



Jack Clement – FOR ONCE AND FOR ALL (Album Review) I.R.S. Records Nashville

A laid back, unreservedly masterful collection of familiar Clement penned country classics.

A decade of Clement penned originals plus a pair of co-writes grace this late music legend's third solo collection, released just short of a year after his passing aged 82. Memphis raised Jack Henderson Clement launched his career with the renowned imprint Sun Records, as producer, musician, songwriter and recording artist. His 1950's sides for the label were included on the high-dollar Bear Family box sets and the more recent 10 CD volumes *The Memphis Recordings: From The Legendary Sun Studios*. Following short sojourns in Nashville and Beaumont, Texas, circa the early 1960's Jack settled in the country music capital, and over the ensuing half-century created his own brand of history. In late October 2013, Clement was posthumously inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame.

Jack's solo debut *All I Want To Do In Life* (1978) was released by Elektra Records, followed three-and-a-half decades later by Dualtone's *Guess Things Happen That Way*. The *For Once And For All* songs were written from the late 1950's through the 1960's, with many steeped in music history, they run the subjective gamut of love – good and bad, railroads, murder and religious faith. Supported by a core band of Kenny Malone (drums) and Dennis Crouch (bass), guest instrumentalists include T-Bone Burnett (acoustic guitar) also listed as executive producer, plus Benmont Tench (piano), Duane Eddy (electric guitar), Stuart Duncan (fiddle) and many more. Production of the release is credited to David Ferguson and Matt Sweeney, and both contribute occasional acoustic guitar. Featuring an all-star cast of guest singers; their efforts, thankfully, are understated and don't detract from Clement's *nutty brown* lead vocal.

Here's a run down of the support singers, and commentary on the 'history' of some of the tunes. "I've Got A Thing About Trains" opens with support vocal from long-time Clement collaborators Bobby Bare and Dickey Lee. A minor 1968 hit for Mac Wiseman, five years later it furnished Nat Stuckley with a #14 Country single; Dierks Bentley and The Secret Sisters add their voices to "Got Leaving On Her Mind." On "Baby Is Gone," Bare and Lee are joined by Will Oldham aka Bonnie "Prince" Billy. Clement protégé Charley Pride scored a 1967, # 9 Country single thanks to Jack's "Just Between You And Me." Vocal support here is supplied by a brace of noted Nashville record producers – and Clement protégés - Allen Reynolds and Garth Fundis. The dark tale of a double murder "Miller's Cave" enjoyed Top 10 Country single success on two occasions, respectively for Hank Snow (# 9/1960) and Bare (# 4/1964). Here the latter sings, while John Prine supplies acoustic guitar.

A 1968, # 4 Country single for Pride, Vince Gill supports on "Let The Chips Fall." Emmylou Harris and Jim Lauderdale harmonise while Buddy Miller adds electric guitar to "Just A Girl I Used To Know." Co-written by Jack and Murphy M. Maddux, "Fools Like Me" was a 1959 R&B hit for another Clement protégé - Jerry Lee Lewis. Hit songwriter Pat McLaughlin, plus Gillian Welch and partner Dave Rawlings add their voices here, and the latter also plays acoustic

guitar. "I Know One" reached # 6 on the Country singles chart on two occasions, for Jim Reeves in 1960 and seven years later for Charley Pride. The support vocalists on this go-round are Rodney Crowell and Marty Stuart. Gill is joined vocally by Tim O'Brien on "The Spell Of The Freight Train." The penultimate selection is the Alex Zanetis collaboration "Jesus Don't Give Up On Me" and features the voices of Del McCoury and Jack's daughter Alison, while "The Air Conditioner Song" – inspired by a childhood holiday memory - features vocal support from Gill and Shawn Camp.

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