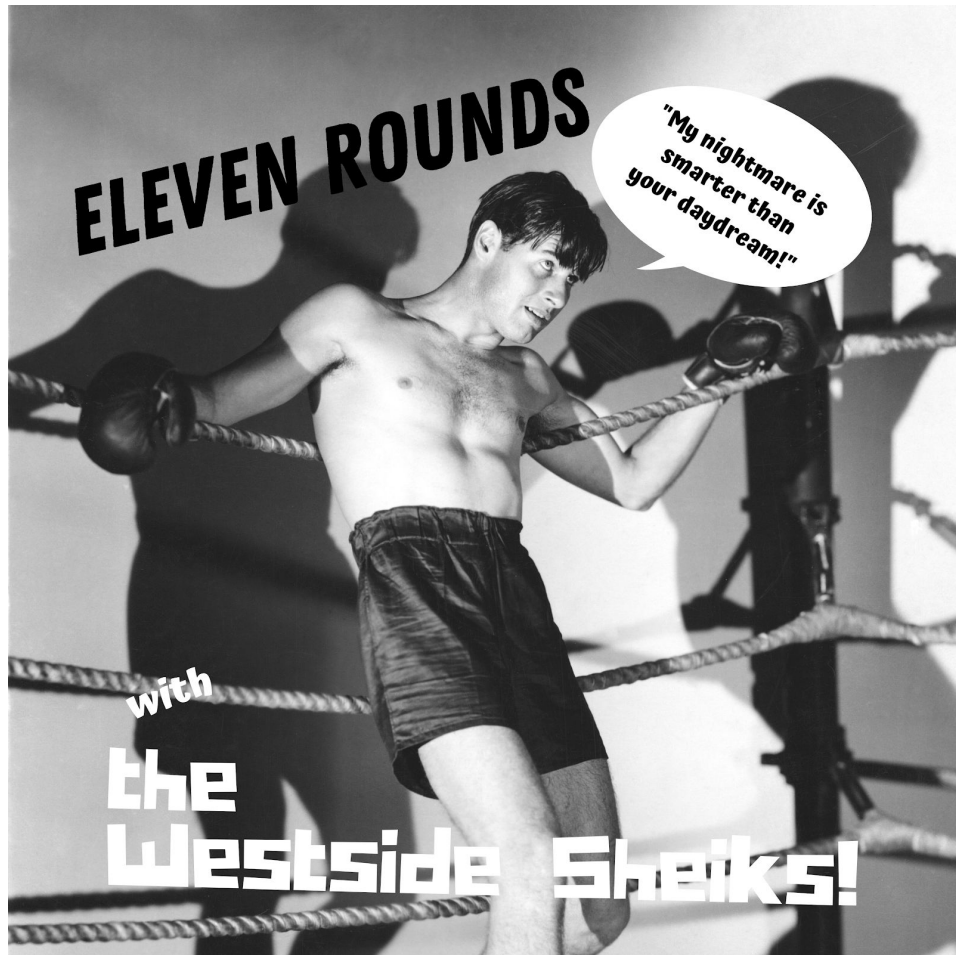


The Westside Sheiks: Eleven Rounds

Enhanced Lyric Booklet

by Christopher Watkins



Eleven Rounds is the debut studio release from The Westside Sheiks, featuring Jon Dryden and Preacher Boy. The album was released on Coast Road Records on December 16, 2020.

All songs on *Eleven Rounds* ® PreachSongsMusic/KobaltMusic/BMI, except: "The Alligator Pond Went Dry" © Victoria Spivey

All songs on *Eleven Rounds* written by Jon Dryden and Christopher "Preacher Boy" Watkins, except: "Broke and Low," written by Christopher "Preacher Boy" Watkins, "I Miss You," written by Christopher "Preacher Boy" Watkins, and "The Alligator Pond Went Dry," written by Victoria Spivey.

On the web:

westsidesheiks.com

coastroadrecords.com

The Story of the Westside Sheiks

The story of The Westside Sheiks begins with the search for a piano.

We found it in the low light of a knife-sharpening phantom of the church.

This is not an exaggeration.

It was after dark when I got to Ahab's* house in Aptos. As his beagle looked on with that peculiar hybrid of bemusement and melancholy that is the province of all great hounds, Ahab pulled himself into the passenger seat, and we set off down the coastal highway.

It was one of those journeys where you start out thinking, "surely, we're there by now?" and end up thinking, "surely, we've taken a wrong turn somewhere?"

As it happened, we strayed from our directions only once, as we tried to get our bearings in a vast and seemingly abandoned Christian compound of low buildings spread widely across sloping grass expanses that drifted toward the ocean. The roads were laid out in simple grids—it should have been simple, but one wrong turn required a set of right angles before you got back to where you went wrong.

Eventually, we found the right building. The only light came from an exposed bulb above an unremarkable door, outside of which were parked a couple of relic trucks and one new-model machine that gave us hope of finding a living soul from the present century somewhere in the bowlers of the long, low building for which the door played portal.

We entered. It was dark. The foyer was empty, as was the first open room we spilled into. It smelled like plywood and still water, and as our eyes adjusted, we came to see there were several rooms off the main one that might once have been offices or studios. They were empty.

The whole structure was built in a sort of oversized railroad apartment-style, with the addition of the side rooms adding depth, but with the core feature being the tunnel effect of rooms laid out in a connected row.

Towards the far end of this tunnel, from what we assumed must be the last room in the chain, came a gravy-yellow light that was as bright as it was sickly. It was as if we'd been spelunking in the dark and had finally come upon a corridor to the surface. We moved through the rooms toward the glow.

Crossing the threshold into the gleaming fluorescence, we were met by a broad-chested man with several long knives in his hands.

Curly headed, hairy-chested, and leather-vested as he was, he seemed a sort of overgrown Bilbo Baggins, and in other circumstances, this would have been worthy of several minutes of deep contemplation, but the urgency of those knives was a distraction.

As soon as he began to speak, however—which he did so immediately upon our entrance—our fears left us, and we were swept up into the story of his troubled-but-sweet piano-playing son who was away somewhere at school. The man indeed turned out to be a knife sharpener by trade, and the piano had been for his son, but he had no use for it now and just wanted to see it played.

He was impressed by Ahab's professional pedigree, which I shared with enthusiasm, and even more so by the brief performance Ahab gave upon the keys. We paid him on the spot and told him to expect a call the following day about arrangements to deliver the machine to the venue we had in mind.

That venue was—and is—a BBQ restaurant on the westside of Santa Cruz. We'd set our sights on this brilliant little spot as home base for our new duo and had gotten the blessing of the owner to proceed with our piano plans. He'd pay for the machine, and it would live there at the BBQ, available any time to Ahab's flying fingers, and, with approval, to any other pianists coming through town.

And thus was born The Westside Sheiks.

We played our first show just a few weeks after installing the piano in the corner of the BBQ. It was November, some four years ago. We've played hundreds and hundreds of shows since that first night, nearly all of them at the BBQ, with Ahab on that blessed upright. On very rare occasions, we would venture out to new environs, only to come running back to the BBQ, swearing that, next time, we'd know better.

