



## Pierce Pettis **"That Kind Of Love"** Compass Records

Pierce Pettis is a straight arrow. The straightest of the straight. I'm referring to the fact for the sixth consecutive occasion he opens with a composition by the late Mark Heard. Heard produced Pettis' album **"Tinseltown"** [1991]. Furthermore, Pierce was on the bill of the Cornerstone Festival in early July 1992 when Heard suffered a heart attack during his performance. Hospitalised, Mark suffered a second attack and passed on 16<sup>th</sup> August. On this go round Pierce delivers a percussive rendition of "Nothing But The Wind," wherein the narrator pricked by conscience contemplates his life journey, past and present. The song was the penultimate cut on Mark's 1992 Fingerprint Records release **"Satellite Sky."**

The **"That Kind Of Love"** disc is housed in a three-way fold-out card liner, and Pettis' song lyrics are reproduced on the inner faces. The dedication *"For Don Dunaway..."* [+] accompanies the song title *"I Am Nothing,"* and the thrust of this spiritually infused lyric can be summed up by the opening lines *"I stutter when I try, To speak the language of life."* Co-written with Robert Vega *"Veracruz,"* a sweet memory of passionate nights in Mexico, dates from the time when Pierce was contracted as a songwriter to Polygram, while in the pensive *"Farewell,"* which follows, Pettis recalls an Rhode Island bred ancestor, *"Just a maiden of 16,"* whose father arranged her marriage to a rich estate owner in Alabama.

Considering the appearance of certain key words in *"Lion's Eye,"* one could conclude that the inspiration was a certain C. S. Lewis children's classic. Jonell Mosser a Nashville based, Kentucky bred singer/songwriter co-wrote the faith filled avowal *"You Did That For Me."* Also possessed of a faith infused lyric, the album title track focuses on 'love' that's unconditional and unsurpassable. Two Hammond B3's – driven by Phil Madiera and Reese Wynans - inject a swampy soulful feel into Jesse Winchester's *"Talk Memphis."* The second of three cover songs in this collection, and the title track of Jesse's 1981 Bearsville Records album, Chris Smither [**"Up On The Lowdown"** 1995] and Toni Price [**"Talk Memphis"** 2007] have also covered this song. The latter renditions were recorded in Austin, Texas studios, while Pierce's version was cut in Compass Records' Nashville facility. In his liner notes Pettis recalls opening shows for Winchester *"Early in my alleged career,"* a privilege that had a *"profound influence on my writing and musical outlook."*

Alluding poetically to the journey of life, the *"To Dance"* lyric was written by a college friend, Greta Larson, and Pierce has added the melody, appropriately, a waltz. At the outset Larson describes *the dancer's* hesitant initial steps, subsequently attesting to the confidence and rich experiences that are derived through constant practice. A backing vocalist on *"Veracruz,"* Katie Herzig adds her unique voice to the tender *"Hallelujah Song."* Propelled at the outset by Stuart Duncan's fiddle, the penultimate cut is Woody Guthrie's *"Pastures Of Plenty,"* the tale of Okie's who, during the 1930's, were forced to journey to California and Oregon in search of employment. Bearing a dedication to his wife Michele, Pierce closes this collection with *"Something For The Pain,"* an exploration of the opening verse assertion *"Life is a mystery."*

On his ninth solo outing, and the second consecutive release produced by Compass co-founder Garry West, Pettis has come up with another charismatic song collection.

### **Note.**

[+] – Don Oja-Dunaway is a singer/songwriter based out of St. Augustine, Florida.

Folkwax Score 8 out of 10.

**Arthur Wood.**  
Kerrville Kronikles 01/09.