



Waylon Jennings “Live From Austin, Texas” New West Records

New West’s series of releases from Austin City Limits’ back catalogue continues apace, although the latest tranche arrives with a fresh twist. Past releases have appeared on CD or DVD only, or, alternatively, have been released simultaneously - and **NOTE** individually - on both formats. Jennings’ release and another from Merle Haggard [his debut on the series, filmed in 1978] come housed in a three-way, fold-out card sleeve featuring one disc in each format – **AND** pretty much for the price of a single disc. Recorded in 1984, Waylon’s band is composed of Jerry Bridges [bass], Earl Scruggs’ son Gary [guitar, harmonica], Ralph Mooney [pedal steel], Dan Mustoe [drums] and Asleep at the Wheel alumni Floyd Domino [piano].

Jennings [d. 2002] was one of life’s bona fide survivors – somewhere in Iowa he gave up his plane seat on that fateful 3rd February 1959 flight, and thirteen years later survived a tussle with hepatitis. Mooney’s pedal steel and Waylon’s chunky [lead] guitar licks are upfront throughout this in-concert presentation. As was the norm, from the top down, Waylon is kitted out in black hat, white shirt and denims. Hanging from his trademark tooled “Waylon” leather shoulder strap, the Texan totes and plays his ‘inlaid’ electric guitar in a sort of horizontal fashion.

A tad over forty minutes in length, the songs performed on ACL by Jennings, amount to a selection of album cuts and Country Chart singles [up to that date]. First up, “Are You Ready For The Country” appeared on the writer’s seminal “**Harvest**” [1972] and opened Side 1 of Waylon’s 1976 RCA Victor album of the same name. What’s more, when released as a single this Neil Young tune gave the Texan a # 7 hit single. It’s followed here by J. J. Cale’s “Clyde” which reached the same position on the chart four years later. Waylon and his *running buddy* Willie [Nelson] enjoyed a 1978 # 1 Country hit single with “Mammas Don’t Let Your Babies Grow Up To Be Cowboys,” and the B side - and the third tune in his ACL set - “I Can Get Off On You” also charted. Penned by Jennings, and taken from his June 1984 album “**Never Could Toe The Mark**,” next up is “People Up In Texas.”

“*This is my favourite Willie Nelson song*” prefaces delivery of the ballad “It’s Not Supposed To Be That Way.” It appeared on Waylon’s “**This Time**” [1974] album, and the composition subsequently charted for Steve Young [1977] and Pam Rose [1980]. “Don’t You Think This Outlaw Bit’s Done Got Out Of Hand,” which peaked on the Country Chart # 5 [in 1978], finds Waylon reflecting on the rise and rise of ‘outlaw country’ a movement in which he was a principle player. His 1973 album “**Honky Tonk Heroes**” helped galvanise his ‘outlaw’ reputation, and featured here “You Asked Me To,” which he co-wrote with Billy Joe Shaver, furnished him with a # 8 country single.

The succinct “*I guess this is my favourite song I ever recorded*” prefaces the Allen Reynolds’ composition “Dreaming My Dreams With You,” a # 10 single back in 1975, and the Texas moves on with his # 3 single from 1972, “Good Hearted Woman.” The latter song was co-written Waylon and Willie [about their respective wives, at that time]. Hit songwriter Bob McDill’s “I May Be Used [But Baby I Ain’t Used Up]” appeared on the Texan’s September 1983 album “**Waylon & Company**,” and on the ACL stage Floyd’s boogie woogie piano licks propel this 1984 # 4 country hit. Turning to Hank Williams’ extensive catalogue, Waylon performs “Let’s Turn Back The Years” which appeared on “**Dreaming My Dreams**” [1975], his first # 1 Country Chart Album.

A man of few words, Jennings introduces his band with “Give ‘em all a big hand, they work hard,” and moves straight into “Honky Tonk Heroes,” the opening track from the 1973 album of the same name, a

collection that, bar the closing track, solely contained songs penned or co-penned by Billy Joe Shaver. Jennings closes his ACL performance with Rodney Crowell's "I Ain't Living Long Like This" which he took to # 1 in the Country Chart during 1980, and returns to encore with "I've Always Been Crazy" – "*Had to come back and get my guitar. Here's a song I wrote about myself*" – a # 1 single for Jennings in 1978.

Folkwax Score 7 out of 10.

Arthur Wood.

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