

STEREO

EMPIRE ELECTRIC

đế chế điện



NO-NO BOY

không-không cậu

EMPIRE ELECTRIC

NO-NO BOY

1 THE ONION KINGS OF ONTARIO! 3:21

JULIAN SAPORITI/WEST MEADE MUSIC, ASCAP

2 NASHVILLE 4:35

JULIAN SAPORITI/WEST MEADE MUSIC, ASCAP

3 MEKONG BABY 3:41

JULIAN SAPORITI/WEST MEADE MUSIC, ASCAP

4 WESTERN EMPRESS OF THE ORIENT SAWMILL 3:31

JULIAN SAPORITI/WEST MEADE MUSIC, ASCAP

5 JAKARTA 4:09

JULIAN SAPORITI/WEST MEADE MUSIC, ASCAP

6 NOTHING LEFT BUT YOU 4:02

JULIAN SAPORITI/WEST MEADE MUSIC, ASCAP

7 LITTLE MONK 3:29

JULIAN SAPORITI/WEST MEADE MUSIC, ASCAP

8 SAYONARA 3:21

JULIAN SAPORITI/WEST MEADE MUSIC, ASCAP

9 MINIDOKA 3:39

JULIAN SAPORITI/WEST MEADE MUSIC, ASCAP

10 1603 5:31

JULIAN SAPORITI/WEST MEADE MUSIC, ASCAP

Produced by
JULIAN SAPORITI

genetics, etc
dly self-made
our own act, p.17
ned them
e of books,

Mekong Baby
1603
Younger Once
Nothing Left But you
Jakarta
Sayonara
Two Chinos
Western Empress
Onion Kings
Little Monk
The Siamese Twins
Montilla

INTRODUCTION

Empire Electric is a wandering; a letting go. A search party. For sounds, for history, and for self. It is a coming back.

When my wife Emilia and I finished our respective programs at Brown University, we couldn't leave campus fast enough. Sometimes you just need to empty out and split. So we pointed the car west and drove. The first place we stopped was a monastery in upstate New York called Blue Cliff. A good place to recalibrate.

Thich Nhat Hanh, the founder of this monastery, played an important role in my life. His slim books were constant companions during my Wyoming years. I wore out their bindings and dusted their pages on hiking trails and mountainsides all over the West. Thich was the first Viet writer I ever came across and his teachings helped me mightily, connecting me with my spirit, nature, and our shared war-torn heritage. Visiting his monastery was next level and that's where this album really begins.

During our week with the monks, we ate in silence, meditated, walked a lot, drank tea, did chores, and slept outside. It was raw, sometimes difficult, but healing. After ten years in grad school, my thinking was deep but narrow. That world had stripped a lot of joy, wonder, and purpose from me. Sitting with the monks at Blue Cliff, learning like a child, it was humbling and profound. For the first time since I had moved back east, I felt myself returning. The calcified mask of the intellectual professional began to crack open. Light started pouring back into my brain. I was taught tricks for patching up a leaking heart. Daily lessons provided much-needed perspective. The air felt clean, again.

I came away from this experience a scholar on my own terms, clear-eyed on how I wanted to use the immense amount of studying I'd done. While I still collaborate with many colleagues in the academy, I won't go near the brutalizing job market or hoop-jumping tenure process, nor publish in the gatekeeper-y, jargon-filled journals of my

fields. Why would I when I can share my research through music with so many more people (including other scholars)? Would you read my dissertation? No, but you are listening to it.

Taking what I learned from the monks, I attempted to enter the next phase of my life with joy and curiosity. To experiment more, think less, spend more time in nature, and get back to pursuing music fully—much easier when you’re not working on a PhD. *Empire Electric* is what I made along this new path. It is a more adventurous album than the previous No-No Boy LPs. Musically, it’s more realized and I really enjoyed creating the deep layers of sonic pastiche—“traditional” American folk sounds, Asian instruments, electronics, and field recordings—that make up the album’s instrumentation.

