

# THE BIRTH OF FOREST CHUMP

*A six-volume chronicle of breakdown, rebirth, and survival through song.*

## PART I: 1 MAN, 1 PIANO, 1 MIC, 1 CABIN

### Volume 1: SONGS OF THE SOUTH

A stripped-down reckoning with blues, folk, and country standards — slowed, reinterpreted, and filtered through a Southern Gothic lens. Recorded in isolation, this volume revives American ghosts with only voice and piano, shaped by trauma and the resolve to keep going.

### Volume 2: THE DEATH OF RYAN LEE REID

Original songs born from incarceration, psych ward stays, and emotional annihilation. Blunt, humorous, and harrowing, this is the first glimpse of Forest Chump stepping forward while Ryan Lee Reid disappears. The lyrics cut deep; the truths cut deeper.

### Volume 3: JAZZ CHUMP

Jazz standards turned on their head. Forget Vegas polish — these are raw, swinging, deeply improvised takes grounded in harmony, counterpoint, and emotional spontaneity. It's the Great American Songbook, not for nostalgia, but for reinvention.

### Volume 4: CLASSICAL CHUMP

A fusion of structure and emotion: original classical compositions, reworks of Rachmaninoff, and atonal improvisations grounded in deliberate parametric systems. Romantic, impressionist, baroque, and experimental pieces make up this formal yet deeply personal volume.

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## Part II: ELECTRONIC CHUMP

### Volume 5: ELECTRONIC CHUMP

Disco cowboys. Bonnie and Clyde in the year 3000. A wild ride through trap beats, breakbeats, and synth swagger. These originals bring levity, absurdity, and electricity. Features 2× Grammy-winning drummer **Derrek Phillips** (Roland SPDx) and **Harmoni Kelley** (electric bass) on an electronic arrangement of one of Forest Chump's classical compositions.

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## Part III: STUDIO CHUMP

### Volume 6: STUDIO CHUMP

This is the proof. Songs forged in fire, brought to life with elite session players **Derrek Phillips** (drums) and **Harmoni Kelley** (bass, vocals). Recorded at **Yellow Dog Studio**, it's the final arc of the journey — *Forest Chump made it out, but Ryan Lee Reid didn't.*

# VOLUME 1. SONGS OF THE SOUTH

## ARTIST STATEMENT

Forest Chump wasn't born in a blaze of glory — he was carved out slowly, in the quiet, with scars for ink and a piano for witness. This is where the story begins — not with a hit record, but with a busted past, a battered heart, and a second chance.

*Volume 1: SONGS OF THE SOUTH* is a collection of reinterpretations — not only of Southern blues, folk, and country songs, but of memory, identity, and grief. These are songs that have weathered time and transformation, and so have I.

As a fifth-generation Texan, having lived just 300 yards from the old Imperial State Prison Farm in Sugar Land — the same prison that once held Huddie “Lead Belly” Ledbetter — the connection between music and survival runs deep. The midnight train still runs past those fields. Its whistle cuts through the air like the memory of a song, and of what it meant to survive.

Some of these tunes, like “Trouble in Mind,” “Texas Flood,” or “In the Pines,” carry a long tradition of sorrow and defiance. But within that pain, there's also motion — a slow churning toward freedom. These are songs for anyone who's had to endure: heartbreak, betrayal, hospitalization, humiliation, or the quiet ache of starting over.

This record was born from isolation — just one man, one piano, one mic, and one cabin. There was no production crew, no fancy gear — just the will to keep going and the need to tell the truth, one note at a time.

This is *The Birth of Forest Chump*.

## ABOUT THE ALBUM

*Volume 1: SONGS OF THE SOUTH* reimagines a set of iconic American tunes through the lens of a solitary piano and a lived-in voice — stripped down, slowed down, and steeped in the soil of the South.

These aren't cover songs. They're recoveries. Each arrangement is a reclamation — of space, of agency, of the emotional weight buried in the original versions. What once strutted is now swaying. What once wailed now whispers. The swing has a drag to it. The gospel leans blues. The blues lean Southern Gothic.

Drawing from folk standards, prison songs, and electric blues classics, the album doesn't chase authenticity — it returns to it. Not in fidelity to the original recordings, but in fidelity to the feeling behind them: betrayal, despair, guilt, grace.

The piano speaks like an old friend who's seen too much. The voice doesn't decorate — it testifies.

Together, they don't just revisit the American South — they haunt it.

## TRACK NOTES

These ten songs weren't chosen for nostalgia — they were chosen for their honesty. Each one carries a different shade of survival: the loneliness of exile, the bitterness of betrayal, the stubborn hope of a new morning. In arranging them, I didn't want to replicate them. I wanted to reveal. What emerged is a collection of Southern ghosts, each summoned through the voice and the piano — no frills, no filter, just feeling.

### **“TROUBLE IN MIND”** *by RICHARD M. JONES*

A prison blues standard recorded by everyone from Bertha Hill to Nina Simone — and once played on the Sugar Land prison yard where Lead Belly was locked up. I recorded this after surviving a suicide attempt, during a time when I couldn't see a way forward. The lyric “but I won't be blue always” isn't just a line — it became a lifeline. I slowed the tempo and kept it bare.

### **“IN THE PINES”** *by LEAD BELLY*

Also known as “Where Did You Sleep Last Night,” this Appalachian ballad has been passed down like a whispered warning. After finding a message on my spouse's phone during the final months of our marriage, this song took on a new kind of ache. It's about silence, shame, and what's left unsaid in the dark.

### **“NOBODY KNOWS YOU WHEN YOU'RE DOWN & OUT”** *by JIMMIE COX*

A classic of the Great Depression and every depression since. It's about friends who disappear, fortunes that vanish, and the humiliation of needing help. I recorded this one slowly, almost as if I was talking to myself — because sometimes that's the only one left to talk to.

### **“TEXAS FLOOD”** *by LARRY DAVIS & JOSEPH SCOTT*

Originally made famous by Stevie Ray Vaughan, this song always felt bigger than just weather — it's about being overwhelmed by something you can't control. My version leans into that helplessness, not with a guitar solo, but with quiet desperation in the piano and voice. The storm here isn't outside — it's internal.

### **“PRIDE & JOY”** *by STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN*

I reimagined this one as a slow, piano-driven lament. It's not the strutting love song you might expect — it's a postmortem. When love becomes currency in a controlling relationship, even joy can feel like debt. This version mourns what should've been sweet.

