



## **OWEN TEMPLE MOUNTAIN HOME**

Release date April 26, 2011

Produced by Gabriel Rhodes

Recorded at Graceyland and Sunbird Studios, Austin, Texas

**OWEN TEMPLE** – Vocals, Acoustic Guitar

**CHARLIE SEXTON** – Baritone Guitar, Bass

**RICK RICHARDS** – Drums, Percussion

**GABRIEL RHODES** – Acoustic Guitar, Tenor Guitar, Banjo, Dobro, Piano

**BRIAN STANDEFER** – Cello

**BUKKA ALLEN** – Piano, Organ, Accordion

**TOMMY SPURLOCK** – Pedal Steel Guitar

**GORDY QUIST** – Acoustic Guitar, Harmony Vocals

**JAMIE WILSON** – Harmony Vocals

**ADAM CARROLL** – Harmonica

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*Mountain Home*, the sixth studio record from Austin, Texas-based songwriter Owen Temple, is a collection of 10 songs about eccentric characters living extraordinary lives in small towns and on the fringes of big cities. The characters are all on edge- on the verge of freedom, catastrophe, and hope- and the songs tell of strange happenings in rural landscapes both past and present.

Recorded with producer Gabriel Rhodes, the album has the feel of a live performance with stellar contributions from Charlie Sexton (Arc Angels, Bob Dylan) on baritone guitar and bass, Bukka Allen (The Bodeans, Terry Allen) on keyboards, Tommy Spurlock (Delbert McClinton, Rodney Crowell) on pedal steel, and drummer Rick Richards (Ray Wylie Hubbard, Hayes Carll).

The project includes songs written by Temple and co-writes with Adam Carroll, Scott Nolan, and Gordy Quist (of The Band of Heathens). Temple's love of folk, blues, and bluegrass shines through in the arrangements and the playing of his compadres.

"I love traditional music- old songs that cross time and space to tell you what the people cared about," Temple says. "With my songs I'm trying to get down some of the stories of this place."

### **Praise for Owen Temple and previous projects**

"Playing off North America's regions, travel album *Dollars and Dimes* delivers the concept richly"

-Dave Hoekstra, *Chicago Sun-Times*

"Texas born and bred singer/songwriter Owen Temple is a country artist, but like Townes Van Zandt, another Texas songwriter he's often been compared to, Temple is as much folk as country, with a finely honed lyrical sense, a wry sense of humor, and a knack for blending melancholy melodies with ingenious wordplay that can conceal as much as it reveals... his ability to deliver telling insights without resorting to clichés or obvious images marks him as an original voice"

-J. Poet, *All Music Guide*

"Thanks to simply yet vividly developed real-world characters, *Dollars and Dimes* is comforting in its gloom and nostalgia, and the moody, understated accompaniment from producer Gabriel Rhodes and backing players fits the mood like an old pair of Levi's."

-Jesse Hughey, *Dallas Observer*

- 2007 Kerrville Folk Festival New Folk Finalist
- 2007 B.W. Stevenson Songwriting Competition Winner – Dallas, Texas
- 3 previous projects produced by Grammy winner Lloyd Maines (The Flatlanders, Terry Allen)
- 1 previous project produced by multi-instrumentalist Phil Madeira (bandmate of Emmylou Harris, Buddy Miller)

## MOUNTAIN HOME

Mountain Home, the sixth studio record from Austin, Texas-based songwriter Owen Temple, is a collection of songs and stories about eccentric characters set in small towns and on the fringes of big cities. Mountain Home may be his strongest collection yet.

The characters are all on edge- on the verge of freedom, catastrophe, and hope- and the songs tell of strange happenings in rural landscapes both past and present.

Recorded with producer Gabe Rhodes, the album has the feel of a live performance with stellar contributions from Charlie Sexton on bass and baritone guitar, Bukka Allen on keyboards, Tommy Spurlock on pedal steel and drummer Rick Richards.

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Temple's last album, Dollars and Dimes, went to #5 on the Freeform American Roots chart and #1 on the Euro Americana chart and earned raves for its uncompromising vision of the American dream's darker side. On Mountain Home, Temple narrows his focus, honing in on the small towns and colorful characters of his home state. The basic tracks were cut live with minimal overdubs. Temple's emotive singing brings the songs to vibrant life.

Mountain Home explores the lives of small time hustlers, politicians, hard scrabble farmers, wildcatters, and ne'er do wells that contributed to the colorful history of Southwest Texas. Tracks include the bluesy "Medicine Man," the story of the mad conquistador Cabeza de Vaca; "Small Town," a talking blues that captures the claustrophobia one feels in a community where everyone knows your business; "Desdemona," a moody eulogy to an oil rush boomtown; "Old Sam," a salute to Sam Houston that blends the facts and fiction that gave birth to Texas mythology; and the title track, a bluegrass shuffle that tells the story of a jailbird returning home after a 20 year stretch in the pen.

The songs on Mountain Home are vignettes of real life. Temple's singing gives them a sense of time and place that makes you feel the hot dusty sun and the cold chill of the unforgiving night. The album captures the feel of the desperate dreamers who want to believe in their latest scheme, even as they feel reality breathing down their neck.

Owen Temple won the B. W. Stevenson Songwriting Competition sponsored by Poor David's Club in Dallas and became a finalist at the Kerrville Folk Festival's New Folk competition in 2007. He's known throughout Texas, the Midwest, and the Eastern US as a first-class songwriter, compelling performer and fine singer. Three of his previous albums, General Store, Passing Through, and Two Thousand Miles, were produced by Lloyd Maines and became regional best sellers.