This all came to a screeching halt with COVID-19.

Just a few months before shelter-in-place put a stop to live performances, we had the unexpected foresight and good fortune to record the live album that would become our commercial recording debut. It was, of course, recorded at the BBQ, and it was, of course, November.

Over the years, we've been blessed to share our humble westside stage with a great many talented musicians, some of whom became honorary Sheiks along the way—including David

"Brexit Wrecks It" Cameron and Eric "Fiddlin' E" Pelletier, who are integral players in the Sheiks story.

Ultimately, however, The Westside Sheiks are Jon "Captain Ahab" Dryden and Christopher "Preacher Boy" Watkins, and that's exactly what you'll hear on this album—the first official studio album from the Sheiks.

Though the Sheiks are only four years young, the Ahab-Preach partnership is one that stretches across decades and miles—specifically, to Brooklyn, in the early months following 9-11, when Ahab first invited a newly-arrived Preach to a softball game in Prospect Park. The rest, as they say, is history.

Fate willing, it will continue as living history. As we one day come to control the pandemic, and musicians and fans are once again able to return to their favorite stages and venues, The Westside Sheiks will surely make their way back to their favorite little BBQ and their treasured piano on the westside of Santa Cruz.

Until then, there is this album.

And so, we invite you to go eleven rounds with The Westside Sheiks.



**Note: "Ahab" is my nickname of some 20+ years for Jon Dryden.*

The Songs

In a Boxer's Town: Story

Cultural references figure prominently in most Westside Sheiks lyrics—sometimes the embeddings are purposeful and obvious, other times they're a bit more insidious and on the sly. With still other instances, the references are tangential at best, but they're there all the same. A great many of them are there to try and entertain Ahab.

"In A Boxer's Town" covers the spectrum.

The overarching narrative of the lyrics draws loosely on *The Devil's Stocking*—Nelson Algren's final novel, which was itself inspired by another boxer's story; that of Rubin "Hurricane" Carter; who was himself the basis for Bob Dylan's "Hurricane." The other main reference is, of course, Simon & Garfunkel's "The Boxer," which is directly quoted in the conclusion of the song.

The song began with piano music from Ahab. He sent me a piece of music and wanted to know if I could do anything with it—I could, and I did! Much of that first arrangement has been retained in the final version of the song, though some phrasings did morph along the way, and the bridge was written later. The bridge was actually written several times over, because Ahab didn't like any of my first attempts!

What I remember most about Ahab's original piece was the signature opening melody drop from the A to the E; it just really swung, and felt very poignant somehow. "You're" and "down" are the first two words of the song, and they fall on that A and E respectively—as do "punch" and "drunk" in the second verse.

Although it's a direct quote, "In A Boxer's Town" recontextualizes Paul Simon's "fighter by his trade" line in a significant way—in the Simon & Garfunkel song, the boxer is alive and "in a clearing." In our song, the line becomes a bittersweet assertion of identity, requested as an epigraph. So take that, Paul Simon. When it comes to pathos, put your faith in the Sheiks.

In A Boxer's Town: Lyrics

you're down, but you ain't out
the referee begins to count
he's goin' one, two, three
the crowd begins to shout
it's a big-time bout
in a boxer's town,
you can't let nobody knock you out

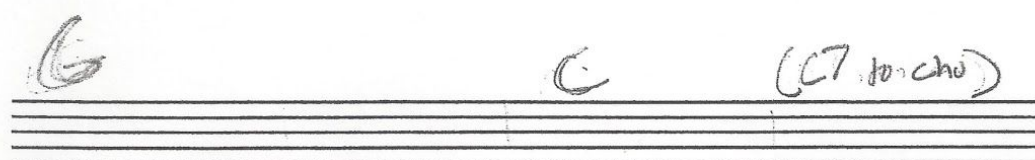
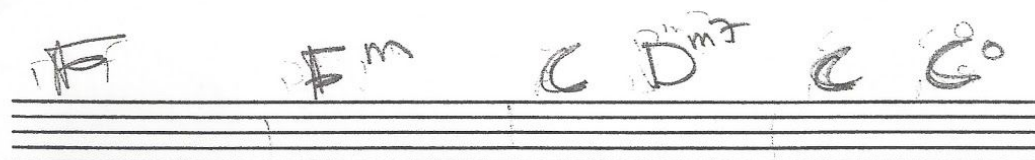
punch-drunk, and your legs is bowed
on the ropes, just tryin' to hold
yerself upright
but that's a heavy load
and then the whistle blowed
it's a boxer's town,
and boy, you done been ko'd

a manager knows
and i got a nose
for sniffin' out a boxer in love
first, it's the ringside eye
the pretty soon, i
am buryin' them with their golden gloves
god help a boxer in love

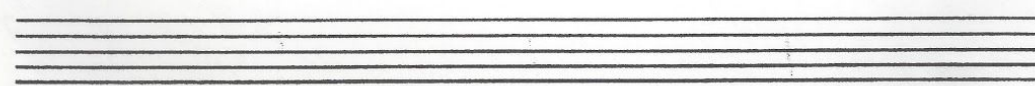
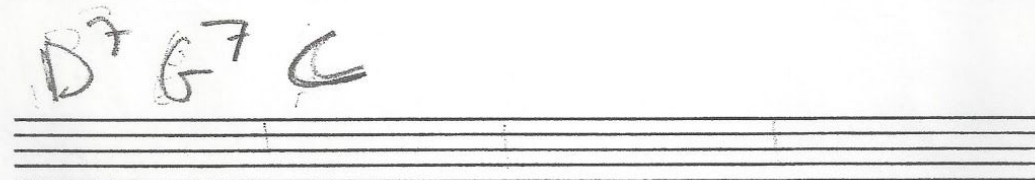
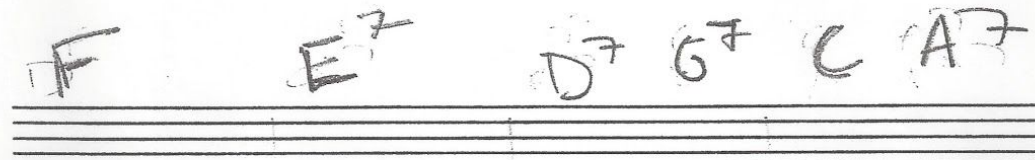
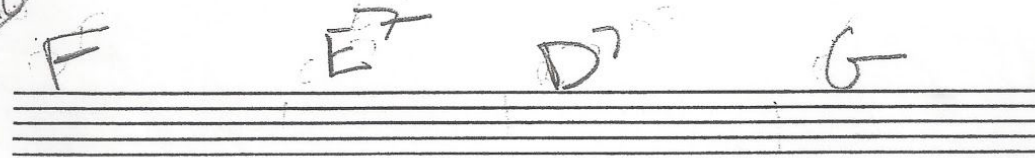
when i've had my final fight
all i ask is that you write
upon that stone
that goes above my grave
where i'm laid
"here lies a boxer,
a fighter by his trade."