### **“HOUND DOG”** *by JERRY LEIBER & MIKE STOLLER*

Before Elvis made it famous, Big Mama Thornton growled this one into existence. I slowed it way down and brought it back to the blues — the way she intended it. It's no longer a breakup anthem. It's a warning to anyone who's been lied to for too long.

### **“EVIL GAL BLUES”** *by LIONEL HAMPTON & LEONARD FEATHER*

I rewrote this one from the ground up. The original was Dinah Washington's, but this version is mine. “She's an evil gal, took everything from me” — that's how it starts, and it doesn't let up. It's not a metaphor. It's about being used, drained, left hollow. There's nothing playful about it. Just the slow realization that love, when weaponized, can ruin you.

### **“ACE IN THE HOLE”** *by HANK THOMPSON*

A Western swing staple from the dancehalls of postwar Texas, “Ace in the Hole” always had a grin behind its swagger. I slowed it down and gave it a laid-back groove — less poker table, more back porch. It's a wink and a warning: everybody's got something up their sleeve, and not all of it's good. Mine just happens to be a piano.

### **“MIDNIGHT SPECIAL”** *by LEAD BELLY*

A traditional prison song that Lead Belly helped bring into the American consciousness. I heard the train whistle nearly every night while living in Sugar Land, just like the inmates once did. That whistle meant hope — the possibility that someone, somewhere, was still moving. I let that rhythm guide the entire arrangement.

### **“HEARTBREAK HOTEL”** *by MAE AXTON & TOMMY DURDEN*

There's something surreal about how bouncy this song sounds in its original form — considering it's about loneliness so complete, it borders on madness. I brought it down to earth. Slower. More hollow. Less Elvis, more echo. It's not a hotel. It's a holding cell.

## RECORDING CONTEXT

This album wasn't tracked in a studio with glass walls and golden plaques. It was recorded in a quiet cabin with just one man, one mic, one piano — and **James Viega** behind the board, helping capture it all.

I played on a modeled Bosendorfer 280VC using Modartt's Pianoteq plugin. That may sound technical, but it matters. It gave me the weight and warmth of an acoustic piano without leaving the room I was trying to heal in.

Everything was tracked live. No overdubs. No edits. No fancy tricks. Just voice, piano, and the space between them. The goal wasn't perfection — it was presence. To sit with these songs and let them speak without interruption.

## A PERSONAL NOTE

I didn't plan to make this album. I just needed something to hold onto.

Most of these songs came back to me while I was in the middle of losing everything — my marriage, my sanity, my reputation, and for a time, even my will to live. I didn't set out to reinvent them. I just sat down with the piano and let them speak the way they needed to.

There's no polish here. What you hear is what I had. But if there's one thing I've learned, it's that even in the dark, music has a way of carrying the truth — especially the kind of truth you can't say out loud.

Thank you for listening.

— Forest Chump



# VOLUME 2. THE DEATH OF RYAN LEE REID

## ARTIST STATEMENT

This album is not a concept. It's a burial.

*Volume 2: THE DEATH OF RYAN LEE REID* isn't just a title — it's a process. These songs were written during the hardest years of my life, in the middle of a storm that almost took me with it. I lost my mind. I lost my marriage. I lost control over my own name.

But it didn't stop there. My body of work — years of songs, videos, writing, recordings, and creative history — was deliberately erased. Not by accident. Not by time. By someone else's hand. I watched my digital existence vanish, piece by piece, like a funeral in reverse. When your past is deleted in real time, it doesn't just feel like a loss. It feels like death.

Every note on this record was played alone — no band, no overdubs, just a piano and a man in pieces. Some of the songs were written while I was institutionalized or in a jail cell. Others came afterward, in the wreckage. All of them are true.

Ryan Lee Reid didn't make it out of that fire. Forest Chump did.

## ABOUT THE ALBUM

This is a solo piano album, but it's not easy listening. These songs weren't written for comfort. They were written for survival.

*THE DEATH OF RYAN LEE REID* is an exorcism in twelve parts. Every track is an original — composed, performed, and recorded alone. There's no polish, no façade. The tempos drift. The keys blur. But the emotion never wavers. That's the point.

Where Volume 1 paid tribute to Southern tradition, Volume 2 is about shedding skin. These are not genre pieces. They are internal dispatches from a man caught between collapse and rebirth. Some were written in a jail cell. Others came during psychiatric hospitalization. And a few were sketched out in the silence that followed. Together, they tell the truth no one else could tell for me.

If Volume 1 is the voice of the ghost, this is the sound of the body burning.

## TRACK NOTES

These songs weren't composed at a piano bench with a notebook and a plan — they came out in fragments, like breath through broken ribs. Some were written behind locked doors, some after the fallout. What holds them together isn't form or genre — it's what they cost. Each one carries part of the man who didn't make it out.

### **“COUNTRYCORE”** *by FOREST CHUMP*

This one's pure satire — but it's not just a joke. I wrote it to poke holes in the formula of modern country pop: the brand drops, the fake blue-collar cosplay, the algorithmic patriotism. But beneath the humor, there's frustration. I've lived the struggle these songs pretend to represent. And I've seen what a real country looks like — it doesn't come with a marketing budget.

### **“EGO”** *by FOREST CHUMP*

This one came out like a fistfight — me versus the voices in my head. Living with schizoaffective disorder, those voices aren't just metaphors. They're constant, cruel, and convincing. I wrote this song in one sitting, like I was finally punching back. It's not poetic. It's not polished. It's just the truth, told loud and without apology.

### **“PILLBILLY BLUES”** *by FOREST CHUMP*

This one's an elegy for anyone who's been broke, doped, and laughed at their own collapse. I wrote it after the psych ward, when pills and late bills were running my life. There's sarcasm in the lines, but every word is true. It's about streaming pennies, rock bottom's basement, and how hitting the floor for a dropped pill can feel like a holy mission. This is gallows humor — Southern fried and barely holding on.

### **“WATCH OUT FOR TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE”** *by FOREST CHUMP*

I wrote this one when the spell broke. It's about the kind of person who makes you fall fast — and then drains you dry. I raised kids that weren't mine (but I love them and think of them as mine), lied to cover for her, and almost didn't survive it. The song isn't subtle because what happened to me wasn't subtle. It's a warning, plain and simple: some charm is weaponized.

