

# TALES FROM BACKSTAGE

## ALEX KLAGES



**Tales from Backstage** is basically the story of my experience as a cast member in the local production of *Anne of Avonlea*. I brought my writing notebook with me and jotted down little ideas and observations here and there, which became the seed from which this concept album germinated. Of special note is that this album is deliberately in a one-take, one-mic recording style, as though we were sitting backstage in the green room and I were singing you my story of what it was like to be in this play. It was a really wonderful experience, and this album is my personal diary and memento book of what it was like. I hope you enjoy it!

**Gear used:** Toshiba Tecra R700 computer with Audacity for recording device; Simon & Patrick SP Pro Mahogany 6 string acoustic guitar, Seagull M4 “Merlin” 4-string diatonic instrument, Lonestar Venice mandolin. All vocals and instruments me, recorded live on the brown couch.

**THANKS:** The Triune God, my wife Kelly and my three kids for putting up with Dad’s music obsession, all the fine folks at FAWM, 50/90, NaSoAlMo, SongSkirmish.com, Southeast Songwriters, and Album Production Challenge, and you, for listening.



**Klages Road**

A Klages Road Production  
All songs and recordings  
© 2017 Alex Klages

## The Audition

empty hall  
empty stage  
yet full of possibility

not quite sure  
what to think  
as the director talks to me

what role would I like?  
how do I see myself?  
do I have any experience?  
how do I see myself?

here I stand  
on the stage  
reading words from a sheet

there are few  
in the hall  
waiting for me to be complete

what role would I like?  
how do I see myself?  
do I have any experience?  
how do I see myself?

if all the world's a stage  
as Shakespeare once said  
then who am I really  
and will I live before I'm dead?

empty hall  
empty stage  
the director thanks me for my time

not quite sure  
what to think  
as I wait to hear my call back time

## The Callback

You've got a part, the voice says on the  
other end of the phone.  
You've got a part.

It's not a major role-- I understand, and  
I'm okay with that  
I've got a part.

First time on the stage in costume  
In so very long  
First time on the stage in costume  
In so very long

I've got a part, the voice inside my head  
reminds me  
I've got a part.

Don't mess this up, the voice inside my  
head tells me  
Don't mess this up.

First time on the stage in costume  
In so very long  
First time on the stage in costume  
In so very long

Last time I did this I was 17  
That was over half my life ago  
Can I do this? The monster's at the door  
Telling me to give up now... but no

You've got a part, the voice says on the  
other end of the phone.  
You've got a part.

I've got a part, the voice inside my head  
reminds me  
I've got a part.

First time on the stage in costume  
In so very long  
First time on the stage in costume  
In so very long

## The Readthrough

The circle of chairs covers most of the  
stage  
As you'd expect with a cast of 48  
I see a few familiar faces

The cast seems to be mostly younger  
than me  
As you'd expect with the material here  
We all start to find our places

We've been given our new names  
We've been given our new roles  
We've been given a beginning  
It's time for the readthrough

The actors all take their turns reading  
their lines  
As you'd expect with a cast of 48  
Most of us only have a few

The leads seem to be full of joy and life  
As you'd expect with the material here  
Young hearts for this to ring true

We've been given our new names  
We've been given our new roles  
We've been given a beginning  
We're now doing the readthrough

We share some laughs  
We share some smiles  
And then it's time to go our ways...

We've been given our new names  
We've been given our new roles  
We've been given a beginning  
It's time for the readthrough

## Doing it over

They say that practice makes perfect  
So we keep doing it over again  
And over again  
I don't mind the repetitions  
As we keep doing it over again  
And over again

It helps me learn my part  
It helps me learn my lines  
It helps me learn my pacing  
It helps me learn where I belong.

Someone messed up on the blocking  
So we keep doing it over again  
And over again  
I just flubbed my entrance  
So we keep doing it over again  
And over again

It helps me learn my part  
It helps me learn my lines  
It helps me learn my pacing  
It helps me learn where I belong.

Doing it over  
Doing it over  
There's times when I wish that the  
rest of my life  
Had a chance to do over...  
But this is a universe unto itself  
And we keep doing it over again  
And over again...

It helps me learn my part  
It helps me learn my lines  
It helps me learn my pacing  
It helps me learn where I belong.

They say that practice makes perfect  
So we keep doing it over again  
And over again  
I don't mind the repetitions  
As we keep doing it over again  
And over again

## keeping it light

rehearsals can be long and tedious  
we're keeping it light  
And so long as we don't miss our cues  
it works out all right

that girl, holding the window frame  
she gets asked, "is that a pane?"  
or sometimes "do you feel sill- y?"  
or worst of all "Did you get framed?"

rehearsals can be long and tedious  
we're keeping it light  
And so long as we don't miss our cues  
it works out all right

that man holding the bowl of goo  
with the cut off wooden spoon  
his frilly apron gets mocked a bit  
part of the backstage tune

rehearsals can be long and tedious  
we're keeping it light  
And so long as we don't miss our cues  
it works out all right

mimicking each others parts  
but with a true respect  
We stand up for each other now  
We don't want the result wrecked

rehearsals can be long and tedious  
we're keeping it light  
And so long as we don't miss our cues  
it works out all right  
rehearsals can be long and tedious  
we're keeping it light  
And so long as we don't miss our cues  
it works out all right

## Bowl of Goo

Every character needs that special spark  
That special little thing to make them  
tick  
But backstage it can be really dark  
And whatever is in the bowl smells kinda  
sick...

