



John Inmon “**Songs For Heavy Traffic**” Music Road Records

John’s sophomore solo outing is an eight-track instrumental recording featuring originals and covers. Fans of this Texas born lead guitar legend [Jerry Jeff Walker, Lost Gonzo Band, Jimmy LaFave] had to wait nigh on three decades for his debut “**Goodbye Easy Street.**” Seven years on Inmon has delivered “**Songs For Heavy Traffic.**” Considering that the sound of this recording is melodically soothing and laid back, my take on the [album] title would be – *“chill out music while trapped in bumper-to-bumper traffic”* – maybe the vehicle choked ‘long and winding’ guitar neck portrayed on the front cover of the liner gave me a clue. Supporting John on this recording is Austin’s drummer ‘for all sessions [and seasons]’ Paul Percy, bass man Glenn Fukunaga, and on keyboards, from the current Jimmy LaFave band, the man of a million facial expressions Radoslav “Rad” Lorkovic.

The collection opens with Inmon’s “Mr. Happy” a joyously melodic affair that, for me at least, describes the engaging onstage smile that I’ve observed on the occasions I’ve seen John support Walker, LaFave, Bobby Bridger and Joel Rafael, and for that matter perform as a member of the Gonzos. Anyone who claims to be a child of the sixties, as far as the original music of that decade is concerned, should smile knowingly during the three cover tunes in this collection. “Suki Yaki,” the second track, is followed by another international instrumental hit from that decade, “Cast Your Fate To The Wind.” Japanese music star Kyu Sakamoto took the former song, respectively, to # 1 and # 6 on the U.S. and U.K. Pop Charts during 1963, while U.K. bred jazz musician Kenny Baker’s instrumental version peaked at # 10 in the Pop Chart there. In Japan “Suki Yaki” was titled “Ue O Muite Aruko” [translates “I Look Up When I Walk”] and was, supposedly, inspired by lyricist Rokusuke Ei’s sadness following the break-up of a relationship. Inmon’s instrumental rendition succeeds in capturing the [intended] pathos. In 1981 Taste of Honey took the song, featuring a rewritten lyric, to # 3 on the U.S. Pop Chart. Vince Guaraldi’s melody “Cast Your Fate To The Wind” won the 1962 Best Original Jazz Composition Grammy. Three years later the British ‘studio group’ Sounds Orchestral took an instrumental version, respectively, to # 10 on the U.S. and # 5 on the U.K. Pop Chart.

“Prelude,” another Inmon original, is a gentle reflective affair that is followed by Gerry Burns’ “The Road Less Travelled.” John has worked with Austin based Gerry in the jam band Gerry’s Kids and the duo WhiteShoes. As for the latter track title, no doubt it was inspired by/paraphrases a line in the final verse of Robert Frost’s 1920 rustic and rural poem “The Road Not Taken.” The penultimate cut here is an Inmon/Burns collaboration bearing the title “The Blue Door.” In the pantheon of singer/songwriter clubs Stateside, the foregoing title immediately brings to mind Greg Johnson’s now fifteen year old Oklahoma City establishment. Ably supported by Lorkovic’s piano, “The Blue Door” is a hook-laden melodically dreamy affair, and is followed by the reflective Inmon penned album closer “This Is My Lucky Day.”

If you’re wondering about that third cover tune, track six, is the Lennon/McCartney composition “In My Life” which appeared on their 1965 album “**Rubber Soul.**” I’ve deliberately left it to last, for a reason. Early the following year Judy Collins’ sixth album for Elektra Records bore that title – hell, I can still recall that thick cardboard cover housing the import disc with the bright orange label – and that disc began a lifelong addiction to the voice and music of Ms Collins.....and launched a still continuing journey into the bowels of folk music. The material featured on Judy’s “In My Life,” marked a concerted effort in interpreting the work of contemporary writers – and not just acknowledged folk composers. Who’d have thought those Liverpool lads were even faintly capable of penning a folk tune!

In fact the thought occurs considering the aural jewels that LaFave fashioned with Gretchen Peters’ “Bus To St. Cloud” and Michael Brown and ‘others’ “Walk Away Renee,” that he would doubtless deliver a

killer rendition of "In My Life." John Inmon's silky smooth and introspective instrumental template already exists.....

Folkwax Score 8 out of 10

Arthur Wood.

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