

SHANA CLEVELAND & THE SANDCASTLES

OH MAN, COVER THE GROUND

Shana Cleveland is a rare artist who seems dismissive of time. She's been performing with a rotating batch of musicians tagged as The Sandcastles for years, and yet *Oh Man, Cover The Ground* is their first proper album. It would be easy to chalk up the delay behind the debut to a slacker lifestyle—*Oh Man, Cover The Ground*'s laid-back vibe certainly suggests an extremely casual approach to songcraft. But Cleveland is no slacker. In the years since she first started playing out under her own name, she's helmed a number of other music projects; most notably her revered Girls In The Garage-inspired band La Luz. In her downtime, she's crafted a set of 37 trading cards dedicated to obscure acoustic guitarists and a calendar of drawings depicting rock bands of yesteryear. The glacial pace of *Oh Man, Cover The Ground*'s development has little to do with work ethic and everything to do with doing things in a way that feels right. "I don't really think of it as a proper band," says Cleveland. "The line-up has been different for almost every show depending on which arrangements I thought would be best for the atmosphere. Some shows I played alone; some with bass, clarinet, and backing vocals; some with the addition of drums, cello and piano. We've played shows really selectively throughout the last few years—just sticking to shows that I thought sounded really interesting. Like, I'd rather play these songs for people in their bedrooms or in a field at night than on a three band bill at a bar." In an industry fixated on striking while the iron is hot, getting an artist in front of as many people in as short of a time as possible, Cleveland's insistence on atmosphere over arbitrary numbers is a bold move.

Oh Man, Cover The Ground's softly-stated melodies and breezy air operates on it's own sense of time. Though the songs still settle comfortably into three-minute parcels, their gestation bucked at the convention of pop music's stringent time format. "I'm really into meandering, fingerpicked open-tuned acoustic guitar, like John Fahey and Robbie Basho," says Cleveland. "I started playing guitar in that style during a year right before I moved to Seattle when I was lonely and bummed out in the San Fernando Valley and found solace in spending long afternoons fingerpicking slow moving improvisations." This casualness is evident in the music—you can hear it in the airy ambience of album opener "Butter & Eggs", the gentle piano and strings accompaniment on the title track, the particularly Fahey-esque explorations of "Itching Around" and "SPATM". But even the timeline of the album's development seems to defy the ephemeral haste that permeates so much contemporary music. The bulk of *Oh Man, Cover The Ground* was recorded in Shana's basement. "I wanted it to sound casual and kind of loose like my favorite folk albums, so we didn't practice much before recording and a few of the musicians were playing the songs for the first time."

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TRACKLISTING

1. Butter & Eggs
2. Holy Rollers
3. Oh Man, Cover The Ground
4. Itching Around
5. Potato Chips
6. Golden Days
7. (death riff)
8. SPATM
9. Rounding The Block
10. City To City
11. Sucking Stones
12. Quiet As Skin
13. Change In The Ocean

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