### **“ALL I DO IS EAT AND WEAR MY MONEY”** *by FOREST CHUMP*

This is what it looks like when grief puts on designer clothes. I wrote it at a time when I was blowing money just to feel something — caviar, Balmain, and the dumbest shit imaginable. There's humor in it, but it's not a joke. I wasn't living. I was spending to survive. And the more I bought, the emptier it felt.

### **“BUSY LIVIN’, BUSY DYIN’”** *by FOREST CHUMP*

This song came from that gray space between hope and burnout — when every day feels the same, and you’re not sure which direction you’re headed anymore. I felt like a cowboy with nowhere left to ride, still singing songs while the clock kept ticking. It’s about motion without meaning. Life without traction. And wondering if you’re living at all, or just slowly fading out.

### **“DON’T SCOOTER BRAUN ME”** *by FOREST CHUMP*

This one’s about being used — emotionally, creatively, and professionally. I wrote love songs on demand to hold a relationship together that was already falling apart. When someone takes your talent and turns it into leverage, it stops being collaboration — it becomes control. This is me taking the pen back.

### **“THE RHYTHM OF TEXAS”** *by FOREST CHUMP*

This one’s about where I come from — musically and spiritually. Texas has a rhythm all its own: part swing, part soul, part swagger. From Lead Belly to DJ Screw, Bob Wills to Selena, the beat here is as wide as the sky. I wrote this as a reminder that no matter how far I fall, the rhythm of Texas still feels like home.

### **“DAY DRINKING”** *by FOREST CHUMP*

This song came from that place where coping turns into a lifestyle. It’s funny on purpose — a little beer-cation with Dr. Shiner — but the punchline hides something real. I wasn’t just drinking for fun. I was drinking to forget. Sometimes the pain starts early in the day, and you meet it where it lives.

### **“SOMEDAY”** *by FOREST CHUMP*

I wrote this for someone who didn’t get their “someday”. It’s a song about potential — what could’ve been, what should’ve been — and the heartbreak of watching that light go out too soon. Some lives burn fast and bright. This is my way of making sure that fire doesn’t disappear.

### **“LIFE IS A RIDE BUILT FOR TWO”** *by FOREST CHUMP*

This song is about holding on — to someone, to hope, to the idea that you don’t have to go through life alone. I wrote it like a promise, even if the promise didn’t last. It’s gentle, but it still knows the drop is coming. The point isn’t to avoid the fall — it’s to have someone there when it hits.

### **“THOSE ROUND TOP DAYS”** *by FOREST CHUMP*

I wrote this looking back at the moment it all felt real — before everything unraveled. Round Top was where we fell in love, or thought we did. Time moved differently there. It was quiet, sacred, almost cinematic. Now all that’s left are the memories, and the question of what was real and what was just a beautifully timed illusion.

**“FEELIN’ RECKLESS”** *by FOREST CHUMP*

A moonshine-fueled mission statement. Part Houston hurricane, part rodeo clown in orbit, it’s built bad decisions. Loud lyrics, punchline-heavy beat, proudly unhinged energy. Not about getting it right — about turning it up, knocking it down, and waking up grinning with no regrets.

## RECORDING CONTEXT

This album wasn't made in a studio. It was made in a state of survival.

Most of these songs were recorded alone, in a bare space with a single microphone and a modeled Bosendorfer 280VC using Modartt's Pianoteq plugin. No fancy studio, no team, No click. Just my hands, my voice, **James Viega**, and whatever I had left that day.

I didn't record these tracks to impress anyone. I recorded them to stay alive — to get the thoughts out of my head before they swallowed me whole. There's noise. There's unevenness. There's breath where maybe there shouldn't be. I kept all of it.

Because sometimes, you don't need a perfect take. You need a true one.

## A PERSONAL NOTE

This album wasn't made in a moment of clarity. It came from the middle of a breakdown — after jail, after the hospital, after everything I thought I was had been stripped away or deleted.

Some of these songs came fast. Others dragged their feet through the dark. All of them were written by someone trying to figure out what was left when the old self died.

If you've ever felt like you were falling apart, I hope something in here makes you feel a little less alone. This isn't about closure. It's about survival.

Thank you for listening.

— Forest Chump

# VOLUME 3. JAZZ CHUMP

## ARTIST STATEMENT

This isn't your usual *American Songbook* record.

I didn't approach these standards like museum pieces. I wasn't trying to replicate Ella or Sinatra, or polish them until they glowed. I came at them the only way I know how — through the blues, through Texas, through scars.

These songs have been sung a thousand different ways. But rarely with a voice like mine. I don't mean technically — I mean emotionally. I didn't clean them up. I cracked them open. I slowed them down. I let the grief show. I gave them a swing, but I also gave them weight.

This is *The American Songbook* rewritten from the bottom up — rearranged, rephrased, re-felt. It's not nostalgia. It's a reclamation.



## ABOUT THE ALBUM

This album is built on improvisation — not just in the piano or the phrasing, but in the way the songs themselves were approached. I kept the arrangements loose. Some tunes have restructured forms. Some have B sections replaced with solo passages. Some were re-harmonized on the fly.

I sang these standards like they'd never been sung to me. I let my voice go wherever the moment needed — bluesy, cracked, off-balance at times, but always honest. The piano plays behind, around, or sometimes against the vocal — like two old friends arguing over a memory.

There's no big band, no string section, no brushed drums. Just me. One mic. One piano. And the history these songs carry.

## TRACK NOTES

Improvisation is the heart of this album. I didn't come in with polished arrangements or fixed ideas. I let the songs unfold in real time — reshaping melodies, bending chords, rewriting forms on the fly. Sometimes I changed the structure. Sometimes I just change my mind.

This is less about honoring the canon and more about challenging it — not out of disrespect, but because these songs deserve to keep growing. I wasn't trying to preserve anything. I was trying to feel something.

### **“STORMY WEATHER / SUNDAY KIND OF LOVE”** *by ARLEN & KOEHLER / BELLE, LEONARD, RHODES & PRIMA*

This mashup is about contrast — the longing for peace and the reality of chaos. One song begs for shelter from the storm; the other aches for love that's steady and sacred. I lived through both. I combined them because I couldn't choose — I was in love during a hurricane, and I kept pretending it was Sunday.

