



terry kitchen

The POST-AMERICAN CENTURY

Urban Campfire CD 1014

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Award-winning Boston contemporary folk singer/songwriter **Terry Kitchen**, called "one of New England's finest songwriters" by *The Boston Globe*, is as much a storyteller as a musician. His 2015 CD *The Post-American Century*, which reached #19 on the national Folk-DJ airplay chart, combines his considerable skills as a singer, composer and guitarist with his fearless emotional honesty, keen eye for detail, and deep empathy for his subjects for a compelling portrait of the land we live in. *The Post-American Century* presents ten sketches of American life, from the unhealed schism of the Civil War to the Baby Boom generation's looming mortality. His first release since the 2013 publication of *Next Big Thing*, Terry's debut novel, and first full-length folk CD since 2009's *Summer to Snowflakes*, *The Post-American Century* finds Kitchen's songcraft honed sharper than ever, with insightful lyrics matched to moody, stick-in-your-brain melodies.

Kitchen gets plenty of help fleshing out his sparse, rootsy vignettes from a talented group of friends including singers Mara Levine (featured on "Sequel" and the duet ballad "Eternity") and Amy Malkoff ("Tall Against the Wave") and players Bob Harris (who played mandolin with Johnny Cash in the 1980s and toured with Vassar Clements), Dobroist Roger Williams (the Amy Gallatin Band), violinist Chris Devine (Ritchie Blackmore) and Brice Buchanan (guitarist of Kitchen's '80s band Loose Ties). Kitchen himself adds accents on mandolin, autoharp and harmonica in addition to his fluid acoustic guitar playing.

The Post-American Century features forays into bluegrass ("So Much More to Home"), gospel ("Rock of Ages") and even pop (a stripped-down cover of Neil Diamond's "I'm a Believer"), but the heart of Kitchen's songwriting remains the folk story-song. The album's title comes from "Sequel," an overheard conversation between two '60s survivors trying to find their place in the confusion of the new century. Contrasting that is "Perelli's Barbershop," in which a young boy sneaks a glimpse at his first *Playboy*. "Tall Against the Wave," narrated by a Confederate infantryman, reveals the terror and futility of war, while "One by One (Song for Trayvon Martin)" explores the vestiges of racism in our own time. "Stay Forever," and its coda, "One More Sunset," confront the specter of loss head-on.

The intensity of Kitchen's subjects is balanced by both the sly humor in his lyrics and the joys of the music itself, from the revival harmonies and dead-on Dobro licks of "Rock of Ages" to the Knopfler-esque guitar lines that snake through "Stay Forever." That balance is central to the album's underlying theme - if indeed we can't stop the years rolling past us, we should at least enjoy them as they go by.

About the SONGS on Terry Kitchen's *The Post-American Century*

1. "So Much More to Home" My friend Andy Dunn and I were talking at the Falcon Ridge Folk Festival a few years back. His wife was extremely pregnant, and my wife and I had just bought a house, so even though we were surrounded by great music we were both being pulled by thoughts of home. We took a break from the crowd and wrote this song. With Bob Harris on mandolin and Mara Levine on harmony.

2. "Sequel" If the 1900s are regarded as "The American Century," what does make the 2000s? Lots of great songs were written in the '60s about freedom and finding ourselves. I got to wondering about how all those lives turned out, and got this song. With Mara Levine on harmony.

3. "Perelli's Barbershop" As places where men gather to wait their turn, barbershops are filled with "guy" magazines - *Car & Driver*, *Sports Illustrated*, and maybe even a *Playboy*. In those innocent pre-internet days when I was growing up, a *Playboy* was a big deal indeed, especially to a ten year old boy. With Roger Williams on Dobro.

4. "Tall Against the Wave" April 2015 marked the 150th anniversary of Lee's surrender to Grant at Appomattox, effectively ending the Civil War, and I was surprised how little attention it got. It might be worth remembering in this time of un-civil politics how bad it can be. Lee had assigned Joe Johnson the task heading off Sherman on his march back from Georgia, and they clashed at Bentonville, North Carolina, when the war was all but over. With Amy Malkoff on harmony and Chris Devine on fiddle.

5. "Stay Forever" We do our best to be caring and brave when confronted with the loss of a loved one, but behind the façade we're angry, hurt, confused and scared. Or at least I am. With Phyllis Capanna on

harmony and Brice Buchanan (from my '80s band Loose Ties) on guitar.

6. "Rock of Ages" When I visit Nashville I stay on my friend Steve's couch, and down the block is a very small and humble-looking church. Even though I'm an atheist I appreciate the fellowship and community people can find there when they really need it. With Roger Williams on Dobro, and Brice Buchanan and Deede Bergeron on harmony.

7. "Eternity" When we're young we race to grow up, then when we get there we futilely try to slam on the brakes. Good luck. A country duet in the tradition of Porter and Dolly, with Mara Levine on duet vocal.

8. "One by One" In a country with an African American president, it's tragic that far too many still pay the ultimate price for merely having the wrong color skin. The list keeps growing – Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Jordan Davis, Clementa Pinckney and on and on. Pete Seeger taught us we shall overcome, but it has to start in the hearts of each of us. With Mara Levine on harmony.

9. "Mommy Come Quick" My mother (Peachy to her family and friends) passed away last fall on her 86-and-a-half birthday. As her Alzheimer's progressed, she lost more and more of her abilities, and our roles reversed. Seeing her so childlike made me remember my own young childhood, when I was helpless without her. With Don Barry on upright bass.

10. "I'm a Believer" In my novel *Next Big Thing*, the fictional band Shadowland's first big hit is a Monkees cover, pissing off songwriter/main character Mark Zodiac. Will life imitate art?

11. "One More Sunset" (hidden cut) A few more reasons to stay forever.