Extra time in the studio, as well as extensive collaborations with my co-producers Emilia Halvorsen Saporiti and Seth Boggess, yielded sounds I hadn’t made (or heard) before, sounds which genuinely surprised me.

This was exciting! I leaned into acts of mutation, blending, and mixing. A lot of this record is still “folky,” but each track contains some musical element that begs listeners to complicate their understanding of what folk music can be. At the end of the day, I wanted to create something reflective of my multicultural American background. *Empire Electric*’s sonic diversity allowed me to convey the trans-Pacific histories I study as a scholar—stories of refugees, immigrants, in-betweeners, balancers—through music, as well as the lyrics.

Like previous No-No Boy material, these songs are based on my research, pulled from archives, oral histories, and site visits. Place is a central component of these songs. A triptych of Oregon pieces (“Onion Kings,” “Western Empress,” “1603”) explores lesser-known histories in my new home state. “Nashville,” named after my birthplace, incorporates autobiography in a rewrite of an old song I never got right, but wanted to reckon with once more.

Empire extends deeper into Asia than my previous work. “Mekong Baby” and “Nothing Left But You” focus on my family’s Viet lineage—balancing war, memory, and childhood. The lush field-recording collage “Jakarta” was inspired by my coursework on Southeast Asia. “Sayonara,” an indie-rock-meets-’80s-city-pop-*taiko* catharsis, works through the brutality of Japanese imperialism that still scars many older Asian folks to this day. “Little Monk,” the album’s center, returns us to the monastery.

In common folk fashion, I built most of these songs around acoustic guitar, but there’s also a lot of banjo on this record, a nod to the diverse foundations of American folk music. Nestled alongside the banjo are intentional pepperings of lap-steel guitar. While many folks now understand the banjo’s African origins—see Smithsonian Folkways label mates Jake Blount and Rhiannon Giddens—the imperial origins (Hawai’i) of the slide guitar are lesser known but equally essential to the foundations of Americana or roots music. The first electrified

form of the guitar was in fact based on this Asian American Pacific Islander invention. Growing up in Tennessee, I often felt pangs of racial inauthenticity due to the overwhelming whiteness of the indie, folk, and country music scenes in town. Little did I know all this music was built on Black and Brown innovation and belonging to all.

On “Nashville,” lap steel and banjo purposefully intermingle with samples of Chinese *pipa*, *guzheng*, and *dizi*. Mariachi violins appear during the instrumental section and throughout there are beds of dreamy indie guitars. All of this is layered over an interlocking rhythm of hand claps, Arabian and West African percussion, and a drumbeat leaning heavily on toms, originally known as the “Chinese tom-toms,” and brought to the United States by 19th-century Chinese immigrants. This is how America sounds to me. *Empire Electric* stitches my research on culture, immigration, and empire into every song.

As with No-No Boy’s previous Smithsonian Folkways release *1975*, I cultivated sound samples from sites of my historical research.

These samples were sometimes turned into percussion or pitched instruments and manipulated by electronics (chopping, reversing, granulating, pitching, delay, reverb). On *Empire*, I also incorporated a lot of field recordings from natural spaces—lots of water, forest sounds, and birds—on this album. Adding these textures was a key component in situating these songs in historical and geographical contexts.

All these sound layers serve the purpose of investigating/expressing a very mixed-up identity, but, getting back to the monastery, these songs also sound out a call to practice *deep listening* (Pauline Oliveros riffing on Buddhism). If you find this music to your liking, I invite you to settle in with good headphones or a stereo and listen closely to all the sounds present, to unravel them, to take time, to breathe, and hopefully to listen beyond even the music, to yourself, to the world around you, to history, to your community, to nature.



Scholar by waterfall, Columbia River Gorge, 2021

Thank you for listening.

