

= 10 Songs for the New Depression =

10 Songs for the New Depression is the twenty @-@ first studio album by American singer @-@ songwriter Loudon Wainwright III , released in July 2010 through Proper Records . Released forty years following his first studio album , 10 Songs is Wainwright 's first album since his Grammy Award @-@ winning tribute project High Wide & Handsome : The Charlie Poole Project ( 2009 ) . The concept album was inspired by the late @-@ 2000s global financial crisis and recession , and features Wainwright backed by his own banjo , guitar and ukulele performances .

Wainwright began writing songs for the album following the inauguration of Barack Obama in January 2009 . The album features ten original songs and two cover versions of songs originally written and recorded during the Great Depression . Lyrical references throughout 10 Songs include economists Alan Greenspan , John Maynard Keynes and Paul Krugman , President Barack Obama , and the government program Car Allowance Rebate System ( more commonly known as " cash for clunkers " ) . Overall , critical reception of the album was positive . 10 Songs reached peak positions of number thirty @-@ eight on the United Kingdom 's Top Independent Albums chart and number twelve on the Top 40 Independent Albums Breakers chart .

= = Development and promotion = =

Wainwright began writing songs for the album following the January 2009 inauguration of Barack Obama . In January 2010 , Wainwright said the following of the album :

As of this writing some folks are saying things are looking up recession wise and this particular hard time might be ending . Other experts are saying we 're in for a " double @-@ dip " and there 's more feces heading toward the national and global fans . If that 's the case I 'd like to cash in . So buddy if you can spare a few bucks , please enjoy 10 Songs for the New Depression !

On February 22 , The New Yorker featured a video of Wainwright performing " The Krugman Blues " and complimenting the publication 's March 2010 article which profiled economist Paul Krugman . Part of " Cash for Clunkers " was featured in a segment of NPR 's program Car Talk . Wainwright was able to promote the album by touring both before and after the album 's release . The Loud and Rich Tour , which co @-@ headlined Wainwright and long @-@ time friend Richard Thompson , began in the fall of 2009 and continued into 2011 .

= = Composition = =

10 Songs for the New Depression is a simple vocal and acoustic performance album composed of original songs as well as two cover versions of songs from the Great Depression . The album is approximately thirty minutes in length and contains lyrical references to economist Alan Greenspan , Nobel Prize @-@ winning economist and The New York Times columnist Paul Krugman , and President Barack Obama . While Wainwright 's previous studio album High Wide & Handsome : The Charlie Poole Project ( 2009 ) contains more than twenty musicians and singers , The Guardian contributor Robin Denselow described 10 Songs as featuring a " pared @-@ down , DIY set , in keeping with the mood of the new songs " .

The opening track , " Times Is Hard " , features " bleak " lyrics about " nihilism [ being ] used as a tool to remedy social ills " sung to upbeat melodies . Wainwright wrote the song following the inauguration of Barack Obama . " House " is about economics and relationships , and tells the story of a couple wanting to divorce but staying together because they cannot sell their house . In the liner notes , Wainwright admitted that at the time the album was released he " remained relatively unscathed by the New Depression " but owned a house in Southern California that he was unable to sell . " On to Victory , Mr. Roosevelt " and " The Panic Is On " were both originally written during the Great Depression . Circa 1933 , Texas politician W. Lee O 'Daniel wrote and recorded the former . Medicine show performer Hezekiah Jenkins originally wrote and recorded " The Panic Is On " .

" Fear Itself " is about being fired " from the job you always professed to hate " and contains a reference to John Maynard Keynes . " The Krugman Blues " references the " gloomy mien of one 's

favourite economic pundit " , Paul Krugman , whom Wainwright met on a train to Boston . Wainwright believed Krugman 's sense of melancholy made for a " compelling and challenging character " . " Spooky " sound effects , suggested by Dick Connette , were added to the track " Halloween 2009 " . Wainwright wrote " Middle of the Night " a few years prior to the album 's release in an attempt to " cheer [ himself ] up and also to purvey an optimistic point of view for a change " . " Cash for Clunkers " refers to the Car Allowance Rebate System , a United States federal scrappage program active during summer 2009 . " Got a Ukulele " features Wainwright performing the titular instrument , which he believes was popular during the 1920s ? 1930s due to its ability to improve " one 's mood and general outlook " .

= = Reception = =

Critical reception of the album was positive overall . Robin Denselow of The Guardian awarded the album four of five stars and wrote that Wainwright 's performance sounded as " easy @-@ going and spontaneous " and it does at his live concerts . Denselow considered " House " to be the album 's best track . The Daily Telegraph 's Colin Irwin described the album as " oddly uplifting " despite its " variants on the theme that we 're all doomed " from the economic crisis . The Observer contributor Neil Spencer wrote that " while [ Wainwright 's ] tone becomes shrill at times , his mix of nihilism and jauntiness ( with ukulele ) are finally uplifting . " Music journalist Andy Gill of The Independent recommended the tracks " House " , " Fear Itself " and " The Panic Is On " . Simmy Richman 's review for The Independent complimented Wainwright 's ability to address current issues " simply and effectively " , claiming " Wainwright can make you laugh , nod in agreement , shake your fist in despair and want to sing along " . Richman appreciated Wainwright 's honesty and humor and wrote that he displayed " better lyrical form than he has been in for some time " . The Independent included 10 Songs on their " Indy Choice : Best of the New Music " list for the week of July 16 , 2010 . PopMatters ' Alex Ramon preferred Wainwright 's album Social Studies ( 1999 ) , but considered 10 Songs to be " an enjoyable effort nonetheless " , complimenting it for its simple approach . Furthermore , Ramon wrote that the album " succeeds in getting you smiling rather than despairing at the mess we 're in , and that 's always been one of Wainwright 's great gifts " .

= = Track listing = =

All tracks written by Loudon Wainwright III , unless noted otherwise .

" Times Is Hard " ? 2 : 55

" House " ? 4 : 19

" On to Victory , Mr. Roosevelt " ( W. Lee O 'Daniel ) ? 2 : 35

" Fear Itself " ? 2 : 34

" The Panic Is On " ( Hezekiah Jenkins ) ? 2 : 56

" The Krugman Blues " ? 3 : 11

" Halloween 2009 " ? 2 : 40

" Middle of the Night " ? 3 : 09

" Cash for Clunkers " ? 3 : 02

" Got a Ukulele " ? 2 : 39

= = Chart history = =

10 Songs for the New Depression debuted and reached its peak position at number thirty @-@ eight on the United Kingdom 's Top Independent Albums chart the week of July 31 , 2010 . That same week the album debuted at number twelve on the Top 40 Independent Albums Breakers chart . 10 Songs fell to number eighteen on the Top 40 Independent Albums Breakers chart the week of August 7 , 2010 .

= = Release history = =

