



JON SHAIN TIMES RIGHT NOW

Produced by Jon Shain with Jackson Hall and Scottsburg Jonze

Mixed by Chris Stamey

Flyin' Records (FR007)

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| 1. James Alley Blues (3:32) | 8. Ooncha Ooncha Music (3:23) |
| 2. Mr. Snakeoil! (4:29) | 9. Midnight Snack (3:20) |
| 3. Spinning Compass (3:44) | 10. Louise Louise (5:54) |
| 4. Something New (3:43) | 11. Song for Dara (1:39) |
| 5. Clementine (5:15) | 12. Little Flower (3:20) |
| 6. Driving Them Crazy (2:51) | 13. Yadkin River Blues (4:26) |
| 7. Careless Love (3:05) | |

The music of Durham, NC's Jon Shain has always been shaped by a variety of influences—from the Piedmont Blues he learned at Big Boy Henry's side, to the bluegrass and roots-rock of his years on the college band circuit. True to form, Shain's new *Times Right Now* is the product of relationships both musical and geographical.

The idea for the album crystallized in the fall of 2007 when Jon sat in with the Washington, DC-based roots band The Grandsons at a resort in the Catskills, the site of that year's Northeast Regional Folk Alliance conference. The experience got him thinking about adding The Grandsons' horns and mambo beat to his usual more folksy acoustic sound.

Step two in the process came a few weeks later when Jon took his wife on a surprise weekend vacation to New Orleans. "I was struck by how the music permeated the whole culture there," recalls Jon. "I thought how much fun it would be to do an album that evoked some of the sounds of the town." Shain started on a set of lyrics that reflected the spirit of the city, both in its exuberance and its post-Katrina aftermath.

But New Orleans isn't the only quintessential American music city to make its presence felt on *Times Right Now*. Having won the Triangle Blues Society's annual blues competition in 2008, Shain and bass player FJ Ventre traveled to Memphis to compete in the 2009 International Blues Challenge, where they made it to the finals, performing a set at the legendary Orpheum Theatre. In Memphis, they soaked in plenty of rib sauce as well as the Beale Street scene. "I've focused on my songwriter-ish aspects the last few years, but it was nice to get the attention for my blues chops," Jon says. "I thought it would be fitting if this album leaned more towards blues than the last one we did."

Loose blueprint in place, Jon and co-producers Jackson Hall and Scottsburg Jonze recorded sessions for *Times Right Now* with the members of Jon Shain Trio: bassist FJ Ventre, harmonica wizard Bill Newton, and dobro player John Currie in Chapel Hill, NC. Sessions with The Grandsons were recorded in Arlington, VA. "My usual Triangle guys have such great ears and sensibilities that they were able to fit in with great ease and sound pretty seamless in the mix with the guys from DC," Jon says. Overall, the record is a triumph in blending influences—the musicians intermingle expertly, and the flavors of Shain's visits to New Orleans, Memphis and the Catskills all figure into the equation.

Perhaps the song that best captures the spirit of *Times Right Now* and Jon's approach to music is "Ooncha Ooncha Music," which finds the guys hailing the musical sounds of the good old days, citing ragtime and seminal rock 'n' roll, the Mississippi Sheiks and Jelly Roll Morton, and, of course, Memphis and New Orleans. But even as Jon looks back, he also keeps a close eye on today; this isn't antique music. "I chose Chris Stamey to mix the album instead of going with a 'trad' guy," Jon explains. "Chris brings a pop vibe and a more radio-friendly approach to his projects. I wanted this album to stay modern sounding despite all its vintage acoustic instruments and throwback influences. Hopefully, we achieved the balance." Mission accomplished. The results are awash in the insistent "20th-century groove" celebrated in "Ooncha Ooncha Music." But they also work splendidly, thank you very much, for the times right now.

Also available from Flyin' Records: WAKE, WAKE (FR001), Jon Shain, *Brand New Lifetime* (FR002), Jon Shain, *Fools and Fine Ladies* (FR003), Jon Shain, *No Tag, No Tail Light* (FR004), Jon Shain *Home Before Long* (FR005) and Jon Shain, *Army Jacket Winter* (FR006)



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