



Townes Van Zandt "**Texas Troubadour**" Charly Records

This 4CD set from, Charly Records, the British based *reissue* label brings together all 74 tracks from Townes' seven studio albums, circa 1968 to 1978, that he cut for the Poppy/Tomato Record labels. The fourth disc is *topped up* by eight selections from the July 1973 "**Live At The Old Quarter, Houston, Texas**" set which, in its original totality, featured twenty seven tracks and twenty six songs. None of the *live* selections duplicate any of the songs on the aforementioned seven-studio albums. In fact, a 2CD full version of "**Live At The Old Quarter, Houston, Texas**" is also available currently from Charly Records [Index No. SNAD508CD].

On Townes debut "**For The Sake Of The Song**" his voice was captured at its purist. That the album by this, then, 24 year old Texan contained a self-penned song titled "Waitin' Around To Die," clearly indicated a person with an peculiar personal mindset. Later, the album titled "**The Late Great Townes Van Zandt**" displayed a similarly wayward attitude to life. Depression and alcohol are not the most congenial bedfellows and in the ensuing three decades Van Zandt indulged in copious quantities of both. Given the foregoing, it's somewhat astounding that he was able to create the quality of song catalogue that is his legacy. As if to balance the sentiment of "Waitin' Around To Die," "Talkin' Karate Blues," on the same disc, gives vent to Townes' humorous side. In truth, and excluding the "**Texas Rain**" series of which the first disc appeared late last year, relative to the tracks gathered here, Townes only recorded [as far as we know, at this point in time] four other studio albums during his lifetime. Chronologically, they were "**At My Window**" [1987], a dozen tracks reckoned to date from 1973 released as "**The Nashville Sessions**" [1993], "**No Deeper Blue**" [1994] and Arista's posthumous disc "**A Far Cry From Dead**" [1999]. Lest my earlier comment about depression and alcohol create a falsely monochromatic image, those factors need to be tempered by the insight that Townes also possessed a wicked sense of humour and a seemingly endless archive of jokes all of which he had committed to memory.

In addition to the eleven studio albums at least an equivalent head count of *live* albums currently exist, many being of dubious legality while some possess an equally dubious sound quality. Many Townes adherents will not agree with my summation that Townes had pretty well said all he had to say with the seven albums gathered here. The aforementioned gaggle of *live* albums consistently featured renditions of the same group of songs. In fact, Dualtone Vintage is currently scheduled to release, within the next few weeks, yet another *live* collection taken from a 1969 performance at Carnegie Hall and titled "**A Gentle Evening With Townes Van Zandt**." Returning to my contention that he'd said it all by the time "**Flyin Shoes**" appeared in 1978, "For The Sake Of The Song" which opened Townes' debut studio disc, reappeared on his self-titled studio disc a few years later. "Tecumseh Valley," "Quicksilver Daydreams Of Maria," "I'll Be Here In The Morning" and numerous other songs suffered a similar fate within the decade 1968 to 1978. As for the aforementioned four-studio albums that followed, apart from "**No Deeper Blue**" they each bore that mark of repetition to a greater or lesser extent.

This collection comes packaged as a hardback digi-book, featuring a lavishly illustrated 52 page booklet, much of it toned in sepia. The initial eighteen pages feature a detailed biography, while the remainder

features a track by track insight into each of the songs. This collection constitutes a fitting tribute to a great **"Texas Troubadour."**

[**ED. NOTE.** By way of clarification the complete albums featured in this collection are **"For The Sake of The Song," "Our Mother The Mountain," "Townes Van Zandt," "Delta Mamma Blues," "High, Low And In Between," "The Late Great Townes Van Zandt,"** and **"Flyin Shoes"**].

Folkwax Rating 8 out of 10

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