### **“DON'T GO TO STRANGERS”** *by KENT, MANN & EVANS*

The quiet plea in this lyric always hit me hard: stay, even if things feel off — stay, even if I'm not enough. That was me, bargaining with someone who had already left emotionally. I slowed it down so every word could linger, like the last thing you say to someone before they disappear for good.

### **“MEAN OL' MOON”** *by WALTER MURPHY & SETH MACFARLANE*

This one's gentle on the surface, but it cuts deep — blaming the moon because it's easier than blaming the person. I used to stare at the sky at 3AM, wondering how I could get away from the abuse. This song wraps that ache in lullaby chords. It's a nighttime confession you whisper to nobody.

### **“I COULD HAVE TOLD YOU”** *by JIMMY VAN HEUSEN & CARL SIGMAN*

Regret isn't loud — it's subtle, slow, and it shows up in the voice. This song is about watching someone fall for a lie you've already lived through. When I sing it, it feels like talking to my younger self. Or maybe to someone I couldn't save. Either way, I sing it soft — like I already know how it ends.

### **“LET'S DO IT (LET'S FALL IN LOVE)”** *by COLE PORTER*

People think of this one as playful, but I found something else in it: repetition, ritual, routine — all the things we mistake for romance. I sing it slowly, with a wink and a sigh. It's not about falling in love. It's about realizing you've done this before, and you'll do it again, even if it breaks you.

**“CRY ME A RIVER”** *by ARTHUR HAMILTON*

This is the ultimate kiss-off — but I didn’t deliver it with fire. I let it simmer. Because sometimes “you made me cry” isn’t a scream — it’s a tired truth. I recorded this in one take, thinking of all the times I was told nothing had changed, when everything had. The river had already flooded. I’m just naming it now.

**“SO THIS IS LOVE”** *by MACK DAVID, AL HOFFMAN & JERRY LIVINGSTON*

Taken from a fairy tale, sure — but there’s sadness in this melody. In my version, the glass slipper never fit right. The clock struck midnight years ago, and I kept pretending the magic was still there. This isn’t the beginning of a dream. It’s the end of one you didn’t want to wake up from.

**“GEORGIA”** *by HOAGY CARMICHAEL & STUART GORRELL*

“Georgia” always felt like a person more than a place. I leaned into the melancholy — the in-between of memory and loss. There’s no train home, no phone call coming. Just the hum of what used to be, still echoing in your head. This one isn’t about going back. It’s about knowing you can’t.

**“I FALL IN LOVE TOO EASILY”** *by JULE STYNE & SAMMY CAHN*

A beautiful lie we tell ourselves when we’re lonely. I’ve lived this one — the rush, the collapse, the silence after. I sang it like someone learning the lesson too late. The melody is simple. The feeling isn’t. It’s not about falling in love. It’s about falling for the same mistake, again and again.

**“NO MORE LOVIN’”** *by FOREST CHUMP*

I wrote this one at a time when I couldn’t tell if I was being gaslit or just going crazy. She said nothing had changed, but everything had — this isn’t a breakup song. It’s a realization. A cold, clear, piano-lit moment where the truth finally stares back at you.

**“YOU DON’T KNOW WHAT LOVE IS”** *by GENE DE PAUL & DON RAYE*

This is the last thing you say before walking out the door. Not in anger — in resignation. I slowed it down to make the lyric ache. Because it’s not about bitterness. It’s about the sorrow of giving everything to someone who never knew what to do with it. Love without understanding is just damage.

**“THE THINGS WE DID LAST SUMMER”** *by SAMMY CAHN & JULE STYNE*

A slow, unhurried take that lets memory breathe. I strip away the swing and let the melody drift, holding each phrase like something too fragile to set down. Bittersweet and spacious, it lingers in the room like the season it remembers—gone, but still warm in the air.

## RECORDING CONTEXT

These songs were recorded live — one mic, one piano, and no safety net. I played a modeled Bosendorfer 280VC using Modartt's Pianoteq plugin, which gave me the depth and dynamics of a concert grand in a space that didn't have one. **James Viega** tracked the session — capturing the bare stripped down nature contained within.

There were no charts, no overdubs, no vocal comping. Most takes were done in one or two passes, guided entirely by feel. I didn't edit out imperfections — I leaned into them. The air, the breath, the hesitation — it's all part of the story.

This isn't how most people approach *The American Songbook*. But for me, improvising with no plan and no polish was the only way it felt honest.

## A PERSONAL NOTE

I studied jazz theory for many years under one of Steinway's premier jazz artists, **Paul English**. I learned the rules, memorized the changes, and paid my dues. But when it came time to record these songs, I had to let all that go.

This album isn't about proving what I know — it's about feeling what I've lived. I didn't want to sound like anyone else. I wanted to sound like someone who made it through something.

Every track on here is improvised — sometimes fragile, sometimes fearless, always real. If it wavers, that's because I meant it to.

— Forest Chump

# VOLUME 4. CLASSICAL CHUMP

## ARTIST STATEMENT

This album is not improvised in the way most people use the word. Nothing here was random. Every note — whether composed, arranged, or composed in real-time — came from structure. From rules. From a deliberate process of limiting chaos through design.

*Volume 4: CLASSICAL CHUMP* is a collection of original compositions, reimagined concert works, and real-time compositions that follow strict internal logic. One real-time composition is built using Michael Wiedeburg 1775 Treatise on baroque real-time composition, “*Der sich selbst informirende Clavierspieler*”.

Others follow self directed systems of mirrored intervals, tritone symmetry, or parametric constraints. Even when I was composing in real-time, I was not reacting emotionally, but executing ideas with intent.

This is not a display of spontaneity. It's a study in control, and what can be expressed when emotion is funneled through structure and form.

# ABOUT THE ALBUM

This album is made up of three threads woven together:

1. **Original compositions** rooted in Romanticism and Impressionism
2. **Solo piano arrangements** of all three movements of Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2
3. **Original real-time composition** — each built around a specific set of constraints or guiding logic

The composed pieces are fully notated but emotionally loose — lyrical, harmonically rich, and often leaning toward ambiguity. The Rachmaninoff arrangements are not transcriptions; they're interpretations, rewritten to live and breathe through solo piano without an orchestra behind them, and more accessible to the modern musical palette.