Sincerely,

Dr. Julian Saporiti (2023)

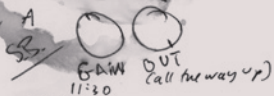
TRACK NOTES

Vocal Tracking →



Onion Kings

1. Neumann mic, N→A (Good but not right for OK.oo)
2. Ribbon mic, A
- good for quiet, try on Western Express



Neumann mic, N→A

3. Decided to go w/ Neumann set up so vocals can cut through other tracks.
- Brighter



Jakarta
Little Monk

emilia on charo set

Redo

1. Table set (line) ✓
2. you @ bar 23 ✓
(but keep arrival)
Take 3
3. Sunday pens (line)
4. Tend the fire (line)
5. We're all wait

NASH OD

1

THE ONION KINGS OF ONTARIO!

Julian Saporiti, lead vocal, instruments, programming; Emilia Halvorsen Saporiti, harmony vocal

← shakuhachi + koto in reverse ← strains of a forgotten pastoral...for my friend

Jim Mizuta + his community in eastern Oregon who made good lives after the camps. Onion fields and Buddhist churches. Written during a residency at Surel's Place in Boise. Thanks, Gregg.



Julian Saporiti and Jim Mizuta, Heart Mountain Pilgrimage 2017, courtesy of Gregg Mizuta

Table set old country style

Hoist the banner and leave the light on

Western treasure valley child

We're all waiting for your arrival!

Your, your arrival

Sunday pews, worn Buddha Bible

Tend the fire and clean your rifle

Sow your field Issei survivor

We're all waiting for your arrival!

In praise, we sing

The onion kings!

Till the land for miles

Oh, time shall bring a reckoning

Waiting for your arrival

Your arrival

In praise, we sing

The onion kings!

Till the land for miles

Time shall bring her reckoning

Waiting for your arrival

We're all waiting for your arrival!

NASHVILLE

Julian Saporiti, lead vocal, instruments, programming; Emilia Halvorsen Saporiti, harmony vocal; Kristin Weber, violin, additional vocal; Hamilton Berry, cello

Wrote this song once before (2007). Despite the autobiography, I still couldn't find myself in the lyric until I fictionalized it and turned the leads Brown. My heart will always belong in Tennessee. For Neil McCoy, Iwan Fals, and my Pops.

Cane sugar Magnolia sweet

Mama dressed like a Pinay queen

Kara Oki could sing anything

Like some mockingbird in the morning

She'd been touring the southern land

Cut her teeth in a backing band

Manila born, raised in Birmingham

*She cried when they
played on the Opry*

*Three flights from
Mindoro, so he could
Catch Dwight at that
Ryman show*

*Then Grimey booked
him for a Slow Bar slow
night*

To open up the bill

*Sore thumb at the
honky-tonks*

*But that kid he lived for
the songs*

*And Fiddles falling into
steel guitars*

*He wore a tattoo
Tennessee*

*Singer says to the singer
Hey, it looks like we're
sharing the bill*

*So, you and I, guess
we'll always have
Nashville*

*She had played a million
shows like this*

*But she had never heard
no songs like his*

*He told her, "Baby, I'm
a Dylan kid*

*But my favorite song is
'Maaf Cintaku'"
(look it up)*

*He loaded out just before
her set*

*Wrapped in a cloud of
cigarettes*

*He heard a voice that
you don't forget*

*She sang, "Meet Me in
the Morning"*

*Not 56th and Wabasha
just the*

*Donut Den over by the
mall, she said*

*Brother, sometimes I
miss it all, he nodded*

*Looking at the modded
F-150s*

Michael Martin Murphey, Randy
Travis, Bob Saporiti, and Roy Rogers,
Montana, 1990