In a boxer's town

(V)



(4-10)



High Hopes: Story

Unlike “In a Boxer’s Town,” which orients itself largely around one primary literary reference, “High Hopes” is positively chock full of little embeddings, with the Sinatra/Van Heusen/Cahn song of the same name being only the most obvious. As to the rest, they include:

The Dharma Bums

Paul Bunyan

Taj Mahal and Yank Rachell

Women Who Run With The Wolves

The Five Man Electrical Band

Woody Guthrie

Stevie Ray Vaughan

Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance

Hank Williams

Casablanca

Bob Dylan

Buddy Holly

Johnny Cash

Tom Waits

Kansas

Can you find them all in the lyrics?

Musically, the song has something like nearly 30 chords in it, played across 3 different keys. I remember at a show once, seeing Ahab share the chart with a piano student of his just before we started our set. For all I know, he was using it as an example of how NOT to write a chart, but I was proud all the same.

High Hopes: Lyrics

got my backpack rucksack
down to the train track
poppin' like a tic tac
choppin' like a lumberjack
baby, i'll catch the katy
don't need no mule to ride, i mean
don't need no mule to ride

mi soy hobo
corro con lobo
everywhere that i go
signs out the window
no trespassing, got me laughing
cuz this is all for you and me, i mean
this land was made for you and me

we got high hopes
pie in the sky hopes
walkin' a tightrope
like children on jump ropes
countin' out 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 high hopes

motorcycle zen, man
cigar-store indian
drunkard, and a citizen
bringin' it all back home again
maybe, baby
i'll have you for me, i mean
maybe baby, i'll have you

i got high hopes
pie in the sky hopes
walkin' a tightrope
like children on jump ropes
countin' out 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 high hopes

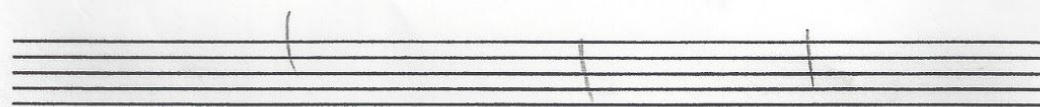
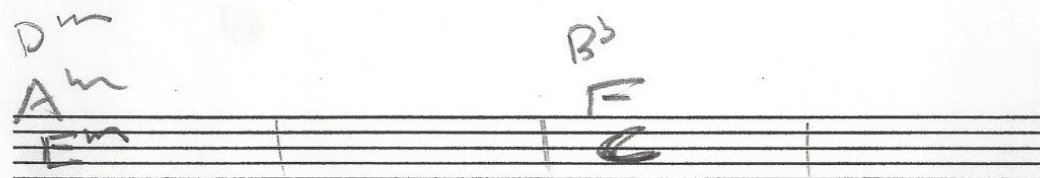
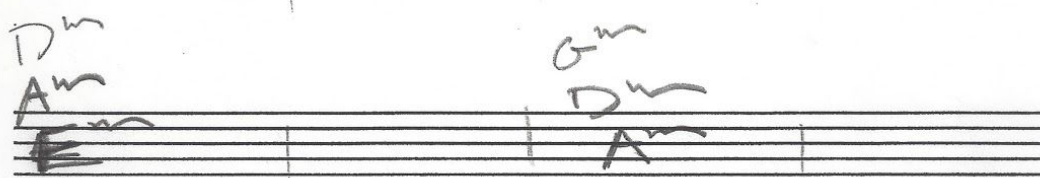
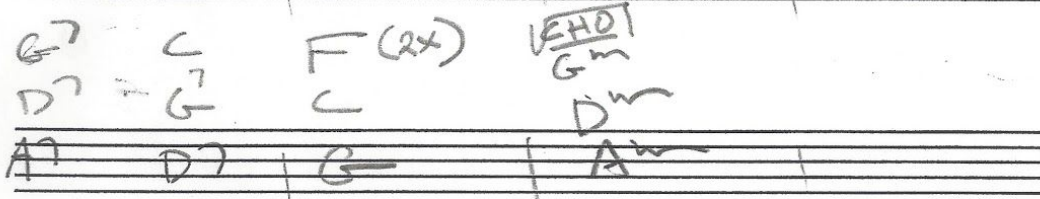
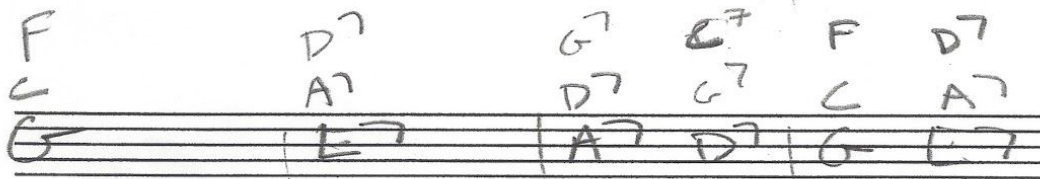
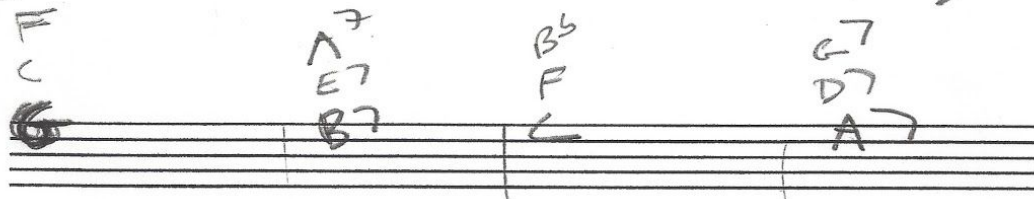
on a thumb and a prayer, man
we been everywhere, man
from cali to connecticut
prevailing on the etiquette

of candles, in the windows
and when the wind blows
we'll be dust in the wind
all we are is dust in the wind

but we got high hopes
pie in the sky hopes
walkin' a tightrope
like children on jump ropes
countin' out 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 high hopes

①

HIGH HOPE



Broke and Low: Story

"Broke and Low" was originally written with the intention of recording it for *Gutters and Pews*, the second Preacher Boy album on Blind Pig Records. I got as far as recording a demo of it, but that's where things ended.

Ultimately, *Gutters and Pews* ended up a very different album than intended—perhaps the most ironic change being the fact that the track from which the album took its name was omitted from the final sequence. Why? Because the record label thought Jim Campilongo's solo on the song sounded "too country," and because I refused to cut the solo. If you know Jim Campilongo's work, you know how ludicrous this is, but the truth is, the world of "roots" and "blues" music was very different in 1996, the year *Gutters and Pews* was released. The things I was trying to do then are quite commonplace now, but in those years, there was no "Americana" genre, no "Oh Brother, Where Art Thou," no "Martin Scorsese presents The Blues," and the Best Contemporary Blues Album Grammy had gone to Buddy Guy three out of the past five years. All of which ought to tell you something about the state of affairs back then.