The real-time compositions vary widely. Some are shaped by intervallic rules (like tritone symmetry). Another borrows from a 1775 Treatise outlining a baroque real-time compositional system. Freedom inside structure. Each real-time composition is a thought experiment made musical.

Everything on this album is performed alone — no edits, no overlays. Just one pianist in conversation with the past, the present, and whatever's left of the future.

## TRACK NOTES

These aren't recital pieces — but they're not guesses, either. Every work on this album is built on structure. Some were fully composed and notated. Others were composed in real-time, but always within strict constraints: symmetry, intervallic systems, harmonic direction, or counterpoint.

Nothing here was made to sound impressive. It was made to hold meaning. Whether I was adapting Rachmaninoff, writing original themes, or composing in real-time with a self-imposed rule set, the goal was always the same — to turn thought into motion, and structure into feeling.

### **“MAGNUS’S THEME”** *by FOREST CHUMP*

Magnus was the older brother — curious, cautious, and deeply kind. He called me Dad, and I took that seriously. His theme is steady, almost noble, with moments of restraint that feel like he's holding something in. I wrote it to sound like a kid who grew up too fast, but still looked out for everyone else.

### **“SEBASTIAN’S THEME”** *by FOREST CHUMP*

Sebastian was the little one — a whirlwind of energy and emotion. His theme is playful, erratic, and tender in the way little kids are when they trust you completely. There's a restlessness in the left hand and bursts of melody in the right, like he's running through a memory I can't hold onto anymore.

### **“REAL-TIME COMPOSITION NO. 1”** *by FOREST CHUMP*

This piece is built on Michael Wiedeburg's 18th-century real-time compositional method — a guidebook for ornamentation, cadences, and voice leading. I used his rules as a framework but stayed in the moment, weaving lines that talk across each other rather than follow. It's contrapuntal, but not fugal — like several thoughts in dialogue, occasionally overlapping, occasionally arguing. Old rules. New wounds.

### **“PIANO CONCERTO NO. 2”** *by SERGEI RACHMANINOFF*

#### **“I. MODERATO”** *solo arrangement by FOREST CHUMP*

I kept as much of Rachmaninoff's grandeur as I could without the orchestra. This movement is all about rising from collapse, something I know too well. My version turns the sweeping string lines into heavy chordal breath — less cinematic, more solitary. Just a man and a piano, pulling himself upright.



## **“II. ADAGIO SOSTENUTO” *solo arrangement by FOREST CHUMP***

This is the stillness after the storm — the moment when you realize you’ve survived, but nothing feels whole. I slowed the tempo and let the silences linger. The melody isn’t just beautiful — it’s lonely. In this version, every note sounds like it’s reaching for someone who’s already left.

## **“III. ALLEGRO SCHERZANDO” *solo arrangement by FOREST CHUMP***

This scherzo is usually triumphant — a full-circle return. But stripped down, it becomes a sprint without a finish line. I played it with clenched teeth and loose wrists, letting the rhythmic drive carry the emotional weight. It’s chaos, yes — but it’s earned. You can’t fake this kind of speed through survival.

## **“REAL-TIME COMPOSITION NO. 2” *by FOREST CHUMP***

I approached this like a lieder singer with no words — 19th century romantic harmony and Bel Canto principles filtered through touch and breath. Think Chopin meets Bellini in a dream. The rubato isn’t just expressive — it’s desperate. There are no lyrics, but it still says: I was here. I felt all of it. And I’m still singing.

## **“SCHIZOAFFECTIVE” *by FOREST CHUMP***

This one’s stormy — overlapping motifs like voices in a diner, all talking at once, none of them mine. I built the piece on mental clutter: looping fragments, sudden shifts, moments of clarity buried under noise. But G minor holds it together. It’s not madness. It’s the sound of living with it.

## **“BETRAYLE” *by FOREST CHUMP***

This one’s about the kind of betrayal that’s quiet and calculated — the kind where someone poisons your relationships behind your back while smiling to your face. It’s how I lost the kids. It’s how I lost my family. The piece doesn’t scream. It just sinks — slow, deliberate, and unresolved. I wrote it in B ♭ minor because it felt like the only key honest enough to hold that kind of grief.

## **“REAL-TIME COMPOSITION NO. 3” *by FOREST CHUMP***

This is the farthest I’ve gone from tradition. I built a self-imposed system of tritone-based symmetry, pushing away tonality but clinging to structure. There’s no home key — just rotation, tension, and orbit. I composed this in real-time in one take. It’s not supposed to feel good. It’s supposed to feel true.

## RECORDING CONTEXT

These pieces were recorded under the same conditions as the rest of the series — solo, live, and stripped to the essentials. I played a modeled Bosendorfer 280VC using Modartt's Pianoteq plugin, tracked through a single mic. No edits. No overdubs. Just a clean capture of what actually happened.

But unlike the folk and jazz volumes, this one demanded more discipline. Even the real-time compositions followed tight internal logic — rules I'd set in advance: consistent tritone intervals, mirrored motifs, harmonic constraints. This wasn't freeform. It was formal and rule based.

Everything you hear was shaped by design — from voice-leading to phrasing to pedal control. All guided by intention. The emotion comes through the structure, not in spite of it.

## A PERSONAL NOTE

In a time when everything felt unstable, structure saved me. These pieces gave me rules to hold onto when nothing else made sense.

I wasn't chasing inspiration. I was building systems. Writing something I could trust, even if I couldn't trust myself. This album gave me a way to keep moving without falling apart.

If you hear clarity, it's because I needed it. If you hear restraint, it's because I earned it.

— Forest Chump

# VOLUME 5. ELECTRONIC CHUMP

## ARTIST STATEMENT

This is what happens when a fifth-generation Texan wires a honky-tonk to the mainframe, fires up a MIDI keyboard, and lets two Nashville heavyweights loose on the rhythm section. Two-time Grammy-winning drummer **Derrek Phillips** brings the heat on a Roland SPDx, while **Harmoni Kelley**—bassist and vocalist for **Kenny Chesney**—lays down an electronic low end that thumps like a diesel engine on the dance floor. At the console, **James Viega**—longtime engineer and producer for **Garth Brooks** and **Trisha Yearwood**—brings the polish that ties the chaos together, without ever taming it.

