



## **Lone Justice THIS IS LONE JUSTICE: THE VAUGHT TAPES, 1983 Omnivore Records**

*Much bootlegged, these landmark early studio recordings by Lone Justice are finally given an official release.*

By December 1983, performing their swashbuckling fusion of punk and country, Lone Justice were consistently playing 'sold out' sets in L.A.'s numerous rock clubs. That month Maria McKee (lead vocal, guitar), Ryan Hedgecock (guitar, backing vocal), Marvin Etzioni (bass, backing vocal) and Don Heffington (drums) hunkered down in Suite 16 Studios in Van Nuys, California, with the late David Vaught (d. 2013) in the role of engineer, and quickly recorded the band's, then, current catalogue of covers and originals direct to two-track. Three of the twelve songs – arrangements of the traditional *Rattlesnake Mama* and *This World Is Not My Home*, plus Merle Haggard's *Working Man's Blues* – surfaced on the posthumous Lone Justice retrospective *THIS WORLD IS NOT MY HOME* (1999), while the Vaught tape appeared in the public domain as the bootleg *COWPUNK ADOLESCENCE*.

The one-dozen raw, energetic performances on *THIS IS LONE JUSTICE* clock-in at thirty-three minutes duration, with three of the songs lasting less than two minutes. The energetic George Jones/Roger Miller penned opening opus *Nothing Can Stop My Loving You* being one of the latter, it's followed by the duet *Jackson* (Jerry Lieber/Billy Edd-Wheeler) a song that, during 1967, cut across the music genres and provided two duos, Johnny Cash/June Carter (country) and Nancy Sinatra/Lee Hazlewood (pop), with considerable commercial success. Lone Justice were subsequently signed by Geffen Records, and McKee's *Soap, Soup And Salvation* is the only Vaught recorded tune to appear on the band's self-titled 1985 debut album.

John Doe's rendition of Etzioni's *The Grapes Of Wrath* appeared on the recent *MARVIN COUNTRY!* (2012) while McKee takes the lead vocal on her song *Dustbowl Depression Time*. Circa late 1983 McKee was a year adrift of turning twenty, and possessed a truly magnificent singing voice. Once heard, never forgotten. Both under two minutes duration, the aforementioned traditional *Rattlesnake Mama* – with McKee sounding like a young Emmylou - is followed by the instrumental *Vigilante*. A Jimmy Iovine produced version of *Cactus Rose* surfaced, during May 1985, as the B-Side of the band's *Ways To Be Wicked* sophomore single. Penned by Etzioni/McKee it included the barbed lines "*They want to hold a Cactus Rose, She loves to watch them bleed.*" The duet *When Love Comes Home To Stay* is less frantic than much of the fare here, following which Maria cranks up the pace on her *Cottonbelt*.

According to Billboard journalist Chris Morris' liner note these recordings offer "*the best representation of the band in its infancy - hot, full of piss and vinegar, and ready to take on the world.*" In addition the liner booklet includes a Hedgecock September 2013 penned essay (*The Pulse Of Lone Justice*), Etzioni's remembrance of regular collaborator David Vaught (who went on to mix all of Marvin's solo releases), while long-time Lone Justice fan Dolly Parton recalls

watching the nascent band perform at the Music Machine in L.A. and furnishes a ringing endorsement. The package is rounded-off by previously unseen photos and memorabilia. Released on CD and LP, the first pressing of the latter was a translucent red vinyl limited edition.

<http://omnivorerecordings.com/shop/records/lone-justice/> and NO MYSPACE

Arthur Wood.

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