Of course, things were starting to change. Alvin Youngblood Hart and Corey Harris were happening. Chris Whitley was happening. G. Love was happening. The Jon Spencer Blues Explosion was happening. The North Mississippi Allstars were founded in 1996. The White Stripes formed in 1997. But in 1994, when I first started recording for Blind Pig, things were still pretty hidebound, and amped up ragtime blues wasn't exactly in vogue!

We're, of course, in a different world now, and after sitting on the song for some 25 years, I finally found the perfect home for it with The Westside Sheiks.

Broke and Low: Lyrics

i went fishin' in my pocket, lookin' for a dollar
didn't find nothin', shoulda heard me holler
i'm broke, good lord i'm low
and i don't know how much lower i can go

so i went to my baby, beggin' money like crazy
but she wanna know what happen to the money that she gave me
i'm broke, i mean i'm low
and i don't know how much lower i can go

looked into the gutter tryin' to find some penny
i can tell you right now, i didn't find too many
i'm broke, good lord i'm low
and i don't know how much lower i can go

i ain't got no money, i don't know where it went
all i got in my pocket is a fistful of lint
i'm broke, i'm pretty low
and i don't know how much lower i can go

don't seem fair to be broke since the day that you born
with all them other suckers just rollin' in corn
i'm broke, good lord i'm low
and i don't know how much lower i can go

i ain't got no money, can't buy no beer
all i got in my pockets is a pair of bunny ears
i'm broke, good lord i'm low
and i don't know how much lower i can go

Broke And Low

(V) (cuts)

The image shows handwritten musical notation on a five-line staff. The notation includes notes, accidentals, and chord symbols. The first staff has notes D, D, G, G, D, B. The second staff has notes E, A, D, E, F#. The third staff has notes E, A, D, A, D, A, D, A. The fourth staff has notes D, A, D, A, D, A, D, A. The fifth staff has notes D, A, D, A, D, A, D, A. The sixth staff has notes D, A, D, A, D, A, D, A. The seventh staff has notes D, A, D, A, D, A, D, A. The eighth staff has notes D, A, D, A, D, A, D, A. The ninth staff has notes D, A, D, A, D, A, D, A. The tenth staff has notes D, A, D, A, D, A, D, A. The eleventh staff has notes D, A, D, A, D, A, D, A. The twelfth staff has notes D, A, D, A, D, A, D, A. The thirteenth staff has notes D, A, D, A, D, A, D, A. The fourteenth staff has notes D, A, D, A, D, A, D, A. The fifteenth staff has notes D, A, D, A, D, A, D, A. The sixteenth staff has notes D, A, D, A, D, A, D, A. The seventeenth staff has notes D, A, D, A, D, A, D, A. 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The eighty-sixth staff has notes D, A, D, A, D, A, D, A. The eighty-seventh staff has notes D, A, D, A, D, A, D, A. The eighty-eighth staff has notes D, A, D, A, D, A, D, A. The eighty-ninth staff has notes D, A, D, A, D, A, D, A. The ninetieth staff has notes D, A, D, A, D, A, D, A. The ninety-first staff has notes D, A, D, A, D, A, D, A. The ninety-second staff has notes D, A, D, A, D, A, D, A. The ninety-third staff has notes D, A, D, A, D, A, D, A. The ninety-fourth staff has notes D, A, D, A, D, A, D, A. The ninety-fifth staff has notes D, A, D, A, D, A, D, A. The ninety-sixth staff has notes D, A, D, A, D, A, D, A. The ninety-seventh staff has notes D, A, D, A, D, A, D, A. The ninety-eighth staff has notes D, A, D, A, D, A, D, A. The ninety-ninth staff has notes D, A, D, A, D, A, D, A. The hundredth staff has notes D, A, D, A, D, A, D, A.

E⁷ A⁷ D ending E F#m

E⁷ A⁷ D A⁷ D A⁷ D A⁷

D (cut)

Jake J. Thomas' Mission St. BBQ Blues: Story

Mission St. BBQ, on the westside of Santa Cruz, is where it all started for the Sheiks, and we're fortunate to have joined quite an illustrious coterie of roots and blues artists who've done their thing on that glorious little wooden stage.

Included among the local, regional, national, and even international musicians who've played the BBQ are: Kim Wilson, Mark Hummel, Paul Oscher, Jeffrey Halford, Shari Puerto, Rip Lee Pryor, Kid Andersen, Aki Kumar, Brother Dege, Taildragger, Little Jonny Lawton, Johnny Burgin, Steve Freund, John "Blues" Boyd, Paula Harris, Quiqué Gomez, Andy Santana, Alastair Greene, and so, so, so many more.

One man in Santa Cruz has chronicled it all through the lens of his ever-present camera. A kind of Weegee of the blues, Jake J. Thomas has earned both the trust of the musicians and the appreciation of the fans as he's preserved for posterity so many of the amazing talents who've entertained the MSBBQ crowds. His photographs are beautiful, poignant, and dripping with vibe.

This song is an homage of sorts to Mr. Jake J, but it's also an evocation of the milieu within which he works—the foggy streets of Santa Cruz.

Jake J. Thomas' Mission St. Blues: Lyrics

when you headin' up the wrong parade
just circle back behind it
cuz when you up on mission st.
you know you gon' to find it

oh yeah, when the fog come rollin' in
it doesn't matter where you goin'
any more than where you been

along a trail of smoke,
the culinary denizens
come tendrillating through the fish-eye
of a jake j. thomas lens

oh yeah, when the fog come rollin' in
it doesn't matter where you goin'
any more than where you been

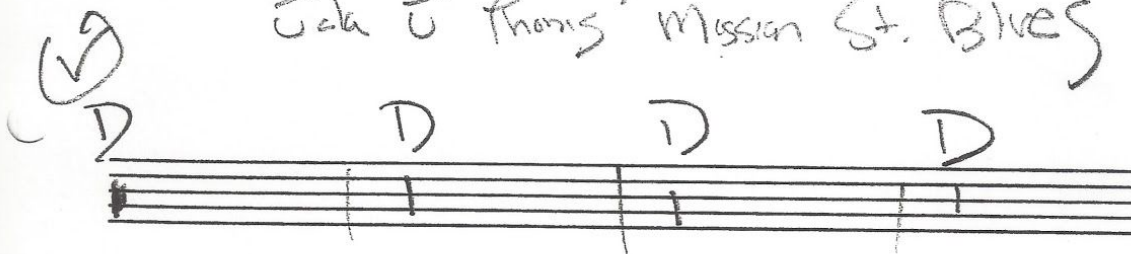
and in the jake j. thomas night
when we are everyone and no one
our corrugated countenances
train trackin' the ocean

oh yeah, when the fog come rollin' in
it doesn't matter where you goin'
any more than where you been

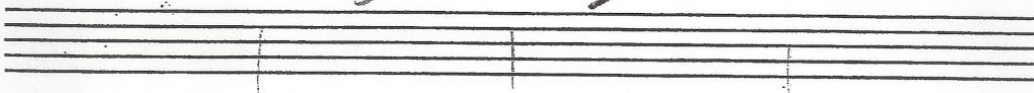
and smoke is to ocean
as bay is to mission
and the lullaby will linger
like an ellipsis in position

oh yeah, when the fog come rollin' in
it doesn't matter where you goin'
any more than where you been