ELECTRONIC CHUMP is still country swagger with breakbeats, still satire with a side of swag—but now it's got a few more miles on the odometer and a lot more horsepower under the hood. For *Sebastian's Theme*—an electronic reimagining of one of my classical compositions—I traded the MIDI rig for a nine-foot concert grand Steinway, brought in just for the session at **Yellow Dog Studio**. Because sometimes even the ghosts deserve a dance remix.

After the wreckage of Volumes 1 through 4—the grief, the heartbreak, the shadow work—I needed to make something that moved. Something loud enough to drown out the past, and ridiculous enough to make me laugh in the middle of it. These songs are exaggerated, electrified versions of my reality: the pain's still there, but now it's wearing rhinestones, strobe lights, and the occasional cowboy hat.

Think of it as CountryCore 2.0, or Bonnie and Clyde in the year 3000. The beat goes hard. The boots still got spurs. And I'm still singing—just with a few more vocal FXs and a lot more reasons to move.

## ABOUT THE ALBUM

This one's for the disco cowboys, the space outlaws, the ones two-stepping under neon lights. Volume 5 is the comic relief in *The Birth of Forest Chump* — but it's still serious music. These are my originals, electrified: breakbeats, trap hats, disco synths, and country swagger all colliding in one big, glittery crash. There's humor here, but also exhaustion — from fame culture, from genre rules, from the idea that you have to suffer to be taken seriously.

Most of this album came from me, a MIDI keyboard, and a willingness to get ridiculous. But for *Sebastian's Theme* — an electronic reimagining of one of my classical compositions — I stepped away from the rig and sat down at a nine-foot concert grand Steinway, brought in just for the **Yellow Dog Studio** session. It's my ghosts in 4/4 time, dressed for the dance floor.

Two-time Grammy-winning drummer **Derrek Phillips** plays the Roland SPDx on some tracks, bringing human swing to synthetic chaos, while **Harmoni Kelley** — bassist and vocalist for **Kenny Chesney** — drops an electronic low end that rumbles like a freight train headed straight for the club. Over it all, **James Viega** — engineer and producer for **Garth Brooks** and **Trisha Yearwood** — adds the final polish, letting the grit shine without sanding down the edges. Nothing here is too clean, too cool, or too controlled. That's the point. This is the volume where Forest Chump finally stops caring what anyone thinks — and just dances.

## TRACK NOTES

Volume 5 trades the shadows of the South for the strobe lights of the future. These tracks don't unpack trauma — they light it on fire and dance through the smoke. I'm still telling stories, but this time it's through synth leads, sub-bass, and breakbeats. Think: country boy meets Daft Punk in a truck stop bathroom. There's swagger, satire, and a whole lot of distortion — both sonic and emotional. This volume revisits some earlier themes (CountryCore returns with a vengeance) but flips the mood: less confession, more confrontation. It's Bonnie and Clyde in the year 3000, armed with 808s and auto-tune. Every song here is a grin with a gold tooth.

### **“COUNTRYCORE”** *by FOREST CHUMP*

Pure satire — but not just a joke. I wrote it to poke holes in the formula of modern country pop: the brand drops, the fake blue-collar cosplay, the algorithmic patriotism. Beneath the humor, there's frustration. I've lived the struggle these songs pretend to represent, and I know what a real country looks like — it doesn't come with a marketing budget.

### **“EGO”** *by FOREST CHUMP*

A confrontation with the voice in your head that never shuts up — the one that calls you a failure, fraud, and joke. For anyone battling mental illness, that voice is relentless. This is my fight song. Raw, blunt, unapologetic.

### **“FEELIN' RECKLESS”** *by FOREST CHUMP*

A moonshine-fueled mission statement. Part Houston hurricane, part rodeo clown in orbit, it's built for big bass and bad decisions. Loud lyrics, punchline-heavy beats, proudly unhinged energy. Not about getting it right — about turning it up, knocking it down, and waking up grinning with no regrets.

### **“WATCH OUT FOR TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE”** *by FOREST CHUMP*

Written when the spell broke. About the kind of person who makes you fall fast, then drains you dry. Funk-boogie basslines and disco beats mask a warning: some charm is weaponized.

### **“DOUBLE WIDE ROCKET”** *by FOREST CHUMP*

Neon space outlaw anthem. Deep-fried sci-fi with glitter on the boots. Two disco-damaged lovers blasting through the galaxy in a double-wide — a 31st-century Bonnie and Clyde with zero F's to give in zero G's. Chaos on purpose.

### **“KISS KISS BANG BANG”** *by FOREST CHUMP*

She's got charm weaponized and bad news in heels. This came from that dangerous border where lust and trouble live side by side — and sometimes share a bed. Playful, loud, and a little unhinged, with a warning baked in: the second you're pulled in, the damage is already done.

### **“KILLIN’ JIM MILLER”** *by FOREST CHUMP*

Swagger and shadows in a pulsing, electronic outlaw ballad about Texas’s deadliest man. Jim “Killin’ Jim” Miller — church on Sunday, murder for hire by Monday. 808s like gunshots, a stalking bassline, and lyrics painting him as the Lone Star devil in disguise.

### **“COWBOY DISCO”** *by FOREST CHUMP*

Pure yeehaw-meets-EDM. Kicks the saloon doors open at 115 BPM with a bassline built for trouble. The neon-lit cousin to *Double Wide Rocket*, blending outlaw swagger with club heat. Simple lyrics by design — it’s about release.

### **“SEBASTIAN’S THEME”** *by FOREST CHUMP*

An electronic reimagining of one of my classical compositions, played on a nine-foot concert grand Steinway at Yellow Dog Studio. Harmoni Kelley joins on electronic bass, giving the piece a pulse that blurs the line between recital hall and dance floor.

### **“ROLL THE DICE”** *by BUKOWSKI arranged by FOREST CHUMP*

A one-minute musical rearrangement and distillation of Bukowski’s poem. The grit of his words meets my cowboy-electronic hybrid sound — part spoken-word saloon, part neon-lit confession booth.

## RECORDING CONTEXT

Volume 5 was produced with zero acoustic instruments — except for one glorious exception — and 100% attitude. Most of these tracks were built with a MIDI keyboard inside a DAW, not a cabin: no rules, no filters, no one looking over my shoulder. Just me, a laptop, some beat packs, and a twisted sense of humor.

