



Jeffrey Foucault “**Shoot The Moon Right Between The Eyes**” Signature Sounds Recordings

According to a recent posting on Foucault’s web site, when he was aged seventeen [which would make the year something like 1993], his father, Ken, brought home an album that was over two decades old. The front cover portrayed the performer sat on a hay bale. The aforementioned posting closes with the insight *“It became my private religion for a while. I learned to play the guitar by learning his songs, and my Dad and I still play them around the table after supper when I’m home.”* If I tell you that the full title of this release is “**Shoot The Moon Right Between The Eyes: Jeffrey Foucault Sings The Songs Of John Prine**” everything should now be clear. Prine was born and raised in Illinois, Foucault arrived on planet Earth one state to the left – Wisconsin - and close on three decades later.

Bar one, the thirteen songs that Jeff has chosen to cover are drawn for the first decade and a half of Prine’s recording career. While “**John Prine**” was Foucault’s introduction to the former mailman’s music, it’s selections from his sophomore opus “**Diamond In The Rough**” that bookend this collection.

Supported by Eric Heywood’s pedal steel and by Mrs Foucault [Kris Delmhorst] on the chorus, the lyrically impenetrable “The Late John Garfield Blues” opens this collection, and, from the same album, the poignant portrait of “Billy The Bum,” one of life’s unfortunates follows. In the closing verse, with a deal of bitterness Prine chides ‘the folks in their holy cloaks,’ none of whom, with an even hand, befriended this cripple hobo, *“For pity’s a crime, And it ain’t worth a dime, To a person who’s really in need.”* Hailing from Prine’s self-titled debut, “Hello In There,” finds Loretta’s unnamed/mature in years spouse reflect on family and their decades together. Written when Prine was in his early twenties, it’s a spot-on portrait of the twilight years that is [most] everyone’s lot in life - *“So if you’re walking down the street sometime, And spot some hollow ancient eyes, Please don’t just pass ‘em by and stare , As if you didn’t care, say, “Hello in there, hello.”* “One Red Rose,” from “**Storm Windows**” [1980], is a tender memory of first finding love, while the ensuing “Far From Me,” the second cut from Prine’s debut, reflects upon love that is fading. Listed on the liner as track eight, it’s actually the seventh on the disc.

A talented piece of wordplay “Speed Of The Sound Of Loneliness” follows [listed as track 7, it has traded places with “Far From Me”]. The only “**German Afternoons**” [1986] selection, what unfolds is another reflection on how, over the years, the flame of love has a habit of diminishing. At the outset [of this review] I noted how ‘bar one’ the songs were drawn from Prine’s early career recordings. Co-written with Pat McLaughlin, “**The Missing Years**” [1991] furnishes the rock ‘n’ roll paced, lyrically sly and subtle “Daddy’s Little Pumpkin.” The “Mexican Home” lyrics doubles as a self-contained movie, wherein the narrator paints numerous ‘I can see that’ portraits including the poetic night time snapshot – *“And I watched the cars roll by, As the headlights raced, To the corner of the kitchen wall.”* Listed as the closing cut, the good-time sounding “Clocks And Spoons,” from “**Diamond In The Rough**,” furnishes this tribute collection with its title.

Foucault’s Prine homage also features “He Was In Heaven Before He Died” [“**Common Sense**” [1975]], “Unwed Fathers” [“**Aimless Love**” [1984]], the “**Storm Windows**” title track, and “That’s The Way The World Goes ‘Round” [“**Bruised Orange**” [1978]]. Darn, just when you think you’re done up pops “Souvenirs” – hidden within the body of the final track, some two and a half minutes of silence follow “Clocks And Spoons.” Co-written with the late Steve Goodman, Prine’s friend and fellow Chicago based folk singer, the collaboration surfaced on “**Diamond In The Rough**” and – we pretty much end as we began – since, on this rendition, it appears that Jeff may have been accompanied by his father Ken – to whom he dedicates this recording.

Folkwax Score 8 out of 10.

Arthur Wood.

Kerrville Kronikles 01/09 & 02/09.