

NEW RELEASES

Rain Perry MEN

Precipitous Records

★★★

A folk-pop concoction that is Perry's third consecutive Congress House recording



In her liner notes Perry relates how male acquaintances and friends inspired her latest song lyrics. As with 2008's CINDERBLOCK BOOKSHELVES and 2010's INTERNAL COMBUSTION, this album was recorded at Congress House Studio in Austin, the principal contributors being Perry (vocals) and album producer/studio owner Mark Hallman (vocals, guitars, mandola, banjo, bass, piano, keyboards, accordion, drums, percussion, clarinet), with guest appearances by 'locals' Julie Chistensen, Matt The Electrician, Andrew Hardin, Sara Hickman, Scrappy Jud Newcomb, Brian Standefer and more.

Included are covers of Robert Earl Keen's culinary *Then Came Lo Mein* and closes with an ear-splittingly loud electric rendition of Chuck Prophet's *Let's Do Something Wrong*—'Well, I once loved a boy, He wouldn't love me.' Perry/Hallman are the credited composers of five songs, with the remaining trio credited solely to California-based Rain. Propelled by an insistent and pounding backbeat one of the latter, *Get In The Car*, a getaway song—'Leave the coffee cups in the sink'—opens her fourth album. Co-written, the ensuing *Done* is underpinned by a gently loping melody, while the title of the gastronomic concoction *Umami*, also co-written, is a Japanese word that translates as 'pleasant savory taste.'

Penned by Perry/Hallman, performed as a duet with Matt The Electrician and prominently featuring Hallman's mandola, *One Of These Days* reflects that we can't expect every day to be perfect, while the now-mature narrator of Rain's *Happily Ever After* reflects: 'If this were a movie it would end after I gave my heart, But how you keep giving it and giving it, Oh, they never show that part.' With a deal of urgency, Rain's *Photonegative Of Love* narrator repeats and repeats: 'This isn't love,' and with a running time a smidgen over six-and-a-half minutes the semi-spoken collaboration *Atlas* ponders what might occur if: 'The Titan Atlas set the world down, And the world just kept spinning.' At the outset of the fifth and final Perry/

Hallman song, *Big Train*, the narrator reveals: 'I was born with a suitcase in my hand' subsequently expresses the hope: 'I want to wake up with a smile on my face, Knowing what it is to love a place' and concludes with the celebratory: 'Big train, roll on through, I've got no more use for you.' **Arthur Wood**

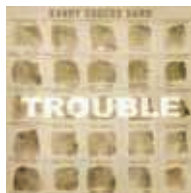
www.rainperry.com

The Randy Rogers Band TROUBLE

Humphhead HUMP43

★★★

The Texas quartet's seventh album blends rock and country influences from Merle Haggard and Radney Foster to Free and Pearl Jam to produce their unique sound



The Randy Rogers Band recorded its first album LIVE AT CHEATHAM STREET WAREHOUSE at a music hall of the same name in San Marcos, Texas, shortly after getting together in the town of Cleburne. That's appropriate, as they're Texas through and through. Since then they have played extensively, sharing the stage with Willie Nelson and the Eagles, charted seven singles on Billboard's Hot Country Songs Charts, released a further six albums (their third set, ROLLERCOASTER, was co-produced by fellow Texan Radney Foster and featured the track *Somebody Take Me Home*, also recorded by Kenny Chesney and penned by Rogers and Foster) while *One More Sad Song*, the first single from their new album TROUBLE, has already charted in Billboard's Top 40.

TROUBLE opens on the plodding *Fuzzy*, a lumbering rock workout featuring the menacing minor chords of Geoffrey Hill's grating electric guitar (watch out for this one—on the promo disc, at least, it's listed as track two, while the stated opener, *Goodbye Lonely*, is actually the closer here—although Amazon lists it as track 1). Despite a haunting intro featuring understated keyboards and Brady Black's gentle fiddle, *Speak Of The Devil* maintains the southern rock mood with its meshed guitars and organ, while the single *One More Sad Song* follows suit, its measured, fiddle-accompanied verses giving way to heavy guitar-laden choruses from the soulful-voiced Rogers, and *Don't Deserve You* also rocks it up to Les Lawless's belting drum rhythm. These guys have amply stated

their alt/rock pedigree through these tracks and others such as *Shotgun*, a guitar-powered country story song reminiscent of Slobberbone, while somewhat gentler rock sounds can be heard on *Had To Give That Up Too*, *Goodbye Lonely*, and the chirping harp of *Trouble Knows My Name*.

And what of country? Well, *If I Had Another Heart* demonstrates admirably that Rogers can sing as well as shout, and features a nice guitar break from Hill, but the well-trad *Flash Flood*, with its trademark steel guitar, fiddle and guitar picking accompaniment, while echoing the Eagles at times, is about as country as it gets. It's one of my two album favourites, honourable mention also going to the other standout here, *Never Got Around To*, a soaring love ballad boasting Rogers' alternately grating and sweet vocals, solid organ lines, vibrato guitar licks and Black's omnipresent fiddle.

So, a great energetic set from the Texas combo that mixing fairly standard but solid southern rock with some heavier alt thrash and just a sprinkling of traditional country. A bit on the heavy rock side for me, but on the whole I like it. Available as a download or as an import CD. **Jeremy Isaac**

www.randyrogersband.com

Roadhouse GODS & HIGHWAYS & OLD GUITARS

Krossborder KBR20131

★★★★

Roots at its best with more than a touch of rock



Ahh, who could not love an album that manages to come up with a mystical mix like that like that in its title, echoing the spirit of Neil Gaiman's novel *American Gods*. And this is Roadhouse, Britain's finest and most enigmatic roots rockers. The music doesn't fit any category but somehow manages to be a dark coming together of country-rock and blues in a way that no one else manages. Main man Gary Boner is still there penning lyrics about everything in the title and he and co-guitarist Danny Gwiliym switch between lead and rhythm in a jangling, throbbing rocking barrage. Sometimes there's a slide guitar moan, sometimes full on rock.

Where Roadhouse really differ is that they have three female singers—Mandie G, Sarah Harvey-Smart and Suzie D—who