Every sound you hear was programmed, chopped, or warped into place — drum machines, modular synths, pitch-shifted vocals, auto-tuned hooks, trap hi-hats, and basslines fatter than a county fair corndog. Some vocal takes were recorded straight into a laptop mic, then mangled until they fit the aesthetic. A few tracks feature the Roland SPDx in the hands of **Derrek Phillips**, a two-time Grammy-winning drummer who somehow made a drum pad sound like a stampede of disco horses.

The lone acoustic moment comes on *Sebastian's Theme*, where I stepped away from the MIDI rig and onto a nine-foot concert grand Steinway, brought in for me at **Yellow Dog Studio**. **Harmoni Kelley** — bassist and vocalist for **Kenny Chesney** — joins me here on electronic bass, blurring the lines between recital hall and dance floor.

At the console for this volume — and all six volumes — is **James Viega**, longtime engineer and producer for **Garth Brooks** and **Trisha Yearwood**. His role: add the polish without taming the chaos. I didn't make Volume 5 to win any purist points. I made it because I needed to move again — physically, creatively, emotionally. The acoustic piano gave way to synth bass and space noise, and somehow it still sounds like me. Just... chompier.



## A PERSONAL NOTE

After all the grief, the gaslighting, the ghost towns and breakdowns... I needed to have a little fun.

Volume 5 isn't about healing — it's about hijacking the getaway car. It's a sonic joyride through everything I wasn't supposed to feel: swagger, sarcasm, seduction, and straight-up absurdity. Most of it came from me, a MIDI keyboard, and the stubborn refusal to sit still. On *Sebastian's Theme*, I traded that setup for a nine-foot concert grand Steinway at **Yellow Dog Studio**, with **Harmoni Kelley** on electronic bass and **Derrek Phillips** on Roland SPDx — a reminder that even my ghosts know how to dance. And through it all, **James Viega** was at the console, adding just enough polish to let the grit shine.

These songs gave me room to laugh again, even if it was through gritted teeth and vocoder. There's real pain behind the glitter, but I didn't want to wear it on my sleeve this time — I wanted to wear sequins.

If the earlier volumes were about survival, this one's about reinvention. A disco ball cracked in half, reflecting a thousand versions of me. And if some of them are outlaws, clowns, or cowboys in space... so be it. I earned the right to play.

— Forest Chump

# VOLUME 6. STUDIO CHUMP

## ARTIST STATEMENT

Volume 6 is the closing chapter of *The Birth of Forest Chump* — but it's also a new beginning. After the stripped-down recordings, the digital exorcisms, the jail cells, and the psych ward laments, I wanted to give these songs the full treatment they deserved. This time, my hands were on the steering wheel more as an arranger than as a constant performer, shaping the music in the spirit of **Bill Evans and his Trio** — giving the rhythm section room to breathe, lead, and respond.

I play piano only on a handful of tracks, leaving much of the conversation to the band: Grammy-winning drummer **Derrek Phillips**, and **Harmoni Kelley**, bassist and vocalist for **Kenny Chesney** — both masters of feel, finesse, groove, and fire. The focus here isn't about one instrument dominating, but about the interplay — the kind of give-and-take that makes a band sound alive.

At the console, **James Viega** — longtime engineer and producer for **Garth Brooks** and **Trisha Yearwood** — brings the final polish, making sure every detail is clear without ever flattening the emotion. His role is the same as it's been throughout the project: enhance, never interfere.

But the heart of it is still the same. These are songs I wrote in the aftermath — of betrayal, erasure, recovery, and return. They've survived rough demos, jailhouse scribbles, and psychiatric holds. Here, they rise with new life. The arrangements are lush, but the stories are raw. Every line, every chord, came from lived experience — I just had the luxury of sharing the load this time.

This volume is about reclaiming sound and space. It's about not just surviving, but thriving — louder, richer, and with a band behind me that knows how to feel it all.

## ABOUT THE ALBUM

This isn't a repeat — it's a reinvention. Some of these songs first appeared in Volume 2, written during and after a complete personal collapse. But here, they've been rebuilt from the ground up — restructured with new arrangements, new players, and, in some cases, entirely new life. Volume 6 is where the songs breathe different air — not stripped down, but stood back up.

We tracked it all at **Yellow Dog Studio**, the kind of place where the walls listen. I played piano sparingly, choosing instead to approach the music as an arranger, much like **Bill Evans and his Trio** — letting the rhythm section drive the conversation. **Derrek Phillips** (2× Grammy-winning drummer) doesn't just play drums here — he shapes the space. **Harmoni Kelley** (bassist and vocalist for **Kenny Chesney**) doesn't just anchor the groove — she gives it lift. The interplay between them is the heartbeat of this record.

At the console, **James Viega** — longtime engineer and producer for **Garth Brooks** and **Trisha Yearwood** — adds his signature polish, making sure every nuance in the band's dialogue comes through without losing the rawness that defines these songs.

This album is full-band, full-blooded, and full of second chances. It's what happens when you make it out — not clean, not untouched, but unbroken. *Forest Chump lived to tell the tale. Ryan Lee Reid didn't.*

## TRACK NOTES

These songs are different — not just because they're mine, but because of how they came to life. Some were scribbled in a journal in jail. Some were written with an unsanctioned pen I kept hidden in the psych ward. Others were finished in the quiet moments when the noise finally stopped. On this volume, I'm not carrying the weight alone: **Derrek Phillips**(drums) and **Harmoni Kelley** (bass and vocals) bring a fire, finesse, and groove that turns these survival stories into something you can move to. The arrangements are built like a **Bill Evans Trio** session — conversation between instruments, space for breath, rhythm section at the center. I play piano on only a handful of tracks, stepping back to shape the whole picture. At the console, **James Viega** — longtime engineer and producer for **Garth Brooks** and **Trisha Yearwood** — adds the final polish without ever taming the edges. What you hear is one-take energy, real-time chemistry, and scars that swing. These aren't just songs — they're proof that Forest Chump made it out... but Ryan Lee Reid didn't.

### **“COUNTRYCORE”** *by FOREST CHUMP*

This one's pure satire — but it's not just a joke. I wrote it to poke holes in the formula of modern country pop: the brand drops, the fake blue-collar cosplay, the algorithmic patriotism. But beneath the humor, there's frustration. I've lived the struggle these songs pretend to represent. And I've seen what a real country looks like — it doesn't come with a marketing budget.

