
JamesNotJim | *Quiet* | Liner Notes

Quiet is an album of instrumental, guitar-based music. My appreciation for ambient music started, as it does for a lot of people, with Brian Eno's "Ambient 1: Music for Airports," and especially with the first track off that album, "1/1." I also subscribe to Eno's definition of ambient music as being designed to "induce calm and a space to think" while remaining "as ignorable as it is interesting." I also drew inspiration from Aphex Twin's "Selected Ambient Works Volume II," particularly the first track, unofficially known as "Cliffs."

Christopher Willits first showed me that guitarists could create ambient music. Before I encountered his work, I thought of ambient as the domain of keyboardists and electronic musicians. But, given modern production techniques, I suppose we're all electronic musicians now. Some of us just prefer the guitar as the primary instrument for creating it.

The field has exploded since then, of course. Today, in addition to those previously mentioned, I draw inspiration from a wide variety of ambient artists, including Lowercase Noises, Chords of Orion, and dozens of others.

Tracks

SNOW DAY

This is the first track I wrote for *Quiet*. It was a snow day, our first in a long while, and I tried to capture the mood of it: the stillness, the quiet, the touch of melancholy.

MILES TO GO BEFORE I SLEEP

Inspired by the Robert Frost poem, "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," this is another track written in winter and attempting to capture some of the essence of having miles to go before you sleep.

THE SPACE BETWEEN

The title for this one was inspired by Piet Mondrian's paintings of trees, in some of which he often emphasizes the spaces between the branches so much that they become the focal point, rather than the limbs.

SANTA FE

I've only been to Santa Fe once, but I really liked it. It's so different from the part of the US I'm used to that it feels like another country. The landscape, the architecture, the climate. It's a fascinating place I hope to visit again. The first guitar I ever played was my dad's archtop acoustic, a Harmony from the 1930s that said "Old Santa Fe" on the headstock and had Gene Autry's signature on one of the lower bouts. I have that guitar now. It hangs on the wall in my studio.

OCTOBER

October is my favorite month. There's Halloween, of course. It's also the month of my wife's birthday. I like the weather and the fall colors. I don't like pumpkin-spice lattes, but I'm a fan of the regular sort.

DARK AND DEEP

"Dark and Deep" is another one inspired by Robert Frost's "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening." The final lines of that poem are "The woods are lovely, dark and deep, / But I have promises to keep, / And miles to go before I sleep, / And miles to go before I sleep." Those lines echo around in my head quite a lot.

BY ANY OTHER NAME

I stole a line from Shakespeare's, *Romeo and Juliet*, where Juliet says to Romeo "What's in a name? That which we call a rose / By any other name would smell as sweet;"

DAVE

I have a Pomeranian named Dave. Everyone loves him, even people who don't normally like little silly dogs like him. Dave is also a friend of mine who convinced me that I should try creating some ambient music. Everyone loves that other Dave, too. Some magic in the name, perhaps. Just luck, maybe. In any case, I needed a name for this track, and both of those fine fellows were top of mind.

FOG

A lot of this album is about trying to capture, in music, the vibe of real-life things. Since it's an ambient album, those things need to be, mostly, calm and meditative. Fog, like snow, changes our perception of the world, if only for a short while, making it new.

OCEANS AT NIGHT

Years ago, in 2006, I wrote a fusion track called "Ocean" and released it on Bandcamp. Back then, I was trying to do everything on the bass. "Ocean" was part of an unfinished album I had planned to call "Structure." I abandoned that project--and, in large part, that genre--but, like most people who grew up in land-locked places, I've always found the ocean a bit mysterious. For a number of years, I lived in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, with the Atlantic Ocean a mere five minutes away. Familiarity often lessens the mystery and magic of things. In this case, it did not. Perhaps for something that vast, it can't.

SNOW DAY REDUX

The only thing this track really has in common with "Snow Day" is that it, too, was written on one. Since a lot of *Quiet* is quite somber, I wanted to end on an up note.

Gear

Quiet was recorded in 2024 and early 2025 in my home studio—Red Owl Studios—in Fayetteville, Arkansas with the the following gear:

Guitar: Fender Classic Series 60s Stratocaster

Bass: Fender Precision Bass Special

Amps: Fender Super-Champ X2, Acoustic B100 MKII

Effects: MXR Dyna Comp, EarthQuaker Devices Special Cranker, Fulltone OCD, BOSS PS-6

Harmonist, Boss OC-3 Super Octave, MXR Phase 95, Marshall VT-1 Vibratrem, TC Electronic

Flashback, EarthQuaker Devices Avalanche Run, EarthQuaker Devices Pyramids, Electro-Harmonix

Oceans 11, EarthQuaker Devices Afterneath.

Mic/Interface: Sure SM57 / Focusrite Scarlett 2i2

Computer/DAW: An ancient Apple iMac from 2008 running GarageBand 10.2.0

The Person Making the Noises

JamesNotJim is James "Wheatbread" Martin, a bassist and guitarist who spent his formative years riding around the US in vans, playing bass in a variety of bands based in Fayetteville, Arkansas, including OX, Punkinhead, Local 151, The Tares, and Nancy. These days, he composes, records, and releases instrumental music from his home studio. *Quiet* (2025) is his second solo release, following *Whole Wheat Funk* (2023). The homepage for the project is jamesnotjim.com