



## Zoe Muth – WORLD OF STRANGERS (Album Review) Signature Sounds Recordings

*WORLD OF STRANGERS*, a ‘changing lanes’ collection of folk, pop and country influences.

On her third studio album, recorded at the Training School in Austin, Texas – Zoe’s hometown since New Year’s Day 2013 - and produced by George Reiff (Dixie Chicks, Ray Wylie Hubbard), Muth’s previous support band, The Lost High Rollers, appear to have been consigned to history. The gatefold card liner, relates that formerly Seattle based Muth (vocals, acoustic guitar) was supported on the WORLD OF STRANGERS sessions by ‘The Band’ and ‘Additional Musicians.’ The former aggregation consisting of Reiff (bass, vocals, percussion), Brad Rice (acoustic/electric guitar + stringbender, electric mandola, bass), Sweeney Tidball (piano, organ, keyboards, accordion) and Lost High Roller alumni Greg Nies (drums, percussion). The ‘Additional Musicians’ can be divided into ‘pickers’ - Dixie Chick Martie Maguire (violin, viola), the talented Brian Standefer (cello), Mike Hardwick (electric guitar, pedal steel) and Eric Hisaw (electric guitar) - and ‘singers’ - Bruce Robison, Brandy Zdan plus Jenn Miori & Beth Chrisman from Austin trio The Carper Family.

In the energetic “*story of the chrome hearts*” album opener *Little Piece Of History*, Zoe recalls the aforementioned Washington State to Lone Star State relocation. At the outset of the gentler *Mama Needs A Margarita* her young child “....fed and changed,” a single mother intimates “Now it’s time to say goodnight.” Even though her father (aka ‘the babysitter’) has to work late, she dons “A pretty red dress and a pair of dancing shoes” and (leaving her slumbering child) heads for a nearby bar in the hope of finding “two strong arms to lead.” The bemused narrator of *Make Me Change My Mind* reflects “I thought you loved me babe, thought you were the right kind.”

Prominently supported by Tidball’s piano and organ, Standefer and Maguire’s strings weave musical magic on the folk ballad *Annabelle*, the tale of a woman prone to wanderlust. The sole cover song is the late Ronnie Lane’s good-time sounding *April Fool*. It debuted on the Ronnie Lane/Pete Townshend album ROUGH MIX (1977), the front cover of which bears a stylistic resemblance to that of WORLD OF STRANGERS. The ethereal sounding instrumental intro to *Somebody I Know* gives way to a lyric that name checks the album title. On the latter, Muth is supported by Robison. With “a real job” and a new two-ton truck, *Too Shiny* finds the former “king of the rusty old machine” arrive on the doorstep of his former “junk store queen.” To discover what occurs.....give the album a listen.

The opening lines of the chorus to Zoe’s *Waltz Of The Wayward Wind* paraphrase consecutive lines in *The Wayward Wind*, the 1956 # 1 U.S. hit for Gogi Grant. Set as winter approaches, the penultimate song *Taken All You Wanted* sets the scene with the darkly hued “Come home at night to bad news and beer breath, And the only light is the one coming from the tv set, And I’m waiting to hear something that I ain’t heard yet.” The theme of relationships in crisis is further pursued in the slow, almost ponderous album closer *What Did You Come Back Here For?*

<http://zoemuth.com/> and <http://www.signaturesounds.com/>

***Brought to you from the desk of the Folk Villager.***

aka Arthur Wood.

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