### **“EGO”** *by FOREST CHUMP*

This track is a full-on confrontation — not with another person, but with the voice in your head that never shuts up. The one that says you're a failure, a fraud, a joke. That voice lives rent-free in the mind of anyone battling mental illness, and mine has a sharp tongue. I wrote this as a fight song. Not polished, not poetic — just me telling my ego to go fuck itself and finally meaning it.

### **“FEELIN' RECKLESS”** *by FOREST CHUMP*

This one's a moonshine-fueled mission statement. Part Houston hurricane, part rodeo clown in orbit, it's built for big bass and bad decisions. The lyrics are loud, the beat hits like a punchline, and the whole thing is proudly unhinged. It's not about getting it right — it's about turning it up, knocking it down, and waking up the next morning with a grin and no regrets. Good times are the philosophy. Reckless is the brand.

### **“DON'T SCOOTER BRAUN ME”** *by FOREST CHUMP*

This one's about being used — emotionally, creatively, and professionally. I wrote love songs on demand to hold a relationship together that was already falling apart. When someone takes your talent and turns it into leverage, it stops being collaboration — it becomes control. This is me taking the pen back.

### **“DOUBLE WIDE ROCKET”** *by FOREST CHUMP*

This is my neon space outlaw anthem. Think deep-fried sci-fi with glitter on the boots. It's two disco-damaged lovers blasting through the galaxy in a double wide — a 31st-century Bonnie and Clyde who give zero F's in zero G's. The beat's wild, the attitude's lawless, and the whole thing is one big yeehaw from the outer rim. It's chaos on purpose. 5150 at the cowboy disco.

### **“KISS KISS BANG BANG”** *by FOREST CHUMP*

She's got charm weaponized and bad news in heels. This song came out of a place where lust and danger live right next to each other — and sometimes share a bed. It's playful, loud, and a little unhinged, just like the woman it describes. There's humor in it, but there's warning too. Because the second you're pulled in, the damage is already done. Kiss kiss. Bang bang. Good luck.

### **“PILLBILLY BLUES”** *by FOREST CHUMP*

This one's an elegy for anyone who's been broke, doped, and laughed at their own collapse. I wrote it after the psych ward, when pills and late bills were running my life. There's sarcasm in the lines, but every word is true. It's about streaming pennies, rock bottom's basement, and how hitting the floor for a dropped pill can feel like a holy mission. This is gallows humor — Southern fried and barely holding on.

### **“MAGNUS'S THEME”** *by FOREST CHUMP*

A companion piece to *Sebastian's Theme*, performed on a nine-foot concert grand Steinway at Yellow Dog Studio. Harmoni Kelley on bass brings warmth and gravity, with Derrek Phillips' drums framing it like a heartbeat. A quieter moment, but no less alive.

### **“ALL I DO IS EAT & WEAR MY MONEY”** *by FOREST CHUMP*

This is what it looks like when grief puts on designer clothes. I wrote it at a time when I was blowing money just to feel something — caviar, Balmain, and the dumbest shit imaginable. There's humor in it, but it's not a joke. I wasn't living. I was spending to survive. And the more I bought, the emptier it felt.

### **“TROUBLE IN MIND”** *by RICHARD M. JONES*

The only non-original on the album. A century-old blues standard reimagined with gospel undertones, featuring Harmoni Kelley on background vocals. A song of sorrow that refuses to sink — the perfect note to close this chapter.

### **“BUSY LIVIN' OR BUSY DYIN'”** *by FOREST CHUMP*

This song came from that gray space between hope and burnout — when every day feels the same, and you're not sure which direction you're headed anymore. I felt like a cowboy with nowhere left to ride, still singing songs while the clock kept ticking. It's about motion without meaning. Life without traction. And wondering if you're living at all, or just slowly fading out.

**“ROUND TOP DAYS”** *by FOREST CHUMP*

I wrote this looking back at the moment it all felt real — before everything unraveled. Round Top was where we fell in love, or thought we did. Time moved differently there. It was quiet, sacred, almost cinematic. Now all that’s left are the memories, and the question of what was real and what was just a beautifully timed illusion.

## RECORDING CONTEXT

After tracking the earlier volumes in solitude — just one man, one piano, one mic — Volume 6 was my return to the studio and to collaboration. We cut these songs live at **Yellow Dog Studio**, where the chemistry was instant.

I approached this record more like an arranger than a constant performer, in the spirit of the **Bill Evans Trio** — giving the rhythm section space to lead the conversation. I only sat down at the piano on a handful of tracks, including *Magnus's Theme* on a nine-foot Steinway Concert D brought in specially for the session.

**Derrek Phillips** — two-time Grammy-winning drummer who's played with everyone from **Victor Wooten** to **Sly & The Family Stone** to **Hank Williams Jr.** — brought his rhythmic genius and intuitive sense of space. **Harmoni Kelley** — longtime bassist and vocalist for **Kenny Chesney** — anchored the low end with tone, taste, and a touch of Texas swagger, and on *Trouble in Mind* added gospel harmonies that brought the song full circle.

While the stories remained mine — born in chaos, betrayal, and rebirth — the sound got bigger. We tracked live, no click tracks, no overdubbed soul, just three players in a room telling the truth. At the console, **James Viega** — longtime engineer and producer for **Garth Brooks** and **Trisha Yearwood** — added the polish that let every detail shine without losing the grit.

## A PERSONAL NOTE

After losing everything — my marriage, my kids, my name, my work, even my voice for a time — I never thought I'd be back in a studio, much less finishing a six-volume series with musicians of this caliber. But here we are.

Most of these songs were born in chaos — written in jail, in the psych ward, or in the wreckage of the life I used to live. To hear them now, shaped in the spirit of a **Bill Evans Trio** session, with **Derrek Phillips** and **Harmoni Kelley** breathing life into every bar, feels like a kind of redemption I never asked for but desperately needed. My own role here was often less about taking the spotlight and more about arranging the conversation, giving the rhythm section space to speak.

We didn't chase perfection. We chased feel. The kind of feel that comes from playing through the pain and laughing anyway. The kind that only shows up when you're finally free. And at the console, **James Viega** made sure that freedom — the grit, the joy, the swing — was heard exactly as it was in the room.

Thanks for listening.

— Forest Chump