It's my bowl of goo  
The special thing I do  
Though it's strange, it's true  
It's just my bowl of goo

Some characters have a catchphrase  
Some characters have a style  
Some characters have lots of things to do  
I've got a bowl of goo

It's my bowl of goo  
The special thing I do  
Though it's strange, it's true  
It's just my bowl of goo

Some characters are memorable  
Some characters have great lines  
Some characters are brilliantly formed  
I've got a bowl of goo

It's my bowl of goo  
The special thing I do  
Though it's strange, it's true  
It's just my bowl of goo

Every character needs that special spark  
That special little thing to make them  
tick  
But backstage it can be really dark  
And whatever is in the bowl smells kinda  
sick...

It's my bowl of goo  
The special thing I do  
Though it's strange, it's true  
It's just my bowl of goo

## Most Interesting

This is most interesting  
This is most interesting  
This is most interesting  
This is most interesting

learning who you are  
learning who I am  
learning about each other  
learning... learning..

This...

growing in my part  
growing in my skill  
growing with each other  
growing... growing...

this...

laughing at myself  
laughing when I fail  
laughing with each other  
laughing... laughing...

this is most interesting..

this is most interesting...

## Backstage

Backstage is smaller than I thought it  
would be  
There's nowhere really to hide  
So we trundle quietly up and down the  
stairs  
In the change room or green room abide

backstage  
getting to know each other  
backstage  
making all new friends  
backstage  
backstage

Backstage is more fun than I thought it  
would be  
There's no-one who's not friends  
So we make our in-jokes up and down  
the stairs  
Working hard, but the joy never ends

backstage  
getting to know each other  
backstage  
making all new friends  
backstage  
backstage

in the trenchcoats  
in the layers  
in the changerooms  
in the hallways...

backstage  
getting to know each other  
backstage  
making all new friends  
backstage  
backstage

## Circle Time

We have our costumes on  
We have our makeup and hair done  
We are in the zone  
It's circle time

stand in the circle  
look at each other  
listen to the director speak  
stand in the circle  
lean on each other  
standing together we are strong not weak

we get updated notes  
We get to hear all the feedback  
We are readying  
It's circle time

stand...

1...  
2...  
3...

red headed snippet!

costume wrangler

my little boy is on the stage  
he'll play two characters tonight  
with different costumes for each  
page  
in which he takes the stage spotlight

though I've got my own parts  
though I've got my changes  
it's not surprising  
no it's not strange-- his

costume wrangler  
is his dad tonight  
costume wrangler  
will get the changes right  
I'm the costume wrangler  
costume wrangler

my little boy is on the stage  
I'm proud as any dad would be  
he's doing so well for his age  
to help is natural for me

though I've got my own parts  
though I've got my changes  
it's not surprising  
no it's not strange-- his

costume wrangler  
is his dad tonight  
costume wrangler  
will get the changes right  
I'm the costume wrangler  
costume wrangler

setting up his new change of clothes  
hanging up his just used one  
that's how this whole story goes  
but not the on stage one

costume wrangler  
is his dad tonight  
costume wrangler  
will get the changes right

I'm the costume wrangler  
costume wrangler

---

Dear Jeanette

Dear Jeanette,  
You stand by your work  
You stand for your crew  
You stand with your actors

Dear Jeanette,  
Though it's often tiring  
Though we're sometimes lacking  
Though backstage gets wacky

Dear Jeanette,  
Thank you for directing us  
Inspiring us  
And guiding us... dear Jeanette

Dear Jeanette,  
Now that the show's done  
Now that it's completed  
Now we all need rest...

Dear Jeanette,  
It's been a true joy  
It's been a real gift  
It's been my pleasure

Dear Jeanette,  
Thank you for directing us  
Inspiring us  
And guiding us... dear Jeanette

---

Hey, Hey

Hey, hey backstage crew  
Thanks for all the things you do  
The show wouldn't be the same without  
you  
Hey, hey backstage crew

Melanie gets the job done  
She's been with us since day #1  
Stage managing, always on the run  
I hope Melanie's been having fun

Hey, hey...

And then the clothes and props crew  
Finding outfits and items for me and you  
Just what was in the cake batter goo?  
Thanks good folks, for all that you do

Hey, hey...

Then there's the lights and sound team  
They make us look and sound like a  
dream  
A sonic joy and luminescent gleam  
That's the lights and sound team

Hey, hey...

Hair and makeup artists, don't forget  
They've got a tough job, you can bet  
Transforming us actors to fit with the set  
They deserve all the thanks that they get!

Hey, hey...

And the set builders, whoever you are  
Whether near, or whether far  
Every production's unsung star  
Set builders, whoever you are...

Hey, hey...

If I've forgotten someone in this song  
This verse is to make right my wrong  
Thanks for what you've done to bring the  
play along  
You're why I sing this thank-you song...

Hey, hey...