

# JJ CALE \* STAY AROUND



## "STAY AROUND" BY DAN FORTE

Probably the greatest respect a musician can be paid is to be termed "a stylist." Be it Ray Charles or Bob Dylan, Billie Holiday or Merle Haggard, their sound is indelibly stamped on everything they ever touched. The same is inarguably the case with the late John "JJ" Cale.

Though he cut his teeth during the '50s, playing guitar in bars in Oklahoma alongside fellow natives David Gates of Bread and Leon Russell, and is credited as one of the key figures in creating the laid-back "Tulsa sound," it was via other artists recording and performing his songs that Cale became best known. Eric Clapton recorded "After Midnight," "Cocaine," and several other Cale originals, his admiration culminating with the pair's "Road To Escondido" collaboration in 2006, which earned Cale his first Grammy, for Best Contemporary Blues Album, and his first RIAA Certified Gold Award. Among the many others who covered Cale's songs are Jerry Garcia, Captain Beefheart, Spiritualized, Beck, Lynyrd Skynyrd John Mayer, Bryan Ferry, Santana, Chet Atkins, Johnny Cash, Lucinda Williams, The Band, Widespread Panic, Freddie King, Phish, Waylon Jennings, Maria Muldaur, Bobby "Blue" Bland, Hiss The Golden Messenger, Dan Auerbach, and Lee Fields, to name just a few.

For "Stay Around", Cale's wife, Christine Lakeland Cale, acted as the compilation producer, poring over songs, both studio and home recordings, that the public

had never heard. "I wanted to find stuff that was completely unheard," she says.

The fact that the songs were previously unreleased is not unusual considering Cale's modus operandi. In a 1994 interview he explained, "All of the albums I make generally have a song, what I call an outtake, that didn't make it to [a previous] album. So I keep the tapes and maybe will modify them a little bit. Sometimes I'll write a song and I'll make a demo of it, and maybe five or six or seven years later I'll pull the demo back out and say, 'Yeah, that's a good song.' I'll re-record it or sometimes I'll just take that original demo and mess with that original track. But generally on an album I put out, I'll have two or three older songs on there."

Cale's manager Mike Kappus concurs: "'Roll On,' the title track of Cale's last studio album, was 34 years old. He would burn me CDs of demos, and one time I said, 'You've got two good albums on here.' Some of the tracks had detailed information, some of them had nothing. Some songs might be a full band of his buddies, others were him playing everything. These were songs he really did intend to do something with because they were carried to his typical level of production for release."

That approach to recording was as distinctively Cale as his economical guitar style or whispery vocals. "I like a little funkier sound," JJ said. "I really admire the people who get really good sound. That takes expensive studios, expensive musicians. I delved into that a couple of

times, but it's more fun when I create something to do it myself; it always has a unique sound. If I start doing it standard-wise, it becomes more polished and it doesn't sound quite as unique; it sounds like everybody else."

While the myth was that JJ Cale sat on his porch and casually turned on a recorder, he actually put more time and work into his music than anyone might realize and that is reflected here in the quality of every song. As he used to say, "Well, my name's on there; I've gotta like it."



1 Lights Down Low 2 Chasing You 3 Winter Snow 4 Stay Around  
 5 Tell You 'Bout Her 6 Oh My My 7 My Baby Blues 8 Girl Of Mine 9 Go DOWNTOWN  
 10 If We Try 11 Tell Daddy 12 Wish You Were Here 13 Long About Sundown  
 14 Maria 15 Don't Call Me Joe  
 x  
 ALBUM "STAY AROUND" OUT APRIL 26<sup>th</sup>  
 15 track Double LP Gatefold Edition (+CD) - Digipack CD - Digital

### NOTES BY CHRISTINE LAKELAND

#### 1. LIGHTS DOWN LOW

A perfect example of John at his self-recording best Both lyrically and musically . . . Completely built the track himself, playing everything Lyrically one of the best explanations from Cale.

