Sonny Landreth - The Road We're On (2003)

01. True Blue
02. Hell at Home
03. All About You
04. A World Away
05. Gone Pecan *play*
06. Natural World
07. The Promise Land
08. Falling for You *play*
09. Ol' Lady Luck
10. Gemini Blues
11. The Road We're On
12. Juke Box Mama

Personnel:
Sonny Landreth (vocals, guitar);
Steve Conn (keyboards);
Dave Ranson (bass);
Mike Burch, Brian Brignac (drums);
Danny Kimball, Joe Broussard (rubboard);
Tony Daigle. R.S. Field (percussion);
Marc Broussard (background vocals).

Sonny Landreth's 10-year career as a leader has always seemed tenuous, because he's a one-dimensional singer and only an adequate songwriter. But these 12 numbers run deeper than his previous recordings. Like much of his catalog, they straddle the worlds of blues, Cajun and zydeco, and New Orleans party music, but the blues dominates. And that gives the conflagrant Mississippi-born and Louisiana-raised slide guitarist plenty of fuel. So he burns liberally at every turn, from the acoustic resonator guitar that opens and closes the disc to the

percolating funk of "Hell at Home" and the Allmans-like, riff-driven intensity of "Fallin' for You." "A World Away" is this album's tour de force, with Landreth summoning soul from the seldom-used soft side of his voice and slow, moaning guitar lines, whose steel-on-steel cries echo the resigned heartbreak of the lyrics. The CD's sterling production puts Landreth's guitar front and center, which reaffirms the former John Hiatt and Clifton Chenier sideman's instrumental mastery. --Ted Drozdowski

Guitar whiz Sonny Landreth hails from the Mississippi/Louisiana region, and his ability to bridge swamp rock, blues, and zydeco is a reflection of his home area's rep as a wonderful melting pot of roots music. THE ROAD WE'RE ON affirms Landreth's ability to tap into this well of inspiration, and with slide in hand the charter member of John Hiatt's Goners puts on a dazzling display. "All About You" finds him using a growling guitar to shape a Stevie Ray Vaughan-flavored shuffle, the snappy "Juke Box Mama" switches to some finely plucked steel-string work, and "Gone Pecan" chugs along convincingly with zydeco serving as the main source of inspiration.

Although the lyrics on this entirely self-penned effort tend to be a bit on the light side, Landreth's mastery of the six-string provides to be a sufficient to carry him through. Be it slow blues ("A World Away"), faux swing (the title track), or jammy southern rock ("Gemini Blues"), Landreth mastery of his instrument makes this album quite the satisfying listen.

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