

= Anodyne ( album ) =

Anodyne is the fourth and final studio album by alternative country band Uncle Tupelo , released on October 5 , 1993 . The recording of the album was preceded by the departure of the original drummer Mike Heidorn and the addition of three new band members : bassist John Stirratt , drummer Ken Coomer , and multi @-@ instrumentalist Max Johnston . The band signed with Sire Records shortly before recording the album ; Anodyne was Uncle Tupelo 's only major label release until 89 / 93 : An Anthology in 2002 .

Recorded in Austin , Texas , Anodyne featured a split in songwriting credits between singers Jay Farrar and Jeff Tweedy , plus a cover version of the Doug Sahm song " Give Back the Key to My Heart " , with Sahm on vocals . The lyrical themes were influenced by country music and ? more than their preceding releases ? touched on interpersonal relationships . After two promotional tours for the album , tensions between Farrar and Tweedy culminated in the breakup of Uncle Tupelo . Well @-@ received upon its initial release , Anodyne was re @-@ mastered and re @-@ released in 2003 by Rhino Entertainment including five bonus tracks .

= = Context = =

Uncle Tupelo 's third album , March 16 ? 20 , 1992 , was released though Rockville Records on August 3 , 1992 . On the release , the band eschewed the growing popularity of alternative rock by playing acoustic folk and country songs " as a big ' fuck you ' to the rock scene " . Drummer Mike Heidorn had a reduced role on the album ; because it was an acoustic album , Heidorn added only brush @-@ stroke percussion on a few songs . Heidorn wanted to leave the band to spend more time with his wife and two young children . Though band manager Tony Margherita announced that several major labels were interested in signing Uncle Tupelo , Heidorn decided to permanently leave the band .

Rockville Records refused to pay Uncle Tupelo any royalties , even though the band 's first two albums , No Depression and Still Feel Gone , sold a combined 40 @, @ 000 copies . Consequently , Margherita was trying to find a new recording deal for the band . On a recommendation by singer Gary Louris of The Jayhawks , talent scout Joe McEwen pursued the band for a contract with Sire Records . McEwen was impressed by how the band was willing to go against trends , calling the band " an alternative to the alternative " . Executing an out @-@ clause in their contract with Rockville , Uncle Tupelo signed a seven @-@ record deal with Sire in 1992 . The deal guaranteed the release of at least two albums , with a \$ 150 @, @ 000 budget for the first .

Before releasing their first album with Sire , Uncle Tupelo needed a drummer . Farrar and Tweedy interviewed twenty @-@ four candidates and were both impressed with Ken Coomer and Bill Belzer . Belzer was chosen and Uncle Tupelo embarked on the European segment of the promotional tour for March 16 ? 20 , 1992 as the opening act for Sugar . Belzer was dismissed from the band after six months , and Coomer was hired as his permanent replacement . Coomer was not the only new member added after the tour ? Uncle Tupelo sought to expand beyond a trio for the Anodyne recording sessions . They recruited multi @-@ instrumentalist Max Johnston and bassist John Stirratt ? Stirratt 's presence enabled Tweedy to become a full @-@ time guitarist on the songs that he wrote .

= = Recording = =

Anodyne was recorded from May to June 1993 at Cedar Creek studio in Austin , Texas . Uncle Tupelo liked the studio because it " just seemed really kind of homey and small and cheap " . The album was produced , mixed , and engineered by Brian Paulson . The now @-@ expanded lineup inspired Tweedy to spend more time with his bandmates . After Tweedy wrote each song , he would play it to Stirratt , Coomer , and Johnston to get their opinions . Farrar interpreted these practice sessions as a sign of Tweedy 's increasing arrogance . At live shows , during this time , tensions between Tweedy and Farrar increased and led to verbal altercations .

The album was recorded live in the studio , and each song was recorded in only one take . As a result , the recording sessions for Anodyne were completed in two weeks . Anodyne was the only Uncle Tupelo album to completely lack overdubbing . Sire was pleased with the album ; according to McEwen , " everybody [ at the label ] considered it a step up from what they 'd done before . " Farrar wrote six of the songs on the album and Tweedy wrote five , though all the new material was credited to both songwriters . While on tour , Uncle Tupelo met Texas Tornados singer Doug Sahm at the Hotel Phoenix in Boston , Massachusetts . Farrar invited him to join the band in the studio for a cover of Sahm 's " Give Back the Key to My Heart " , which Sahm contributed lead vocals to .

The lyrical content of Anodyne was influenced by 1950s and 1960s country music , particularly Ernest Tubb , Buck Owens , and Lefty Frizzell . Tweedy included several songs referencing aspects of the music industry . One example was " Acuff @-@ Rose " , a paean on the music publishers of Acuff @-@ Rose Music . He also wrote " We 've Been Had " , which was intended to chastise bands such as Nirvana and The Clash who were " all just show biz " in his opinion . Tweedy was also the author of " New Madrid " , a song about Iben Browning 's erroneous prediction of an apocalyptic earthquake in New Madrid , Missouri . Farrar was less comfortable discussing the lyrics that he wrote , claiming that his songs frequently change their meanings . Like other Uncle Tupelo albums , Farrar and Tweedy wrote their own lyrics , and played them for each other a week before the recording sessions . In comparison to the rest of the Uncle Tupelo catalog , Coomer described the music of the album as " some of [ the band 's ] earlier crunch with the acoustic subtlety of March 16 ? 20 , 1992 " .