#### 2. CHASING YOU

Recorded in the living room with the band set up while rehearsing for the '09 tour Who knew the song would be prophetic . . . In chasing a dream or chasing the elusive magic when making music . . . Chasing something from the past . . . That tour turned out to be the last. 2009 . . . not a fave year it turns out. My car accident and John's heart attack the low points for sure.

#### 3. WINTER SNOW

This is the shorter take and version of this song. It's obvious John liked the song as he spent so much time overdubbing and making this into a cut he included often in his short lists of his favorite demos. Perhaps the longer version will find its way to a bonus track in the future.

#### 4. STAY AROUND

It. Moves. Me. Takes me right to another place when I hear it. Another magical mood captured in his home studio in Valley Center.

#### 5. TELL YOU 'BOUT HER

Another Valley Center home studio recording. Love the horns John played with the keyboard patch.

#### 6. OH MY MY

Oh My My is a solo recording made at his home studio in Valley Center.

#### 7. MY BABY BLUES

Including the song "My Baby Blues" is my bit of self-indulgence. The song brings everything full circle for me. It was the first song John and I cut as a 4-piece combo in Bradley's Barn studio when we met in 1977. He cut his version in 1980 at Capitol Studio in

Nashville. I found he had overdubbed to his unused outtake at his Valley Center home studio and placed it with some other songs he liked. It's finally released here.

#### 8. GIRL OF MINE

Girl of Mine is also part of the home recordings made in Valley Center.

#### 9. GO DOWNTOWN

This track is also recorded at his home studio in Valley Center.

#### 10. IF WE TRY

John liked to record all over the house. He'd turn the fridge off when he was sitting at the kitchen table with a couple short stand mics in front of him. You can hear the squeaking chair as he rocked back and forth in this take. I'm happy there were several solo guitar pieces to consider for this collection. It feels as if Cale is sitting right beside you singing and playing. Yes, he forgot to turn the refrigerator back on more than once. A next-day surprise . . . Oh, and we fixed the squeaking chair.

#### 11. TELL DADDY

Recorded at Valley Center home with longtime drummer Jim Karstein. I can always tell the recording sound of our real Steinway played live in the room. Got that piano in Nashville in 1978.

#### 12. WISH YOU WERE HERE

Had to include one with banjo from John! Fits the lyric so well.

#### 13. LONG ABOUT SUNDOWN

Once again John writes exactly what it's like to be apart. Another Valley Center home recording.

#### 14. MARIA

His Ramirez gut string guitar is the perfect tone for this. (I grin to myself as this reminds me of the 45 "Juarez Blues" Denny Cordell had us put out on Shelter Records as the duo Juan and Maria. At least I like to think he meant to use the name).

#### 15. DON'T CALL ME JOE

Valley Center home recording.





## TULSA

JJ Cale was raised in Oklahoma. Although he was born in *Oklahoma City* (December 5, 1938), Cale grew up in *Tulsa* where he began his career as a musician, cutting his teeth with local bands in a vibrant local scene mixing jazz, western swing, rhythm & blues and blues..

## NASHVILLE

In 1959, Cale travelled to *Nashville* where he began performing as a guitarist for famous country singers at the *Grand Ole Opry*. He struggled to gain recognition for his own songs and didn't manage to launch his songwriting career.

## LOS ANGELES

Returning to *Tulsa*, Cale met *Leon Russell* and followed him to *Los Angeles*. They spent most of the '60s playing club shows and in various recording studios. During these years, Cale learned his first recording tricks with *Snuff Garrett*.

## NASHVILLE

Following the success of *Eric Clapton's* 1970 cover of *After Midnight*, Cale moved back to *Nashville*, teaming with *Audie Ashworth* to record his first records under his own name. Together, they built *Crazy Mama's Studio*, where Cale did much of his recording until 1980.

## ESCONDIDO

In the early '80s, JJ Cale moved to Southern California, living at first in a trailer. Eventually moving into a house in *Valley Center*, Cale continued to record at home, where he would typically pull his recording gear out into his living room to record. He recorded most his songs at home until his passing on July 26, 2013.