*She bought him tickets
to the hall of fame*

*Sometimes it takes a
tourist to reframe*

*Gram's jacket up there
on display*

*"Oh, sister, you live in a
goldmine"*

*Singer said to the singer
As they stumbled up to
Capitol Hill*

*You and I, we will
always have Nashville*

*He worked concessions
for the Sounds*

*Kara hustled, made the
music row rounds*

*Called him soon as the
deal went down*

*"Meet me at RCA B in
the morning"*

*He gave her his greatest
song*

*They cut a record to
travel on*

*Picked up a band that
could do no wrong
She taught him how to
sing*

*That record bought 'em
both big backyards but
The years passed, the
city lost its charms*

*The condos swallowed
up the boulevards
He only stuck around
for her*

*Somewhere on the
endless road*

*He decided to leave the
show*

*+ 63 he changed a
country code*

*You gotta know when a
goldmine is gutted*

*Singer said to the singer
No, I don't think we'll be
sharing the bill*

*This town is a shell of
a shell*

I reckon I had my fill

*Oh, we had it for a good
long run*

*But now, the bridal
party's making me ill*

*You and I, remember
when we had Nashville*

*You and I, oh, once we
had Nashville*

*You and I, we will
always have Nashville*



Father and Son, Julian and Bob Saporiti,
Nashville, 2022

3

MEKONG BABY

Julian Saporiti, lead vocal, instruments, programming;
Thai Hien, vocal

All praise to Thai Hien, a Viet musical auntie who lends her voice, grace, and grounding to this looking back. Hien's father was Phạm Duy, famed Viet ethnomusicologist and songwriter. I actually recorded most of this on a portable sampler one afternoon at Tryon Creek State Park waiting to pick up Emilia from law school next door. For Tata Nicole, my mom, and their mom.



Julian, Tata Nicole, Delphine, Adrien,
Jacqueline, and Bà Ngoai, Paris, 1990

*Ngày xưa ta rất dại khờ
Sail away Mekong baby*

Cùng ra khơi

*Cháu con dòng Cửu
Long*

*Sail away Mekong
Baby*

We were lovers once

Ngày xưa ta rất dại khờ

*Cháu con dòng Cửu
Long*

*And I was younger
once*

*How your charm
offensive tested*

*And you were younger
once*

*All I own are second
guesses*

And so it goes

Fighting on the beach

And so it goes

Violence in our teeth

*Cháu con Cửu Long
sông*

*Cháu con Cửu Long
sông*

*Sail away Mekong
baby...*

*Năm mươi con có về
vùng núi non*

*Nửa bãi con năm mươi
về đại dương*

Sail away

*Cháu con, Cháu con
Cửu Long sông*

Mekong Baby

4

WESTERN EMPRESS OF THE ORIENT SAWMILL

Julian Saporiti, lead vocal, instruments, programming;
Emilia Halvorsen Saporiti, harmony vocal

True story of Miyo Iwakoshi, first Japanese settler (1880) in Oregon. Buried for decades in the Gresham Pioneer cemetery next to her Australian-Scot husband Andrew McKinnon with no headstone (b/c not white). Only marker was a Japanese Cedar—still there, mighty tall, today. Thanks to Wynn Kiyama for telling me about this story and asking me to write this song. Wynn and Portland Taiko performed on early versions of several of these songs and I used samples of many of their instruments for this album and 1975.

Oregon Nikkei

First of the forest

*Steam-powered sawmill
town*

*Patience and patience
now*

Samurai plowshare

Old Nagasaki

*The Scotsman makes
funny sounds*

*Turning the language
round*

*Learning enough for
asking her out*

Rafts made of hardwood

Wide as the river

Orient girls confound

*Like Monarchs on
frozen ground*

*Miyo buried Andrew's
body*

Gresham Pioneer

*Tama and the Kyoto
salesman*

Married earlier last year

Pose for a photo

Oh, how the years go

*Flanked by two
grandsons proud*

*Jewels and a modest
gown*

Long for the islands
 Welcome the workers
 Burnish a simple crown
 Patience and patience
 now
 Patience and patience
 now
 Hakujin lover, baby,
 let's go, oh,
 Trail blazed and timbers
 down
 Fifty years before the
 expo
 Western empress
 brought 'em
 underground
 Miyo said I crossed a
 goddamn ocean for you,
 fool,
 I ain't leaving now
 Bury me, Japanese cedar
 tree
 Bury me, Japanese cedar
 tree