= = Promotion and reception = =

Anodyne was Uncle Tupelo 's only recording to appear on the American Billboard Heatseekers chart . Despite the lack of a single to promote the album , sales eventually surpassed 150 @, @ 000 copies . A promotional tour for the album began later that year , including a sold @-@ out show at Tramps in New York City . Most shows on the tour sold over one thousand tickets . The success of the tour encouraged the label ; according to Sire executive Bill Bentley , " people here thought we were going to have platinum records from Uncle Tupelo . "

Despite the label 's aspirations , Jay Farrar announced his intention to leave Uncle Tupelo in January 1994 . Farrar kept his reasoning secret until fall 1995 , when he claimed in an interview that " it reached a point where Jeff and I really weren 't compatible . " As a sign of loyalty to band manager Tony Margherita , who had acquired a three thousand dollar debt on behalf of the band , Farrar agreed to do another promotional tour . Physical altercations between Tweedy and Farrar began two weeks into the tour and continued throughout ? many were due to Farrar 's refusal to play on Tweedy 's songs . Despite Farrar 's reservations , Uncle Tupelo performed Tweedy 's " The Long Cut " on Late Night with Conan O 'Brien , the band 's only network television appearance . The band played their final concert on May 1 , 1994 at Mississippi Nights in St. Louis , Missouri . The remaining members of the Anodyne sessions formed Wilco a few weeks later .

The band re @-@ mastered and re @-@ released the album on March 11 , 2003 through Rhino Records . The new version included two previously unreleased songs : Farrar 's " Stay True " , Tweedy 's " Wherever " . It also included a cover of Waylon Jennings ' " Are You Sure Hank Done It This Way ? " , with vocals by Joe Ely , a song previously released on the 1993 compilation Trademark of Quality . Live cover versions of " Truck Drivin ' Man " and " Suzy Q " were also included on the re @-@ issue .

Anodyne was well received by critics domestically and internationally . Allmusic writer Jason Ankeny wrote , " Uncle Tupelo never struck a finer balance between rock and country than on Anodyne " . Mark Kemp wrote for Rolling Stone that the band " [ has ] an intuitive sense of the simplicity and dynamics of a country song . " German music periodical Spex compared the album to Neil Young and to Little Feat 's debut album . At the end of the year , Anodyne placed at number twenty @-@ eight on The Village Voice 's Pazz & Jop critics ' poll and at number nineteen on the Spex critics ' poll . Nathan Brackett praised Max Johnston 's contributions in the 2004 book The New Rolling Stone Album Guide and called the album " Tupelo 's finest effort . " Norwegian newspaper

Dagbladet listed Anodyne in 1999 as one of " The Best Albums of the Century " . In 2008 , Rolling Stone critic Tom Moon listed Anodyne among the 1 @, @ 000 Recordings to Hear Before You Die .

Although the majority of the album 's reviews were positive , some critics disagreed . Q 's reviewer gave the album three stars out of five and noted that the band needed to " shed some of the Neil Young obsession . " Tom Moon of Rolling Stone gave the 2003 re @-@ release all five stars , but commented that the bonus tracks there were " pleasant but inconsequential . " Robert Christgau perceived the album as neither a " dud " nor worthy of " honorable mention " .

= = Track listing = =

Songwriting credits from the 2003 reissue .

" Slate " ( Farrar ) ? 3 : 24  
" Acuff @-@ Rose " ( Tweedy ) ? 2 : 35  
" The Long Cut " ( Tweedy ) ? 3 : 20  
" Give Back the Key to My Heart " ( Sahm ) ? 3 : 26  
" Chickamauga " ( Farrar ) ? 3 : 42  
" New Madrid " ( Tweedy ) ? 3 : 31  
" Anodyne " ( Farrar ) ? 4 : 50  
" We 've Been Had " ( Tweedy ) ? 3 : 26  
" Fifteen Keys " ( Farrar ) ? 3 : 25  
" High Water " ( Farrar ) ? 4 : 14  
" No Sense in Lovin ' " ( Tweedy ) ? 3 : 46  
" Steal the Crumbs " ( Farrar ) ? 3 : 38

= = = 2003 CD reissue bonus tracks = = =

" Stay True " \* ( Farrar ) ? 3 : 29  
" Wherever " \* ( Tweedy ) ? 3 : 38  
" Are You Sure Hank Done It This Way " \* ( Jennings ) ? 3 : 01  
" Truck Drivin ' Man ( Live ) " ( Fell ) ? 2 : 13  
" Suzy Q ( Live ) " ( Hawkins / Lewis / Broadwater ) ? 7 : 13  
\* Tracks 13 ? 15 previously unreleased studio outtakes .

= = Personnel = =

Uncle Tupelo

Ken Coomer ? drums

Jay Farrar ? vocals and guitar , mandolin on " Acuff @-@ Rose "

Max Johnston ? fiddle and lap steel guitar ; banjo on " New Madrid " , dobro on " Fifteen Keys "

John Stirratt ? guitar , bass guitar

Jeff Tweedy ? vocals , bass guitar , guitar

Additional musicians

Joe Ely ? vocals on " Are You Sure Hank Done It This Way ? "

Brian Henneman ? vocals on " Truck Drivin ' Man "

Lloyd Maines ? pedal steel guitar

Doug Sahm ? guitar and vocals on " Give Back the Key to My Heart "

Technical personnel

Dave C. Birke ? graphic design , art direction

Dan Corrigan ? photography

Scott Hull ? mastering

Brian Paulson ? production , engineering , mixing