



Chip Taylor/Carrie Rodriguez **"Let's Leave This Town"** Trainwreck Records/Texas Music Group

There is absolutely no question that Chip Taylor is a mighty talented guy. He possesses the *Midas* touch – golf pro, hit songwriter, black jack ace, pony betting legend – you name it, he has probably enjoyed success whatever skill he practised. During the Y2K+1, annual South-By-Southwest Music Conference in Carrie's hometown of Austin, Texas, Taylor spotted her when she played a solo gig. A mere eighteen months later, not only are they touring companions, but Taylor has penned a suite of songs for them to perform, individually and as duets. The bottom line is that the whole deal comes off sounding utterly natural, unforced and a whole bunch of fun. Taylor may not be an intellectually deep lyricist, but he sure knows how to marry interesting words to a memorable tune. Hell, Chip is so laid back on these cuts that, he casually calls out their Christian name when he feels that Carrie or guitarist John Platania should deliver a solo instrumental break. The King of Cool???????? Absolutely.

Undaunted, at the lower limit of being a twenty-something *veteran* fiddle player and vocalist of *recent vintage*, Carrie stepped up to the plate with this legend, almost forty years her elder, and, frankly, she has smacked the ball clean out of the park. Truth to tell Carrie Rodriguez shredded the darned *ball*. I'd even go as far as to suggest that a star has been born here. Magnanimously, having spotted the potential, Taylor gave Carrie the opportunity to shine.

Wistful, humorous, sassy, gentle, awesomely powerful – you name it, the pair ring the vocal changes. There's a hint of Kimmie Rhodes voice in Carrie's delivery and that's no bad thing in my book. I'd even go as far as to say that, vocally, there are occasions when, Carrie *deliberately* traded on her Texas roots – delivering "*baby where is my Mercedes*" in a thick Southern drawl, you can hear Chip draw breath and almost laugh. If the latter indicates the pedigree of the up-tempo opener, "Sweet Tequila Blues," then, changing pace, the quasi-religious lyric of "Him Who Saved Me" follows. In the *for laughing out loud* stakes, Chip turns the tables during the good-time sounding "Do Your Part," where he has Carrie sing "*drink coca cola from a biodegradable cup*" one too many times. Carrie voice leads on the country swing tinged "Extra," by the far the most lyrically sassy cut on this album. When Chip joins in he merely ups the tension, as Carrie counters with "*(I'm) just a little Texas girl – with big things on her mind.*" In the same vein, on the album title cut, Rodriguez clarifies her needs with "*I want the hurricane in the danger zone,*" while Taylor goes on to declare in heartfelt style "*You know somethin' girl, You're amazing.*" Resurrecting his old Billy Vera co-write, "Storybook Children," their duet on this *circa 1970's* ballad screams *classic*. "His Eyes," is a sad song of parting that tears at the heartstrings, while Carrie cuts loose with her five strings *good and true* on a blistering rendition of the traditional instrumental "Midnight On The Water." Chip closes the set with a half-spoken vocal on the laid back "Was That For Me," a song that eulogises hearing "*a Texas fiddle play.*" The lyric goes on to mention French sculptor Auguste Rodin and Camille Claudelle, his student and lover, while Carrie delivers a thoughtfully melodic break, mid song.

What really gets me uptight is that these guys played a gig, locally, a few weeks back. Now guess who didn't get off his *wide load*. What price a life filled with regret!!! In the meantime, my consolation is this mighty fine album.

Folkwax Rating 9 out of 10

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