Old dutch song
 The slowest seasonal
 Got the notes all wrong
 We sailed anyway
~~young brown eyes~~ Two days done
 Bali lies before us
 Get ready girl
 Get ready girl
 The scholar's wife
~~The hawk observed with his eyes~~
 a sunbird's call
 Get ready, girl
 Get ready, girl, farewell
 Gifford Gearte,
 @ first
 the villagers
 sea

And wear your lonely feathers
 Dressed by the sun in the window

5

JAKARTA

Julian Saporiti, lead vocal, instruments, programming
Psychedelic daydream during Southeast Asian studies class. Sampling anthropologists sampling locals... jumping beats across bar lines like imperial watercolors running across maps of the continent and archipelagos. Laughing at Clifford Geertz. In utter appreciation of birds and their amazing music.

Old Dutch song, the slowest serenade

Got the notes all wrong, we smiled anyway

Two days drive, Bali lies before us!

Get ready girl

Get ready girl

The strange man Geertz, behold, the Harvard poser

We dropped him off, the villagers ignored him

A Sunbird's call took us to the sea

Get ready girl

Get ready girl for me

And wear your lonely feather

Dressed by the sun in the window

6

NOTHING LEFT BUT YOU

Julian Saporiti, lead vocal, instruments, programming;
Emilia Halvorsen Saporiti, harmony vocal

(Việt Nam) again... again...

remembering / never knowing / family /
Bloodline vibes

organ made from đàn bầu / guitar + habit =
chase bliss

Boggess made the last verse's orchestra

still here, mutation, displaceman, reformation.

still here—still there, too.

*What perfect harmony
still shakes me to the
core*

*Begot this cynic's soul to
rumble?*

It was in your voice

I had no choice

*But to rise and ring out
too*

When those records play

*All the clutter fades
away*

*And there is nothing left
but you*

*There are no labors that
can reset space or time*

*It's beyond sacrifice or
school*

I've learned a lot

*I've given up almost all
I got*

*I keep this passport I
can't use*

There's no soil to kiss

*Those old borders don't
exist*

*No, there is nothing left
but you*

*Ain't there some crest of
a wave, oh, way out on
the sea*

*In the back of a
godhead's ocean of
ancient memories*

*That lifts some sacred
boat*

*And its sailor, at least,
his charming ghost*

*Who earned your heart
when it was first free?*

*He was callous and
cruel*

LITTLE MONK

*But he bought your
dreams and saw them
through*

*To own the past, forgive
the fool*

*What steady rhythm
still doth move me at
this hour*

*To put my pen to page
and pray?*

For the reconcile

*To crack a joke and catch
a smile*

*Why keep my fingers
clenched dear muse?*

Because, once, I died

*And I came out the
other side*

*And there was nothing
left but you*

Julian Saporiti, lead vocal, instruments, programming; Emilia Halvorsen Saporiti, harmony vocal, lap steel; P.T. Banks, harmony vocal; Kristin Weber, violin

Little Monk was a real guy at the monastery.

He was very wise and looked like a cartoon monk.

The children gave him the nickname. He is very small.

Hear Coach Saban but this once, “be where your feet are.” (go vols!)

Slow down, listen deep, look clear at your own hypocrisy

Take down the yard signs, people. Give up on perfection or success

Carry hats for the homeless.

Shout less, sing more.

Empty out. Do kind. Wine less.

Eat well. For Thich and the monks at the monastery.

So, it's the end of the world, once again

What is it this week?

Protests over this

Riots over that

Do you remember at the monastery

When the outraged child cried

And Little Monk just sweetly smiled back?

Oh, how and when do I get so zen?

