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# JOHN PRINE & MAC WISEMAN

**Standard Songs For Average People** Oh  
Boy Records OBR-038

*Standard Songs For Average People* is a collection of cover songs, many of which have enjoyed country and pop chart success, including the Charlie Feathers/ Stan Kesler co-write *I Forgot To Remember To Forget* covered by Elvis Presley; *I Love You Because*, penned and performed by blind Texan Leon Payne; and the 1944 hit *Pistol Packin' Mama*. Produced by John Prine and David Ferguson, the album was recorded at The Butcher Shoppe in Nashville, Tennessee. Prine and bluegrass legend Wiseman – 'The Voice With A Heart' – perform fourteen duets. It appears that these long-time Nashville residents had never met until mutual friend, the legendary Cowboy Jack Clement, introduced them. It's hardly surprising that Clement (rhythm guitar, dobro) is one of the session players, as is John's regular bass player Dave Jacques, plus there are contributions from Kenny Malone (drums), Jamie Hartford (electric guitar), Stuart Duncan (fiddle), Lloyd Green (pedal steel guitar) and more. It appears that the conversation during their first meeting turned to songs they loved, and they departed having agreed to exchange lists. When the pair eventually got around to comparing them, they were surprised to find seven common titles. Was the occurrence mere serendipity? The pair took it as an indication that they should make an album – together.

Circa 1970, Kris Kristofferson successfully persuaded Prine to leave Chicago and journey to New York in search of a recording contract. *Just The Other Side Of Nowhere* appeared on *Kristofferson* (1970), the Texan's debut album, and here it separates a couple of gospel songs: C. Austin Miles's *In The Garden*, and a Prine arrangement of the traditional *Old Rugged Cross*.

The album closes with the American Songbook classic *Where The Blue Of The Night*. Prine won the Best Contemporary Folk Album Grammy for his most recent solo outing, *Fair And Square* (2005), and I guess *Standard Songs For Average People* was an opportunity to draw breath while having some fun recording some of his and Mac's favourite tunes.

[www.ohboy.com](http://www.ohboy.com); [www.johnprine.net](http://www.johnprine.net)

Arthur Wood