John Thomas' Mission St. Blues



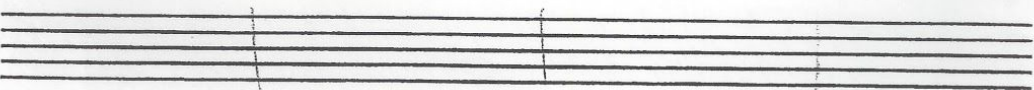
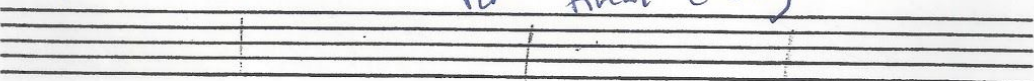
solos - same form no cuts



~~Remember~~ repeat ~~last~~ ~~chorus~~



~~Remember~~ 1 bar on D, then back to IV, for final chorus



Colonel Potter's Field: Story

What exactly is this song about?

At face value, it's ostensibly about Maxwell Q. Klinger and Colonel Potter from M*A*S*H.

But it's also sort of about Sad Sack, the comic strip character created by Sgt. George Baker during World War II.

And it's also sort of about another classic cartoon character—Caspar Milquetoast, created by H. T. Webster.

And it's also not quite about any of those characters.

It's sort of an evocation of a feeling—of being the wrong person in the wrong place at the wrong time, all the time.

After all, who requests burial in a potter's field?

Colonel Potter's Field: Lyrics

well, it's 1-2-3, and i don't want to go
and don't pick me, i'm tellin' you so
i'm emotionally destabilized, pigeon-toed and lazy-eye'd
can't be trusted in the saddle, sure to wilt in the heat of battle

i'm desperately status quo
inconsequential placebo
vanilla, milquetoast, sad sack
master of none and a man-jack
of all trades, plumbers, maids
no holidays and no parades
never burns, only fades
and when i am beyond what can be healed
just bury me in colonel potter's field

if you have to pick, pick carefully
or just cut to the quick, and pick anyone but me
cuz i ain't a hero, and i don't want a shot
so does you want to win, or does you not?

i'm just a desperately status quo
inconsequential placebo
vanilla, milquetoast, sad sack
master of none and a man-jack
of all trades, plumbers, maids
no holidays and no parades
never burns, only fades
and when i am beyond what can be healed
just bury me in colonel potter's field

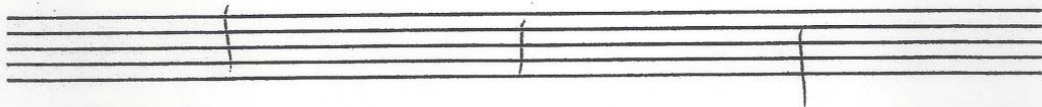
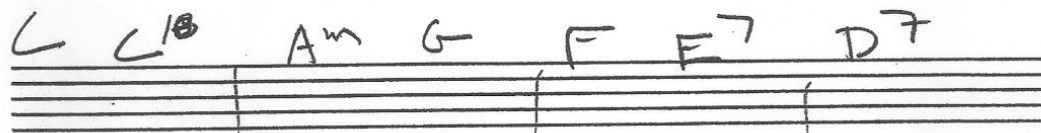
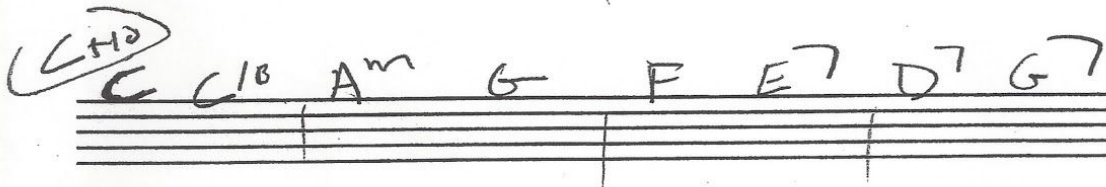
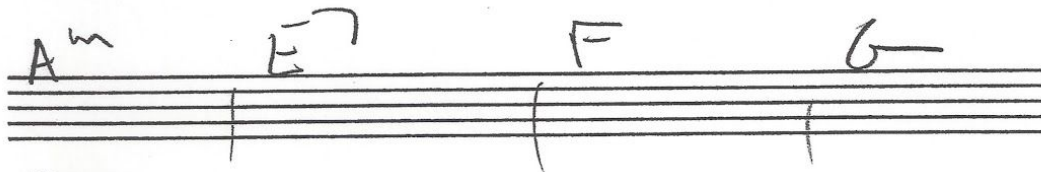
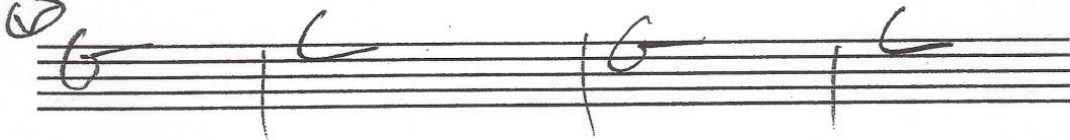
well, it's 1-2-3, and i don't want to go
and don't pick me, i'm tellin' you so
i'm emotionally bifurcated, mono-dimensionally complicated
you say bark, and i wag, sure to raise the wrong flag

i'm just a desperately status quo
inconsequential placebo
vanilla, milquetoast, sad sack
master of none and a man-jack
of all trades, plumbers, maids

no holidays and no parades
never burns, only fades
and when i am beyond what can be healed
just bury me in colonel potter's field

Col. Potter's Field

Vamp on C



Everybody Got Religion But Me: Story

At the time we decided to record the album, "Everybody Got Religion But Me" had just been written, so it was the newest of all the songs we recorded, and I'd recently acquired this beautiful old late 50s Kay archtop, and it was such a joy to play ragtime progressions on, and I'd started to work up the pattern that became the song's chorus, and I just couldn't put that guitar down, and I sort of forced myself to start working on lyrics, and almost before I knew it, things just started flowing, and I was thinking about this documentary I'd seen that included a scene about how Bob Dylan had written "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall," and I started latching on to that idea of writing more and more verses, and tying it all together with these kind of mantra-like folk phrases, lyrics, and sayings, and because it was going to be a Sheiks song, I went ahead and specifically borrowed a little Dylan to embed, and the embeddings continued to come, and the Dylan nods continued to come, and eventually, I had the whole song, and I wrote up a chart, and I got it done by about 5pm on a Wednesday, and by 6pm I was set up on the Mission St. BBQ stage with Ahab at the piano, and I gave him the chart and told him we were going to try it that night, and at some point that night we did, and Ahab dug it, and being Ahab he nailed it, and we decided to record it, and it's the only song on the album where I didn't play the National, because, natch, I played the Kay.