Temple met multi-instrumentalist and producer Gabe Rhodes, son of singer/songwriter Kimmie Rhodes, in 2006. Rhodes became part of Temple's touring band and produced Dollars and Dimes and Mountain Home. Temple and Rhodes will be touring to support the album. "I'm a songwriter out of the narrative folk tradition," Temple says. "The songs I remember hearing years afterward, that stick with me longest, are songs that have taken me places, that allow you to travel with the story. I hope to continue that tradition, to pass that experience on."

## **Cut by Cut – Mountain Home**

**By Owen Temple**

### *Mountain Home*

I grew up near Mountain Home, a small ranching community in the Texas Hill Country. It's in a part of the state - called the Edwards Plateau - with steep hillsides and valleys created over the millennia by streams and rivers cutting through a hard bedrock of limestone.

It doesn't rain much out there, so the hills are covered with one of the hardiest and most stubborn shrubs around - the mountain cedar.

The people that live in those hills are fairly stubborn themselves, from dealing with the unfarmable land - with hard rock inches below the surface - and from dealing with the blight of mountain cedar that covers any available space and consumes every inch of soil it can steal.

In the 1980s, I remember hearing stories about some folks who lived in the hills near us. Hitchhikers on Interstate 10 reported bizarre events near Mountain Home - kidnapping and forced labor - and the sheriff got involved. A high profile trial began, and the testimony was filled with surreal anecdotes:

“Yes sir, they would play a cassette tape of Elvis singing ‘Jailhouse Rock’ over and over and they would not let me leave. They forced us to work on the ranch.”

“What were you forced to do?”

“Chop and clear cedar, repair fences, and we had to carve the cedar branches into small keychains. They sold the keychains to truckstops.”

When the trial wrapped up, a few people went to prison. A family friend of ours said, “it was like the wild west out here in those days.”

### *Desdemona*

The town of Desdemona, Texas was founded and named for a Justice of the Peace's daughter during the boom times of oil production near the town in 1919. Then the oil production dropped off dramatically, due to wasteful methods, and the town dried up in the early 1920s. At its peak, the town had four gambling parlors and two brothels and a legendary lawlessness that the Texas Rangers had to finally break up and disperse.

Desdemona is one of many boom- and then bust- oil towns of West and Southeast Texas. Epic fortunes were made and lost near these towns so that lives and the land changed forever.

### *Medicine Man*

I wrote this song with Adam Carroll and Gordy Quist. About 500 years ago, Cabeza de Vaca shipwrecked on Galveston Island and spent the next 8 years living among native people as a healer. He walked from tribe to tribe, bluffing and putting on a show, and he eventually made it to Mexico City and then back to Spain.

In my mind, he was the original traveling hustler/song and dance man from out-of-town- he did his best to make people feel good some night, then he'd move on to the next village before it wore off.

The Band of Heathens recorded a great version of this song for their new album, *Top Hat Crown & The Clapmaster's Son*.

### *Small Town*

A small town at night can look peaceful, but I know from personal experience, strange things happen in some small towns at night. Sometimes people know each other *too* well in small towns, and that can be dangerous. All those background relationships between people in a small community, all the rivalries and affairs, are hidden under the surface for someone from out of town.

### *Danger and Good Times*

Adam Carroll, Scott Nolan, and I wrote this song as a tribute to a mutual friend of ours. Every time our buddy opens his mouth, out drops some pearl of wisdom with two themes- things you got to watch out for and memories he has of good times. Almost everybody's got a friend like this - a born raconteur who knows the dirt on what goes down and he's sure as hell going to entertain you while he's telling you about it.

### *Fall in Love Every Night*

I wrote this song after reading two books by Joe Nick Patoski: *Caught in the Crossfire* (about Stevie Ray Vaughan) and *An Epic Life* (about Willie Nelson). This song is a tribute to those songwriters (and to guys like Ray Wylie Hubbard, Delbert McClinton, Billy Joe Shaver, the Vaughan Brothers, the Sexton Brothers) who have spent those late nights and early mornings putting their heart on the line to play the songs.

### *Jacksboro Highway*

A song about State Highway 199, otherwise known as the Jacksboro Highway that runs out of west Fort Worth, Texas. In the 1940s and 50s Jacksboro Highway was lined with bootlegger's joints, brothels, and nightclubs. The police mostly turned a blind eye, when they weren't specifically on the take, and they let the low grade mobsters fight it out among themselves.

### *Old Sam*

Driving north out of Houston on I-45, you pass the 65 foot tall statue of Sam Houston that stands by the interstate near Huntsville, Texas. He was a governor of Tennessee, president of Texas, U.S. Senator, and Governor of Texas, but his life was complicated. He ran away from home as a boy to live with the Cherokee Indians, was nearly killed in battles by wounds in the groin, shoulder, and foot, was humiliated by rejection in an early short lived marriage, resigned from the governorship of Tennessee in disgrace, battled alcoholism, fought a Congressman with his cane, warned Texans that the Civil War would be brutal and that secession was a bad idea, and followed the code of "honor" above all.

This song is kind of an audio comic book about his life that Adam Carroll and I tried to write in the style of Johnny Horton songs like "The Battle of New Orleans." My favorite Sam Houston quote is, "To be honest and fear not is the right path."

### *Prince of Peace*

Leon Russell and Greg Dempsey wrote this song- one of my favorites- about treating everyone with respect and love. I did this as a tribute and out of gratitude to Leon Russell for the songs he's written. Leon Russell is a true medicine man in my eyes.

### *One Day Closer to Rain*

During the summer of 2009, one of the worst droughts in Texas history was happening. Out near Mountain Home, wells were drying up, cows were dying, crops were burned up, and still it didn't rain. People who lived out there watched the weather on the San Antonio newscasts and tried to keep up hope that the drought would break someday. At the end of a blistering - and completely dry - August day, a friend of mine said, "ah well, we're one day closer to rain."

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