



Rod Picott "**Stray Dogs**" Welding Rod Music

To give you a sense of how Rod sounds on this, his sophomore, solo release I'd say that stylistically he *pretty-well* treads the same piece of musical territory as [Jimmy] LaFave and Springsteen. Guest vocalists on this disc include Slaid Cleaves - Rod's old school buddy, former teenage band mate and occasional writing partner - and Alison Krauss. Apart from some violin fills from Ned Henry, the tight band sound achieved on the upbeat cuts was created by the quartet of Rod, album producer David Henry [guitar, percussion, keyboards, cello], Paul Slivka [bass] and Craig Krampf [drums/percussion].

The title track opens this collection with a pounding and incessant guitar riff [it's a real toe tapper], wed to images of a street scene where *"latin boys sat in a blue Camaro listening to ZZ Top, while showing off their new tattoos to the neighbourhood girls."* The upshot of this tale being that the observing narrator, whiskey in hand, sits at home watching tv and pining for the girl who split – *"I left your name there on the mailbox, In case you come back home to me."* The car in "Blue Baby" is a Cadillac, while the runaway around whom this tale revolves is *"daddy's little trouble girl."* The shuffle waltz paced "Angels And Acrobats" is a neat little song about love. Nothing more, nothing less. The three words "Workshirts And Turpentine" literally scream out "blue collar rock" and neatly encapsulate this three minute plus saga of *"drinking beer, a Chevrolet new used car, and dumping the oil in the backyard"* n' more. The nineteen-year old central character in "Find Your Way Home" already has three kids and a *pretty boy* lover who has moved on, mentally as well as physically. All is not lost however, since the lyric closes with the optimistic line *"someday somebody's gonna hold you tight."* "I Coulda Been The King" is another blue collar anthem underpinned with an Elvis theme, while the slow paced closer "River Runs" – with support vocal from Cleaves – focuses on the *seemingly* eternal search for *perfect love*.

The laid back and acoustic "Circus Girl" comes complete with *"a thousand dollar car"* [the make of which is not specified] and vocal support from Krauss. "The Leaving Kind" and the sadly reflective portrait of a life headed downhill, "Not Going Down," are reminiscent [sound wise] of "**Nebraska**" period Springsteen. Please do not be mislead by my repeated reference to the *Kid from the Jersey Shore* and the Texas based *Red Dirt Rocker*, since Picott very much possesses his own lyrical take on life. The foregoing are merely meant to be interpreted as *stylistic* pointers. Then again, I used the term *stylistic* at the outset. Seems to me that we've now travelled full circle.....although I forgot to say that, overall, this is actually a darned fine collection of Picott originals that sustains repeated listening.

Folkwax Rating 7 out of 10

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