Everybody Got Religion But Me: Lyrics

in the cold light of the morning, i'm goin' up over the hill
if the first shot don't kill me, i know the last one will
it's a judas jubilee, it's a fallen filigree
oh, everybody got religion but me, oh my lord, oh, everybody got religion but me

oh, what do you know, my blue-eyed son?
and what do you know, my darling young one?
i know a tailor with no thread, i know a baker with no bread
i know a cobbler with no elves, i know some folks that don't hardly know themselves
but that ain't me babe, that ain't me, that ain't me babe, that ain't me
cuz in the cold light of the morning, i'm goin' up over the hill
if the first shot don't kill me, i know the last one will
it's a judas jubilee, it's a fallen filigree
oh, everybody got religion but me, oh my lord, oh, everybody got religion but me

and what do you know, my darling young one?
oh, what do you know, my blue-eyed son?
i know a banker with no cash, i know a woodsman with no axe
i know a cabinetmaker with no shelves, i know some folks that don't hardly know themselves
but that ain't me babe, that ain't me, that ain't me babe, that ain't me
cuz in the cold light of the morning, i'm goin' up over the hill
if the first shot don't kill me, i know the last one will
it's a judas jubilee, it's a fallen filigree
oh, everybody got religion but me, oh my lord, oh, everybody got religion but me

oh, what do you know, my blue-eyed son?
and what do you know, my darling young one?
i know a driver with no car, i know a barkeep with no bar
i know a drinker tryin' to make his twelves, i know some folks that don't hardly know themselves
but that ain't me babe, that ain't me, that ain't me babe, that ain't me
cuz in the cold light of the morning, i'm goin' up over the hill
if the first shot don't kill me, i know the last one will
it's a judas jubilee, it's a fallen filigree
oh, everybody got religion but me, oh my lord, oh, everybody got religion but me

and what do you know, my darling young one?
oh, what do you know, my blue-eyed son?
i know a trucker with no truck, i know a gambler with no luck
i know a witch which lost her spells, i know some folks don't hardly know themselves
but that ain't me babe, that ain't me, that ain't me babe, that ain't me

cuz in the cold light of the morning, i'm goin' up over the hill
if the first shot don't kill me, i know the last one will
it's a judas jubilee, it's a fallen filigree
oh, everybody got religion but me, oh my lord, oh, everybody got religion but me

oh, what do you know, my blue-eyed son?
and what do you know, my darling young one?
i know the writer who wrote these rhymes
i know the singer who sung these lines
i know he did it for love, not for wealth
i know some folks don't hardly know themselves
but that ain't me babe, that ain't me, that ain't me babe, that ain't me
cuz in the cold light of the morning, i'm goin' up over the hill
if the first shot don't kill me, i know the last one will
it's a judas jubilee, it's a fallen filigree
oh, everybody got religion but me, oh my lord, oh, everybody got religion but me

Chris Everybody Got Religion But me

Handwritten musical notation on a staff, showing chords and notes:

Chords: C, E7, A7, D7, G, F, F#7b, A7, D7, G, C, A7, D7, G7, C, G, C, F, C, G, C, A7, D, G, Am, G, Am, G.

Notes: A circled 'D' above a G note.

I Miss You: Story

The first time I demo'd this song was when the missus and I were living in Brooklyn. I had no particular album in mind at the time, it was just something I was working on. I was fairly fond of the track, and shared it around reasonably widely, and lo and behold, it found its way onto a soundtrack.

The film was an ironic gem of a weird and bittersweetly romantic indie comedy called *Love In The Age of Fishsticks*, from writer-director Yun Shin. While the film never found mainstream distribution, it did make a decent splash at Sundance, and "I Miss You" plays over the opening credits—a delightfully bizarre and entertaining animated sequence by Louie Gonzales.

I think I only ever played it live once in New York, at The Living Room, if memory serves. It just didn't seem to pop solo, and I never got around to working it out with a band. Fortunately, when you play with Ahab, you don't need to work anything out. You just play it.

And play it, we did—several times. But we never actually played it quite like we did in the studio. The chunk chord vibe in the intro was an in-the-moment improv from Ahab, and it was genius, and we went with it, and that's what's on the final release.

I should note that the whole recording process for the whole album was just two musicians (Ahab and Preach), two instruments (piano and guitar), and four microphones. There are no overdubs, no splices, no punch-ins, no nothing. We just recorded every song 4 or so times, and when it came time to mix, we just picked the performance we liked best.

The piano at Mission St. BBQ occupies a special place in Sheiks history, but at the end of the day, there is no piano better suited to Ahab than the piano he has in his house, so that's where we recorded—because we just had to have THAT piano on the record. For the record, it's a Mason & Hamlin Model BB from 1913!

As for me, I played Grandpa's National on every song (except for "Everybody Got Religion But Me"), and I used my trusty AKG C1000 on it, as I've been doing for decades.

To mix the album, I listened to a lot of Leon Redbone, Mose Allison, and Dr. John, and *The Randy Newman Songbook Vol. 1* was a great reference recording for piano sounds.

I Miss You: Lyrics

i take the kicks deep in my gut, and slowly double over
i count my breaths and live with less
it's no wonder i ain't sober

there is only so many times a man can take a beating
and still get up to try for what
he knows won't stop the bleeding

oh, give us today our daily bread
and pour no pain upon our heads
i cross my heart and fear to die
i may have stoop'd but i don't lie
and i miss you

it's the little victories that reignite your engines
but pleasant dreams are few and far between
and all that's left is tension

just to win once, oh god, it's magic, there's nothing like that feelin'
but what ascends must sink again
and i am no exception

oh, give us today our daily bread
and pour no pain upon our heads
i cross my heart and fear to die
i may have stoop'd but i don't lie
and i miss you

i do my best to patch the leaks and count upon the rains
from dusk to dawn i soldier on
with what little pride i've retained

oh, give us today our daily bread
and pour no pain upon our heads
i cross my heart and fear to die
i may have stoop'd but i don't lie
and i miss you

V1: 2

I MISS YOU

F G#m F G#m

F G#m Bb C

(CHIO)

F Gmin7 F/A Bb

F C7 Dm C Bb

F C F C

V5 (modulation)

repeat above for V 3:4 + CHIO

G Am G Am

G Am C D

(CHIO)

G Ammin7 G/B C

G D7 Em D C

G D G D

outro

G D G C Cm

G →

Fair Weather Friends: Story

I got the idea for the song while driving and listening to The Subdudes on the radio. I had the chorus done before the 'Dudes finished, but it was months before I got around to the verses. I just sang the chorus into my little recorder and then forgot all about it.

I stumbled on the recording again by happenstance some months later when I was trying to find some other song remnant, and ended up deciding to work on it. Where the characters in the song come from, I'm not entirely sure, but there are bits and pieces of real folks strewn throughout their stories.

