

JERRY JEFF WALKER

REUNION

Maybe Mexico/ Sailing/ Takin' it as it comes/ Got lucky last night/
Bittersweet/ Some go home (The train song)/ Morning song to Sally/
She left me holdin'/ For little Jessie (She knows her daddy sings)/
Pick up the Tempo.
(MCA 5199 Import).

'Reunion' marks Jerry Jeff's return to MCA, under the auspices of the new Southcoast Record label, which is operated by his management team of Brousky/ Stewart.

Jerry Jeff has never been one of the World's most prolific writers, and his last solo album on Elektra, 'Too old to Change' testified to this, as it consisted entirely of songs by fellow contemporary writers. This time around, however, J.J. has penned all the songs with the exception of Willie Nelson's 'Pick up the Tempo'.

Throughout his career, J.J. has consistently re-interpreted songs and this album is no exception, as five tunes date from the period 1968 - '76.

'Maybe Mexico' which opens the album, first appeared on the 'Mr Bojangles' album and extols the virtues of being a restless free spirit. The backing track on this song has some excellent brass work by the Muscle Shoals Rhythm Section.

The title 'Sailing' indicates precisely what the song is about, and has a New Orleans Jazz band feel. 'Takin' it as it comes' describes J.J.'s old, but amply documented, 'laid back' lifestyle, while 'Got lucky last night' continues the saga, ladyfriends and all.

Side one closes with 'Bittersweet', co-written with Robert Livingston, (from J.J.'s old Lost Gonzo band), and it is one of the best tracks on the album, with one of those instantaneous hum-a-long melodies. There is also a hint of self confession in the first verse, since J.J. now claims to be a reformed character.

Four of the five tracks on side two are re-workings of old songs, the exception being 'For Little Jessie', (his daughter who is featured on the album cover). Since the majority of the old songs are on side two, it may possibly have pre-empted the title of the album, although it could also be argued that the songs all have connections with reunions, (be they thoughts or actions).

The four Jerry Jeff Walker songs on side two, when considered as an entity, suggest that he must have been in an extremely reflective frame of mind while recording this album; they are all 'class' songs.

The album closes with a lively rocking version of 'Pick up the Tempo', and Bonnie Bramlett's backing vocals are particularly outstanding.

A worthy effort after a two year absence.

Q.W.