Light the way from your small apartment

Quiet days, worry within your reach

Tend your garden, do not harden

At the cruel and constant spinning of your mind's demands

Pro-tip for a good heart

Be where your feet are now

So, it's the end once again of the world

the sophomores bellyache

And demonstrate

Over everything but class

Red suns and ash cover

Half the state of California

Little Monk just meditates

And slowly walks the path

I can't control what I can't control

Light the way from your small apartment

Quiet days, worry within your reach

Tend your garden, do not harden

At the cruel and constant spinning of your mind's demands

Pro-tip for a good heart

Be where your feet are now

So it's the end of the world

But I don't feel so anxious this week

Drawing Canvasbacks

And sitting on the grass

Watch as they sweep the park

Trash the tents while it's still dark

Though once I lived out of a car

I wouldn't say I'm mad

To have the sidewalk back

Julian and Emilia Saporiti, Blue Cliff Monastery, New York, 2019



8

SAYONARA

Julian Saporiti, lead vocal, instruments, programming;
Emilia Halvorsen Saporiti, harmony vocal

Talking to Emilia's grandad about being marched around as a boy on his polio leg by some wicked Japanese in Taiwan. (See Korea, China, Southeast Asia too.) Brutal shit. He told the story over a sushi lunch. "Asian America" is an amnesiac, imbalanced (and for me, honestly, useless) term. Trace back your bloodline, cast off colonizers, sayonara 2 empire, and forgive everything. We're all all right / you're one of one, too.

*I never knew you but I
love you, kid*

*Man, that's the way it
goes*

*What's more lovely than
some secret hid*

*Who doesn't want that
ghost?*

*But oh, bloodlines, some
eyes like mine*

*A denim coat, a yellow
knife*

Under Taipei lights

*You told me where I
come from*

*Told me that I'm all
right*

*I didn't know what
hapa meant*

*You said, "Oh, you're so
white."*

*How does your mother
feel about black men?*

Babe, we're all all right

*We caught some heat
climbing up family trees*

*Forget violin and some
model minority*

Under Taipei lights

*You kissed my broken
eyes*

*You showed me that I'm
all right*

Sa, sa, sa, sayonara

*A sigh, a sigh, a sigh, a
sigh was all you said*

Sa, sa, sa, sayonara

An Empire's end



Delphine, Pilgrim, Julian, and Adrien,
Plymouth Plantation, 1992

*An old teak bar down by
the Kabuki screens*

*Sigh, sigh, sigh,
sayonara*

*You gave me a list of
books and an antique*

*Sigh, sigh, sigh,
sayonara*

*Some feudal charm from
century 16*

Sa, sa, sa, sayonara

A red lacquer box

*A sigh, a sigh, a sigh, a
sigh was all you said*

A white paper swan

Sa, sa, sa, sayonara

Black ink in Japanese

An Empire's end

MINIDOKA

Julian Saporiti, lead vocal, instruments, programming;
Emilia Halvorsen Saporiti, harmony vocal

Sing with me Chickie

Dance with me in Idaho

Cry for Jimmy's dead mother in Wyoming

Bad dreams and boredoms

Peace in the outfield

Barracks in the snow

I love you, friend

(commissioned by the national parks)