The narrator is essentially on the receiving end of a series of abandonments by family and friends—the formerly boozy, now mormon-marrying uncle; the sailor in the Keys; the aunt in Salinas. It all comes to a head in the bridge, when the narrator wonders why everyone keeps “disencumbering” from him—a real word, mind you; as is “tee-toh-tailor,” though, of course, it ought to be written with its proper spelling: teetotaler.

Phonetically speaking, it should be noted that rhyming “teetotaler” with “sailor” was simply too good of an opportunity to pass up.

There is one other item potentially necessary to clear up, depending on your age, which is this—a “rotary” is a telephone.

Fair Weather Friends: Lyrics

it's been a minute, since we met
but i ain't heard that you passed yet
so i'm wonderin' where you been for so long
if you's a fair weather friend,
well i see the sun comin' out again
and i'm wonderin' where you been for so long

i had a uncle from wichita falls
gave me my first old crow and my last pall malls
he was always a poor man
til he married a mormon
now he don't have no time for his nephew at all

once had a friend down in the keys
we was joined at the hip and we was thick as thieves
but he went in for the sea
and out went me
and I ain't seen my friend since nineteen-ninety-three

it's been a minute, since we met
but i ain't heard that you passed yet
so i'm wonderin' where you been for so long
if you's a fair weather friend,
well i see the sun comin' out again
and i'm wonderin' where you been for so long

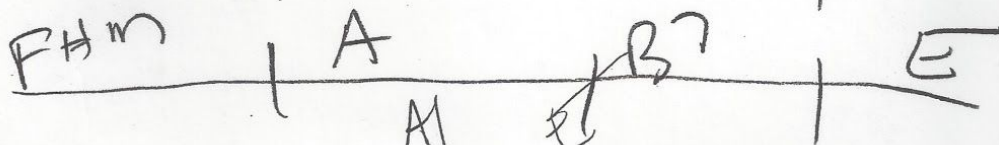
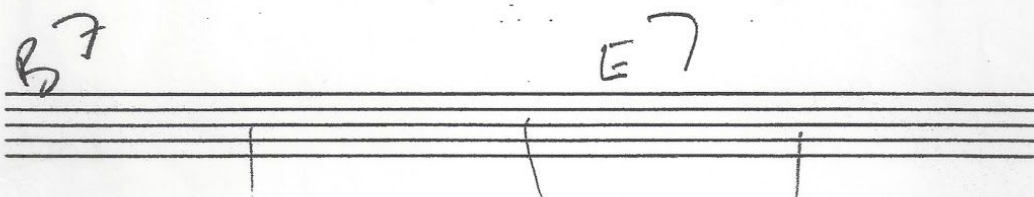
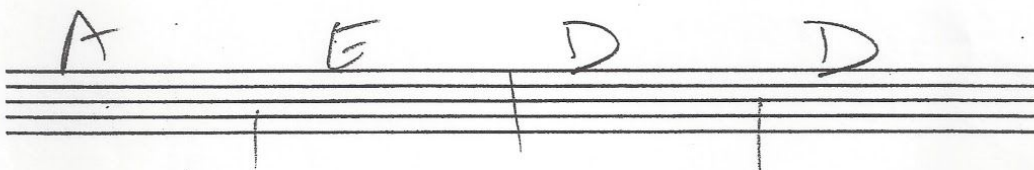
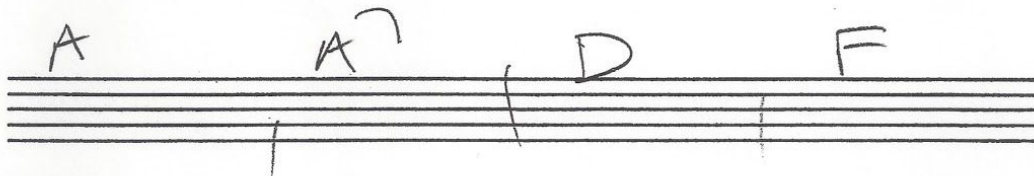
i had an aunt down in the salinas valley
she was christened margarita but she went by sally
last we talked was on the rotary
she hasn't got ahold of me
for thirty-seven years, give or take, by my tally

What did you do with my drunken sailor?
why is my uncle a tee-toh-tailor?
where is my aunt, and what's her number?
why must everybody disencumber
from me? poor me!

it's been a minute, since we met
but i ain't heard that you passed yet

so i'm wonderin' where you been for so long
if you's a fair weather friend,
well i see the sun comin' out again
and i'm wonderin' where you been for so long

#410 Fm-v Western Friedly



The Alligator Pond Went Dry: Story

My ban on songs about pets comes dangerously close to being violated here, depending on how you would describe a “social” with an alligator in attendance.

Truth is, I dispense a lot of hard-line musical maxims, and Ahab calls me on it every time I break my own rules.

This was the first Sheiks song we ever played together, and we’ve started every show with it ever since.

Victoria Spivey was an incredible artist, businessperson, and creative talent. She wrote her own songs, formed her own publishing and record companies, and enjoyed a career that lasted more than four decades. She was originally signed to Okeh records, and her debut in 1926 was the song “Black Snake Blues.” 36 years later, she was backed on recordings by a young Bob Dylan. In between, she toured the world, starred in movies, was backed by a who’s who of blues and jazz artists, and got married four times.

In short, Victoria Spivey was a total badass.

The Alligator Pond Went Dry*: Lyrics

folks, I'm tellin' ya somethin' that I seen with my own eyes
as I passed the pond one day
that ol' alligator was teachin' his babies to do the georgia grind
and i heard one of them say

lord, this is a social
and the alligator pond gone dry
oh lord, it was a social
but the alligator pond gone dry

now, ol' mister alligator, got way back
well, he said, look out children, i'm gon' throw it off my back
it was a social
and the alligator pond went dry

folks, I'm tellin' ya somethin' that I seen with my own eyes
as I passed the pond one day
that ol' alligator was teachin' his babies to do the georgia grind
and i heard one of them say

lord, it was a social
but the alligator pond gon' dry
oh lord, it was a social
but the alligator went dry, oh my

oh, now, ol' mister alligator got real hot
he said, we gonna have this function whether there's water or not
it was a social
and the alligator pond went dry

if you don't believe it, go ask alligator jack
there wadn't no drop of water in the pond when he got back
lord, it was a social
but the alligator pond went dry

★

**original music and lyrics by Victoria Spivey. this arr. by The Westside Sheiks*

The Alligehre (2nd) West Drey

Handwritten musical notation on a spiral-bound staff, organized into four systems. Each system contains two staves. The notation includes various chords and notes, with some markings circled or boxed.

System 1:

- Staff 1: (1) A, A, E, A
- Staff 2: A, A, E, A, A7

System 2:

- Staff 1: (2) D7, D7, A, A
- Staff 2: D7, C#7, C#7

System 3:

- Staff 1: (3) F#7, F#7, D7, B7
- Staff 2: A, E, A, D7, A, E

System 4:

- Staff 1: (4) [Empty]
- Staff 2: [Empty]

My Nightmare is Smarter Than Your Daydream: Story

Apparently, John Fogerty started with titles—in fact, he purportedly continues to maintain a “title book,” and many of his most legendary songs were titles first and lyrics later.