I'll never know

*Some kid drowned in
the river*

*Now, we're digging a
swimming hole*

*Yesterday, I played
center field*

*I needed some half-
innings alone*

*Doubled off the
Buddhist minister*

*Knocked the tying run
home*

Minidoka

Bottom nine

*2 - 0 count, a good lead
off third*

*Toss me something fast
and low*

*I dreamt I saw a model
plane this morning*

*Flying past the
boundary road*

*Caught the eye of able
Grable*

*Sliding into second to
beat the throw*

*Flurries started and I
thought of the man*

*Who got lost from block
3 in the snow*

Blanketed in white

Freezing in the night

*Cursing and scared,
feeling foolish, dying
alone*

*Our first baseman got
married*

*They rode an Army
truck out to Twin Falls*

*Spoke their vows in a
hotel suite*

*As a busted pump organ
wheezed through the
walls*

*Little sister butchering
the "Wedding March"*

*Some sweet comedy to
it all*

Minidoka

Dressed in white

Minidoka

*Snow drifts bouncing
the moonlight*

*As the evening took the
afternoon*

*Deep in the count,
staying alive*

*A thousand spectators,
nothing better to do*

*"Under diamond-cut
stars, horizon to horizon*

*And a translucent milk-
glass moon"*

Minidoka

In the night

*"Under diamond-cut
stars, horizon to horizon*

*And a translucent milk-
glass moon"*

Minidoka

Dressed in white

Minidoka

10 1603

Julian Saporiti, lead vocal, instruments, programming; Emilia Halvorsen Saporiti, harmony vocal; Diego Javier Luis, spoken word

Diego found the crew list in a Spanish archive: Anton Thomas, Antonio Bengala, Francisco Miguel, Christoual Catoya, Agustin Longalo , Lucas Cate, Agustin Sao.

Two centuries before Lewis and Clark (!) Asian eyes “discovered” Oregon. We road-tripped / pilgrimaged to Gold Beach to witness where Vizcaíno’s crew floated near death under the dramatic cliffs of the southern coast. Snow on the hills, northwest passage in sight, too ill to land, religious zealots. 1603, Oregon first seen by folks like us. For my brother Diego and his great research.



Julian and Emilia Saporiti, Cape Sebastian, Oregon, 2022

*Sailed as far from
Malabar*

As any soul has known

*Peaks of snow, a jagged
coast*

*Great giants made of
stone*

*Two months through the
Visayas*

*Then three beyond the
blue*

*At California’s crest
turned south*

*The mouth of hell we
drew*

Only for you

Only for you

*Left the bay, the 5th of
May*

North to San Bernabe

*Beneath a tent the
sacrament*

*The feast was held on
Sunday*

Indios y Indio

A gift of tiger’s skin

*The Latin Mass, our
foreign past*

Forgive us for this sin

Only for you

Only for you

I feel brand new!

Only for you!

San Diego, Tres Reyes,

Y Santo Tomas

*Santa Barbara learned
her name*

*Grumetes learned the
stocks*

*The autumn course, our
bearings north*

*The winter not forgotten
Luzon wood built
cannon proof*

*But like us quick to
rotten*

*Thomas turned back
with the ill*

*Diego kept the cross
The New Year's Day
beyond Drake's Bay*

The frigata was lost

*North we climbed,
morale declined*

*Not even six could stand
But through the storm,
from legend torn*

The strait of Anían

Only for you

I feel brand new!

Only for you!

*The floating ghost, the
bouldered coast*

*Too weakened to make
land*

*The wind so rose, the
lamp oil froze*

*We never touched the
sand*

*Oh I believe, oh, I
believe!*

The father and the son!

*Claim this coast, oh holy
ghost*

*Who spoke through
prophets' tongues*

Only for you

I feel brand new!

Only for you!