With a title like “My Nightmare is Smarter Than Your Daydream,” I’d love to say I followed a similar process. But the truth is rather more embarrassing. The original title of this song was actually “Livin’ on a Bad Dream.” I know, terrible. It was meant to be a play on the Bon Jovi song “Livin’ on a Prayer.” I know, terrible.

The original chorus followed suit:

*i scream, you scream, we all scream for ice cream
you livin’ on a prayer, i’m livin’ on a bad dream*

I know. Terrible.

That said, in its current form, the chorus actually contains one of my favorite lines I’ve ever written:

i scream, you scream, i’m on the away team

I just get such a kick out of that. Something about the phrase “I’m on the away team” just says SO much about where the narrator is at, and how he’s feeling.

But really, why are we even talking about lyrics? The secret of the song’s success is the piano bassline. Just so groovy. That, and the modulation. Oh, the lift.

My Nightmare is Smarter Than Your Daydream: Lyrics

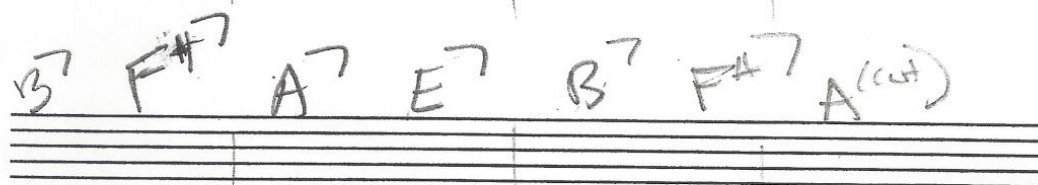
ring around the collar, pocket lack a dollar
ashes ashes, man, you sleepin' on the ground
but hey diddle diddle, i gots me a fiddle
with that mississippi sheiks sound
now, i scream, you scream, i'm on the away team
my nightmare is smarter than your daydream

the wheels on the bus go around and around
so rise and shine and make a mournful sound
good mornin', good mornin', good mornin' how are you?
i hope you don't suffer through the same blues i do
now, i scream, you scream, i'm on the away team
my nightmare is smarter than your daydream

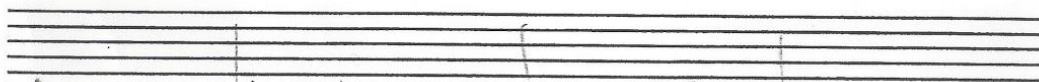
twinkle twinkle, now, little star
i wonder where in the hell this ol' world you are
cuz the man don't 'low no fiddle playin' here
and i still lacks a dollar for to buy me a beer
now, i scream, you scream, i'm on the away team
my nightmare is smarter than your daydream

ring around the collar, pocket lack a dollar
ashes ashes, man, you sleepin' on the ground
but hey diddle diddle, i gots me a fiddle
with that mississippi sheiks sound
now, i scream, you scream, i'm on the away team
my nightmare is smarter than your daydream

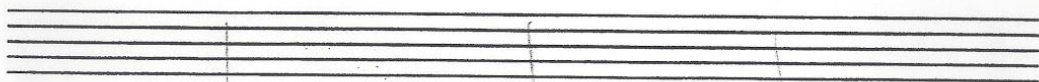
V 1 & 2 my night mare is smaller than your day dream



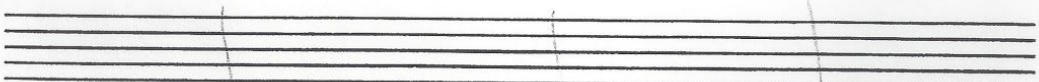
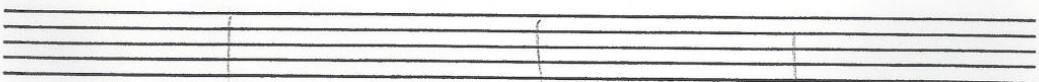
V3 modulate to F#



Solo - back to E for verse form



Final verse, same as the first



The Westside Sheiks: Story

Ah, the theme song!

This was the very first song we ever wrote for the Sheiks, and we've closed every single show with it since.

The music is all Ahab, as can clearly be seen from the charts. It's the only one that LOOKS like a professional chart.

My job was the lyrics.

Spite is the great motivator, so, of course, I populated the song with clowns and derisive Beatles references.

It's really a bit of a paean to Santa Cruz itself, and especially the westside. The Sheiks really were born on this side of town.

Live, the intro is a great opportunity to improvise up a closing monologue while Ahab strolls the ivories. I've done it hundreds of times across hundreds of shows, and every result is different, and while some of the improvs go a little too far off the rails, others end up resulting in a kind of in-the-moment beatnik magic.

I remember one night in particular when I started off blathering about "gesticular mysteries" and "gazing upon the sacred landscape of your naugahyde coverlet" before moving on to "Olympic-level gods who have come down from the hospitality mountains." After that, I believe I ended up digressing into something about unsupervised machine learning and a "pony named Princess whose favorite pattern was plaid." This then led to a characterization of Sandusky, Ohio, as a place where "ponies grow tall and young lads grow up bowlegged" (until they get to 7th grade, apparently, at which point they go knock-kneed). After that, it was back to hospitality and a riff on post-BBQ flossing, before concluding with an actual introduction to the song.

There's a recording of this somewhere, and if memory serves, this all went on for nearly 5 minutes straight.

Musically, the song has one of my favorite bridges of all time. Something about that D7 to F7 to B7 just does me in every time. The whole thing is just supremely groovy. It's definitely got the blues, but with a turnaround from C to Bb—in the key of A—well, it's got a little somethin' else as well. A lil' bit of that special Ahab thing. Which is a very big part of that special Sheiks thing.

The Westside Sheiks: Lyrics

west of town, sad-eyed clowns
with tears on white cheeks
walk the streets, done up in grease
the westside sheiks

along the shore, troubadours
like old antiques
they walk the creeks, for eight-day weeks
the westside sheiks

and we sittin' on top of the world with cross-legs
and we can't afford the blues, so boys, let's beg
and borrow,
from the widows
on their peaks
the westside sheiks

swingin' rhymes, in double-times
they doublespeak
they swear blue streaks, and wet their beaks
the westside sheiks

and we sittin' on top of the world with cross-legs
and we can't afford the blues, so boys, let's beg
and borrow,
from the widows
on their peaks
the westside sheiks

west of town, there's a sound
on mission street
it's pompadour sleek, and dust bowl bleak
it's the westside sheiks

~~WEST SIDE SHEPHERD~~

- Purcell, arr. Dryden

WEST SIDE SHEPHERD

Handwritten musical score for "West Side Shepherd" by Jon Dryden. The score is written on ten staves. The first staff contains the melody in 3/4 time, G major. The subsequent staves contain chords for accompaniment. The chords are: A6, A7, D7, E7, C7, Bb, A, D7, F7, B7, Dmin6, E7, A, A7, D7, E7, C7, Bb, A. The score ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