CREDITS

Produced, recorded, and annotated by
Julian Saporiti

Co-produced by
Emilia Halvorsen Saporiti
and **Seth Boggess**

String and orchestral arrangements by
Seth Boggess

Recorded at **Saporiti** home studio,
Portland, Oregon

Mixed by
Seth Boggess at Seth Boggess's
home studio, Normal, Illinois

Mastered by
Mike Monseur, Axis Audio,
Nashville, Tennessee

Photos by
Diego Javier Luis, Gregg Mizuta, and
Phan Chan The/Saporiti Family

Executive producers:
Maureen Loughran and **John Smith**

Production manager:
Mary Monseur

Production assistant:
Kate Harrington

Editorial assistance by
James Deutsch

Cover art designed by
Emilia Halvorsen Saporiti

Art direction and package design by
Caroline Gut



Smithsonian Folkways is: Paloma Alcalá, sales associate; Cecille Chen, director of business affairs and royalties; Logan Clark, executive assistant; Toby Dodds, director of web and IT; Will Griffin, licensing manager; Kate Harrington, production assistant; Seth Langer, licensing assistant; Helen Lindsay, customer service; Maureen Loughran, curator and director; Mary Monseur, production manager; Sahara Naini, inventory coordinator; Jeff Place, curator and senior archivist; Sophie Sachar, marketing and promotions assistant; Laura Shanahan, social media coordinator; Sayem Sharif, director of financial operations; Ronnie Simpkins, audio specialist; John Smith, associate director; Jonathan Williger, marketing manager; Brian Zimmerman, mail order manager, sales and marketing specialist.

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings is the nonprofit record label of the Smithsonian Institution, the national museum of the United States. Our mission is to document music, spoken word, instruction, and sounds from around the world. In this way, we continue the legacy of Moses Asch, who founded Folkways Records in 1948. The Smithsonian acquired Folkways from the Asch estate in 1987, and Smithsonian Folkways Recordings has continued the Folkways tradition by supporting the work of traditional

artists and expressing a commitment to cultural diversity, education, and increased understanding among peoples through the production, documentation, preservation, and dissemination of sound.

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, Folkways, Arhoolie, A.R.C.E., Blue Ridge Institute, Bobby Susser Songs for Children, Collector, Cook, Dyer-Bennet, Educational Activities, Fast Folk, Folk Legacy, Mickey Hart Collection, Monitor, M.O.R.E., Paredon, Right on Rhythm, UNESCO Collection of Traditional Music, and Western Jubilee Recording Company recordings are all available through:

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings Mail Order
Washington, DC 20560-0520
Phone: (800) 410-9815 or 888-FOLKWAYS (orders only)
Fax: (800) 853-9511 (orders only)

To purchase online, or for further information about Smithsonian Folkways Recordings go to: **www.folkways.si.edu**. Please send comments and questions to **smithsonianfolkways@si.edu**

**EMPIRE
ELECTRIC**

NO-NO BOY



There are seemingly infinite layers of meaning to be found in No-No Boy's third album, *Empire Electric*. You can listen closely to singer-songwriter Julian Saporiti's lyrics, which juxtapose true stories of struggle from throughout Asia and its diaspora with Saporiti's own reckoning with intergenerational trauma. You could also let the majesty of Saporiti's songcraft wash over you, his captivating melodies cloaking those themes in a veneer of hope and ecstasy. But the deepest storytelling happens at the sonic level, as sounds drawn from across the Eastern hemisphere mingle freely with distinctly American instrumentation—banjo and *koto*, lap-steel and *guzheng*—while electronically manipulated field recordings of rushing water, chirping birds, and other natural sounds ground us in the now. Adventurous and affecting, *Empire Electric* offers a vision for a new kind of folk music, one that tells unorthodox stories through unorthodox means and finds new pathways through our tangled roots.

Produced by **JULIAN SAPORITI**



Smithsonian

LC 9628

SFW CD 40255
WASHINGTON DC 20560-0520
FOLKWAYS.SLEDU

© 2023 SMITHSONIAN FOLKWAYS RECORDINGS

NO-NO BOY



**EMPIRE
ELECTRIC**
đế chế điện

- 1**
**THE ONION
KINGS OF
ONTARIO!** 3:21
- 2**
NASHVILLE 4:35
- 3**
**MEKONG
BABY** 3:41
- 4**
**WESTERN
EMPRESS OF
THE ORIENT
SAWMILL** 3:31
- 5**
JAKARTA 4:09
- 6**
**NOTHING LEFT
BUT YOU** 4:02
- 7**
LITTLE MONK 3:29
- 8**
SAYONARA 3:21
- 9**
MINIDOKA 3:39
- 10**
1603 5:31